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ROLAND CASHEL

By Charles James Lever.

With Illustrations By Phiz,

In Two Volumes. Vol. I.

Boston: Little, Brown, And Company. 1907.

ROLAND CASHEL.

BY

CHARLES LEVER.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIZ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.
1907.

To G. P. B. JAMES, Esq.

Dear James,—You, once upon a time, dedicated to me a tale of deep and thrilling interest Let me now inscribe to you this volume on the plea of that classic authority who, in the interchange of armour, “gave Brass for Gold.”

It is, however, far less to repay the obligation of a debt by giving you a “Roland”—not for your “Oliver,” but your “Stepmother”—than for the pleasure of recording one “Fact” in a bulky tome of Fiction, that I now write your name at the head of this page,—that fact being, the warm memory I cherish of all our pleasant hours of intercourse, and the sincere value I place upon the honor of your friendship.

Yours, in all esteem and affection,

CHARLES LEVER.

Palazzo Ximenes, Florence, Oct 20, 1849.

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PREFACE.

I first thought of this story—I should say I planned it, if the expression were not misleading—when living at the Lake of Como. There, in a lovely little villa—the "Cima"—on the border of the lake, with that glorious blending of Alpine scenery and garden-like luxuriance around me, and little or none of interruption or intercourse, I had abundant time to make acquaintance with my characters and follow them into innumerable situations, and through adventures far more extraordinary and exciting than I dared afterwards to recount.

I do not know how it may be with other story-tellers, but I have to own for myself that the personages of a novel gain over at times a degree of interest very little inferior to that inspired by living and real people, and that this is especially the case when I have found myself in some secluded spot and seeing little of the world. To such an ascendancy has this deception attained, that more than once I have found myself trying to explain why this person should have done that, and by what impulse that other was led into something else. In fact, I have found that there are conditions of the mind in which purely imaginary creations assume the characters of actual people, and act positively as though they were independent of the will that invented them.

Of the strange manner in which imagination can thus assume the mastery, and for a while at least have command over the mind, I cannot give a stronger instance within my own experience than the mode in which this story was first conceived.

When I began I intended that the action should be carried on in the land where the tale opened. The scene on every side of me had shed its influence, the air was weighty with the perfume of the lime and the orange. To days of dazzling brilliancy there succeeded nights of tropical splendor; with stars of almost preternatural magnitude streaking the calm lake with long lines of light. To people a scene like this with the sort of characters that might befit it, was rather a matter of necessity with me than choice, and it was then that Maritaña revealed herself to me with a charm of loveliness I have never been able to repicture. It was there I bethought me of those passionate natures in which climate and soil and vegetation reproduce themselves, glowing, ardent, and voluptuous as they are. It was there my fancy loved to stray among the changeful incidents of lives of wild adventure and wilder passion; and to imagine the strange discords that could be evoked between the traits of a land that recalled Paradise and the natures that were only angelic in the fall.

I cannot trust to my memory to remind me of the sort of tale I meaned to write. I know there was to have been a perfect avalanche of adventure on land and on sea. I know that through a stormy period of daily peril and excitement, the traits of the Northern temperament in Roland himself were to have asserted their superiority over his more impulsive comrades; I know he was to have won that girl's love against a rivalry that set life in the issue; and I have a vague impression of how such a character might come by action and experience to develop such traits as make men the rulers of their fellows.

Several of the situations occur to me, but not a single clew to the story. There are even now scenes before me of prairie life and lonely rides in passes of the Pampas; of homes where the civilized man had never seen a brother nor heard a native tongue. It is in vain I endeavor to recall anything like a connected narrative. All that I can well remember is the great hold the characters had taken in my mind; how they peopled the landscape around me, and followed me wherever I went.

This was in autumn. As winter drew nigh we moved into an Italian city, much frequented by foreigners, and especially the resort of our countrymen. The new life of this place and the interest they excited, so totally unlike all that I had left at my little villa, effected a complete revolution in my thoughts, utterly routing the belief I had indulged in as to the characters of my story, and the incidents in which they displayed themselves. Up to this all my efforts had been, as it were, to refresh my mind as to a variety of events and people I had once known, and to try if I could not recall certain situations which had interested me. Now the spell was broken, all the charm of the illusion gone, and I awoke to the dreary consciousness of my creatures being mere shadows, and their actions as unreal as themselves.

There is a sort of intellectual bankruptcy in such awakenings; and I know of few things so discouraging as this sudden revulsion from dream-land to the cold *terra firma* of unadorned fact.

There was little in the city we now lived in to harmonize with “romance.” It was, in fact, all that realism could accomplish with the aids of every taste and passion of modern society. That this life of present-day dissipation should be enacted in scenes where every palace and every street, every monument, and indeed every name recalled a glorious past, may not impossibly have heightened the enjoyment of the drama, but most unquestionably it vulgarized the actors.

Instead of the Orinoco and its lands of feathery palms, I had now before me the Arno and its gay crowds of loungers, the endless tide of equipages, and the strong pulse-beat of an existence that even, in the highways of life, denotes passion and emotion.

What I had of a plan was lost to me from that hour. I was again in the whirlpool of active existence, and the world around me was deep—triple deep—in all cases of loving and hating, and plotting and gambling, of intriguing, countermining, and betraying, as very polite people would know how to do: occupations to watch, which inspire an intensity of interest unknown in any other condition of existence.

Out of these impressions thus enforced came all the characters of my story. Not one was a portrait, though in each and all were traits taken from life. If I suffered myself on one single occasion to amass too many of the characteristics of an individual into a sketch, it was in the picture of the beau of Drumcondera; but there I was drawing from recollection and not able to correct, as I should otherwise have done, what might seem too close adherence to a model. I have been told that in the character of Linton I have exaggerated wickedness beyond all belief. I am sorry to reply that I made but a faint copy of him who suggested that personage, and who lives and walks the stage of life as I write. One or two persons—not more—who know him whose traits furnished the picture, are well aware that I have neither overdrawn my sketch, nor exaggerated my drawing.

The Kennyfeck young ladies—I am anxious to say—are not from life, nor is Lady Kilgoff, though I have heard surmises to the contrary.

These are all the explanations and excuses that occur to me I have to make of this story. Its graver faults are not within the pale of apology; and for these I only ask indulgence,—the same indulgence that has never been denied me.

CHARLES LEVER.

Trieste, 1872.

ROLAND CASHEL.

CHAPTER I. DON PEDRO'S GUESTS.

And thus they lived ye merrie yeare,
For they were a jollie crewe
Of pleasante laddes that knewe no feare,
And—as little of honestie too.

Ballade of Capt. Pike.

Our tale opens on a gorgeous night of Midsummer, at an era so little remote that to name the precise year could have no interest for the reader, and in a region which seemed to combine all that is delightful in climate with whatever is luxuriant and splendid in vegetation. It was upon the bank of a small river, a tributary of the Oronoco, not very distant from the picturesque city of Barcelonetta, that a beautiful villa stood, the elegance of whose architecture and the lavish magnificence of whose decorations were alike evidence that neither taste nor wealth were wanting to its proprietor.

In this land, where Nature had been so prodigal of her gifts, the luxurious appointments of this princely abode seemed to partake of the character of a fairy palace; and the admixture of objects of high art, the treasures of Italian galleries and Spanish collections, with the more vivid realities of the scene, favored this illusion. The fortunate owner of this paradise was a certain Pedro Rica, who, for something like fourteen

years, had been a resident of Columbia. A widower, with an only child, then an infant of scarce a year old, he had arrived in that country, seeking, as he said, by new scenes and new associations, to erase, so far as might be, the painful memory of his late bereavement.

While he gave it to be understood that he was a Spaniard by birth, some averred that he was a Mexican; others, that he was a Texan; and one or two alleged that he was an American of the States,—an assumption that the ease and fluency of his English went far to corroborate. Of whatever nation he came, certain it is that a mystery hung over both his native land and his history; and as he showed little disposition to enlighten the world on these subjects, as is usual in such cases, his neighbors took their revenge by inventing a hundred stories about him, each one only worse than the other. At one time it was said that his wealth was acquired by piracy; at another, that he absconded from a Texan city, with a large sum belonging to the government; forgery, breach of trust, were among the commonest allegations; and the most charitable only averred that he made his money in the slave-trade.

It is but fair to say that the sole foundation for these various rumors lay in the stern distance of his manner, and the cold, almost repulsive, austerity with which he declined all acquaintance with the neighborhood. These traits, added to the voluptuous splendor of a retinue and a style of living infinitely above all around, gradually estranged from him the few who attempted to form an intimacy, and left him to live—as it seemed he preferred—a life of solitary magnificence; an object of affected pity to many, but of real envy to all.

As his daughter grew up, he was accustomed to visit the sea-coast each summer for some weeks, and from these absences he now usually returned with one or two acquaintances, for the most part officers of the Columbian navy, with whom he had formed an intimacy at the seaside. Such acquaintanceship seemed to increase from year to year, till at last each autumn saw the “Villa de las Noches Entretenidas,” “of the pleasant nights” crowded with guests, whose wild orgies were in strange contrast to the former stillness and quietude within those walls.

A more motley and discordant assemblage it would be hard to conceive, consisting as they did of adventurers from every land of Europe,—the wild and reckless outcast of every clime and country, the beggared speculator, the ruined gambler, the duellist with blood upon his hand, the defaulter with shame upon his forehead; all that good morals reject, and the law pursues, mingled with others whose faults went no further than waste or improvidence, or the more venial sin that they came poor into the world, and were stamped “Adventurers” from the cradle.

A service that never exercised too nice a scrutiny into the habits of its followers, and whose buccaneer life had all the freedom of piracy, with the assumption of a recognized class, offered no mean attraction to the lover of enterprise; and certainly, if the standard of morals was low, that of daring, reckless adventure was the very opposite.

Amid this pleasant company we must now ask pardon for introducing our reader, with this saving assurance, that he shall not have long to commune with such companionship. It was, as we have said, a summer's night. A sky all glittering with stars spread its dark blue canopy over a scene where, amid the banana, the manioc, and the plantain, flowers of every bright hue were blooming, and fountains gushing; while, through an atmosphere tremulous with the song of the mocking-bird, fire-flies were glancing and glittering.

In the deep piazza before the villa was now assembled a numerous party of men disposed in every attitude of lounging, ease, and abandonment; they seemed, though perhaps after very different estimates, to be enjoying the delicious balm and freshness of the night air. They were of various ages; and although the greater number showed by their dress that they belonged to the naval service, other signs, not less distinctive, pronounced that they were drawn from classes of life as varied as they were numerous; while, here and there, a caballero might be seen attired in the picturesque costume of the Caraccas, his many colored scarf and plumed hat aiding, in no inconsiderable degree, the picturesque effect of a scene Salvator might have painted.

Not only beneath the piazza itself, but on the marble steps, and even beneath them again, on the close-shaven turf, the party lay, sated as it were with splendor, and recruiting strength for new dissipations. Some sat talking in low and whispering voices, as if unwilling, even by a sound, to break the stilly calm. Others, in perfect silence, seemed to drink in the soothing influence of that tranquil moment, or smoked the cigarettos in dreamy indolence; while at intervals, from the leafy groves, a merry laugh, or the tinkling of a guitar, would mingle with the bubbling murmur of the fountains, making the very stillness yet more still as they ceased. Behind the piazza, and opening by several large windows upon it, could be seen a splendid saloon, resplendent with wax-lights, and still displaying on the loaded table the remnants of a sumptuous repast, amid which vessels of gold and vases of flowers appeared. Here, yet lingered two or three guests,—spirits who set no store on an entertainment if it did not degenerate into debauch.

A broad alley, flanked by tall hedges of the prickly pear, led from the villa to a little mound, on which a chestnut-tree stood, the patriarch of the wood; a splendid tree it was, and worthy of a better destiny than it now fulfilled, as, lighted up by several lanterns suspended from the branches, it spread its shade over a large table where a party were playing at “Monte.”

Even without the suggestive aid of the large heaps of gold beside each player, and piled in the middle of the table, the grave and steadfast faces of some, the excited look of others, and the painful intensity of interest in all, showed that the play was high. Still, although such was the case, and while the players were men whose hot blood and reckless lives did but little dispose them to put the curb upon their tempers, not a word was spoken aloud; nor did a gesture or a look betray the terrible vacillations of hope and fear the changeful fortune of the game engendered. Standing near the table, but not mingling in the play, stood Don Pedro himself, his sallow and melancholy features fixed upon the game, with an expression that might mean sorrow or deep anxiety, it were difficult to say which.

Beside him, at a small table littered with papers and writing materials, sat his steward, or intendant, a German named Geizheimer, a beetle-browed, white-cheeked, thick-lipped fellow, whose aquiline features and guttural accents told that lending money at enormous interest was no uncongenial occupation. Such was his

present, and indeed almost his only duty; for, while Don Pedro seldom or never played, gaming was the invariable occupation of the guests, whose means to support it were freely supplied by the steward; the borrowers either passing a simple note for repayment, or, when the sum was a heavy one, mortgaging their share in the next prize they should capture. Other contracts, it was rumored, were occasionally resorted to, but of such we shall speak anon.

At a short distance from the table, but sufficiently near to observe the game, stood one on whom nothing short of the passion of play could have prevented every eye being bent. But so it was; she stood alone and unmarked, while all the interest was concentrated upon the game. Dressed in a white tunic, or chemise, fastened round the waist by a gold girdle, stood Maritaña Rica, her large and lustrous black eyes eagerly turned to where two youths were standing intensely occupied by the play. Her neck, arms, and shoulders were bare, in Mexican fashion, and even the mantilla she wore over her head was less as a protection than as a necessary accompaniment of a costume which certainly is of the simplest kind. Except the chemise, she had no other garment, save a jupe of thin lama-wool, beautifully embroidered and studded with precious stones; this terminated below the middle of the leg, displaying an ankle and foot no Grecian statue ever surpassed in beauty.

If the deep brown of her skin almost conveyed the reproach—and such it is—of Indian blood, a passing glance at the delicate outline of her features, and, in particular, of her mouth, at once contradicted the suspicion. The lips were beautifully arched, and, although plump and rounded, had none of the fulness of the degraded race. These were now slightly parted, displaying teeth of surprising whiteness, and imparting in the whole expression a character of speaking animation. Although not yet sixteen, her figure had all the graceful development of womanhood, without having entirely lost a certain air of fawn-like elasticity, which, from time to time, her gestures of impatience displayed.

The two young men on whom her interest seemed fixed, were playing in partnership, and, in their highly wrought passion, never once looked up from the board. One, somewhat taller and older by a few years, appeared to exercise the guidance of their play; and it was easy to see, in the swollen and knotted veins of his forehead, in the clinched hands, and in the tremulous lip, the passionate nature of a confirmed gambler. The younger, whose dress of green velvet, slashed and braided in Mexican taste, and whose wide-leaved sombrero was decorated with a long sash of light blue silk, whose deep gold fringe hung upon his shoulder, was evidently one less enamoured of play, and more than once busied himself in arranging the details of his costume, of which he seemed somewhat vain. It was in one of these moments that his eyes met those of Maritaña fixed steadfastly upon him, and, fascinated by her unmoved stare, he felt his cheek grow hot, and, whether from a sense of shame or a still more tender motive, the blush spread over his face and forehead. Maritaña looked steadily, almost sternly, at him, and then, with a slight toss of her head, so slight that none save he who had watched her intently could read its scornful import, she turned away. The youth did not wait a moment, but, slipping from his place, followed along the alley he had seen her take.

He who remained, unconscious of his friend's departure, continued to mutter about the chances of the game, and speculate on the amount he would dare to hazard. “She is against us every time, Roland!” said he, in a low, half-whispering voice. “Fortune will not smile, woo her how we may! Speak, *amigo mio*, shall we risk all?” As he spoke, he began counting the piles of glittering gold before him, but his hand trembled, and the pieces clung to his moist fingers, so that he was too late for the deal.

“Sixteen hundred,” muttered he to himself. “Ten—twenty—thirty.”

“The bank loses!” cried the croupier, announcing the game.

“Loses!” screamed the young man, in an accent whose piercing agony startled the whole board,—“loses! because it was the only time I had no wager. See, Roland, see how true it is; there is a curse upon us.” He seized the arm of the person at his side, and clinched it with a convulsive energy as he spoke.

“*Saperlote!* my young friend; you 'll never change luck by tearing my old uniform,” growled out a rugged-looking German skipper, who, commanding a small privateer, affected the rank and style of a naval officer.

“Oh, is it you, Hans?” said the youth, carelessly; “I thought it had been one of our own fellows. Only think the bank should lose, because I made no stake; see now, watch this. Halt!” cried he to the dealer, in a voice that at once arrested his hand. “You give one no time, sir, to decide upon his game,” said he, with a savage irascibility, which continued bad luck had carried to the highest pitch. “Players who risk their two or three crowns may not object; but, if a man desires to make a heavy stake; it is but common courtesy to wait a moment. A thousand doubloons, the red queen—fifteen hundred,” added he, quickly,—“fifteen, and thirty-five—or eight.” So saying, he pushed with both hands the great heap of gold pieces into the middle of the table; and then, with eyes bloodshot and glaring, he watched each card that fell from the banker's fingers. When the first row of cards were dealt, all was in his favor, and, as the banker took up the second pack, a long-suppressed sigh broke from the gambler's bosom. It seemed, at length, as if fortune had grown weary of persecuting him.

“Come, Enrique,” said a handsomely dressed and fine-looking man, who stood opposite to him, “luck has turned at last; there is nothing but the queen of spades against you!”

As if by some magic spell he had called the card, the words were not out when it dropped upon the table. A cry of mingled amazement and horror burst from the players, whose natures would seem to recognize some superstitious influence in such marked casualties. As for Enrique, he stood perfectly still and silent; a horrible smile, the ghastly evidence of an hysterical effort, sat upon his rigid features, and at length two or three heavy drops of blood trickled from his nostril and fell upon his shirt.

“Where's Roland?” said he, in a faint whisper, to a young man behind him.

“I saw him with Maritaña, walking towards the three fountains.”

Enrique's pallid cheek grew scarlet, and, rudely pushing his way through the crowd, he disappeared from view.

“There goes a man in a good humor to board a prize,” said one of the bystanders, coolly, and the play proceeded without a moment's interruption.

With his broad-leaved hat drawn down upon his brows, and his head sunk upon his bosom, he traversed the winding walks with the step of one who knew their every turning; at last he reached a lonely and unfrequented part of the garden, where the path, leading for some distance along the margin of a small lake, suddenly turned off towards a flower terrace, the midst of which “the three fountains” stood.

Instead of taking the shortest way to the spot, Enrique left the walk and entered a grove of trees, through whose thick shade be proceeded silently and cautiously. The air was calm and motionless, and none save one who had received the education of a prairie hunter could have followed that track so noiselessly. By degrees the wood became open, and his progress more circumspect, when he suddenly halted.

Directly in front of him, not twenty paces from where he stood, was the terrace, over which, in the stilly night air, the fountain threw a light spray-like shower, rustling, as it fell upon the leaves, with a murmuring sound. Lower down, was a little basin surrounded by a border of white marble, and beside this two figures were now standing, whom, by the clear starlight, he could easily recognize to be Roland and Maritaña.

The former, with folded arms, and head bent down as if in thought, leaned against a tree, while Maritaña stood beside the fountain, moving her foot to and fro in the clear water, and, as though entirely engrossed by her childish pastime, never bestowed a look upon her companion. At last she ceased suddenly, and turning abruptly round, so as to stand full in front of him, said, “Well, senhor, am I to hope our pleasant interview is ended, or am I still to hear more of your complaints,—those gentle remonstrances which sound, to my ears at least, more wearisome than words of downright anger?”

“You have not heard me patiently,” said the youth, advancing towards her, while the slightly shaken tones of his voice contrasted strangely with the assured and haughty accents in which he spoke.

“Patiently!” echoed she, with a scornful laugh. “And where was this same goodly gift to be learned? Among the pleasant company we have quitted, senhor? whose friendships of a night are celebrated by a brawl on the morrow! From the most exemplary crew of the 'Esmeralda,' and, in particular, the worthy lieutenant, Don Roland da Castel, who, if report speaks truly, husbands the virtue so rigidly that he cannot spare the smallest portion to expend upon his friends?”

“If my thrift had extended to other matters,” said the youth, bitterly, “mayhap I should not have to listen to language like this?”

“What say you, sir?” cried the girl, passionately, as she stamped upon the ground with a gesture of violent anger. “Do you affect to say that it matters to me whether you stood there as loaded with gold as on the morning you brought back that Mexican prize, and played the hero with such martial modesty; or as poor—as poor—as bad luck at cards can make you? If I loved you, I 'd have as little care for one event as the other!”

“You certainly thought more favorably of me then than now, Maritaña!” said Roland, diffidently.

“I know not why you say so!”

“At least you accepted my hand in betrothal—”

“Stay!” cried she, impetuously. “Did I not tell you then, before the assembled witnesses—before my father—what a mockery this same ceremony was; that its whole aim and object was to take advantage of that disgraceful law that can make an unmarried girl a widow, to inherit the fortune of one she never would have accepted as her husband. Speak, sir!—and say, did I not tell you this, and more too, that such a bridal ceremony brought little fortune to the bridegroom; for that already I had been thrice a widowed bride? Nay, more, you heard me swear as solemnly, that while I regarded the act as one of deep profanation, I felt in nowise bound by it. It is idle, then, to speak of our betrothal!”

“It is true, Maritaña, you said all this; although, perhaps, you had not now remembered it, had not some other succeeded to that place in your regard—”

“There, there!” cried she, stopping him impatiently. “I will not listen again to the bead-roll of your jealousies. People must have loved very little, or too much, to endure that kind of torture. Besides, why tell me of these things? You are, they say, a most accomplished hunter, and can answer me,—if, when in chase of an antelope, a jaguar joins the sport, you do not turn upon him at once, the worthier and nobler enemy, and thus, as it were, protect what had been your prey.”

The youth seemed stung to the quick by this pitiless sarcasm; and, although he made no reply, his hands, convulsively clutched, bespoke the torrent of agitation within him. “You are right, Maritaña!” said be, after a pause. “It is idle to talk of our betrothal,—I release you.”

“Release *me!*” said she, laughing contemptuously; “this is a task I always perform for myself, senhor, and by the shortest method, as thus.” As she spoke, she struggled to tear from her finger a ring which resisted all her efforts. At last, by a violent wrench, she succeeded, and holding it up for a second, till the large diamond glittered like a star, she threw it into the still fountain at her feet “There, *amigo mio*, I release you,—never was freedom more willingly accorded!”

“Never was there a slave more weary of his servitude!” said the youth, bitterly. “If Don Pedro Rica but tear his accursed bond, I should feel myself my own again.”

“He will scarce refuse you, sir, if the rumor be correct that says you have lost eleven thousand doubloons at play. The wealthy conqueror stands on very different ground from *the* ruined gambler. Go to him at once! Ask back the paper! Tell him you have neither a heart nor a fortune to bestow upon his daughter! That, as a gambler, fettered by the lust for play, you have lost all soul for those hazardous enterprises that win a girl's love and a father's consent.”

She waited for a moment, that he might reply; and then, impatient, perhaps, at his silence, added, “I did not think, senhor, you esteemed yourself so rich a prize! Be of good cheer, however! They who are less cognizant of your deserts will be more eager to secure them.”

With these slighting words she turned away. Roland advanced as if to follow her, but with a contemptuous gesture of the hand she waved him back, and he stood like one spell-bound, gazing after her, till she disappeared in the dark distance.

CHAPTER II. A CHALLENGE—AND HOW IT ENDED.

La Diche viene quando no se aguarda.

—Spanish Proverb.

(Good lack comes when it is not looked for.)

Roland looked for some minutes in the direction by which Maritaña had gone, and then, with a sudden start, as if of some newly taken resolve, took the path towards the villa. He had not gone far when, at the turn of the way, he came in front of Enrique, who, with hasty steps, was advancing towards him.

“Lost, everything lost!” exclaimed the latter, with a mournful gesture of his hands.

“All gone!” cried Roland.

“Every crown in the world!”

“Be it so; there is an end of gambling, at least!”

“You bear your losses nobly, senhor!” said Enrique, sneeringly; “and, before a fitting audience, might claim the merit of an accomplished gamester. I am, however, most unworthy to witness such fine philosophy. I recognize in beggary nothing but disgrace!”

“Bear it, then, and the whole load, too!” said Roland, sneeringly. “To your solicitations only I yielded in taking my place at that accursed table. I had neither a passion for play, nor the lust for money-getting; you thought to teach me both, and, peradventure, you have made me despise them more than ever.”

“What a moralist!” cried Enrique, laughing insolently, “who discovers that he has cared neither for his mistress nor his money till he has lost both.”

“What do you mean?” said Roland, trembling with passion.

“I never speak in riddles,” was the cool reply.

“This, then, is meant as insult,” said Roland, approaching closer, and speaking in a still lower voice; “or is it merely the passion of a disappointed gambler?”

“And if it were, *amigo mio*,” retorted the other, “what more fitting stake to set against the anger of a rejected lover?”

“Be it so!” cried Roland, fiercely; “you never caught up a man more disposed to indulge your humor. Shall it be now?”

“Could not so much courage keep warm till daylight?” said Enrique, calmly. “Below the fountains there is a very quiet spot.”

“At sunrise?”

“At sunrise,” echoed Enrique, bowing with affected courtesy, till the streamers from his hat touched the ground.

“Now for my worthy father-in-law elect,” said Roland; “and to see him before he may hear of this business, or I may find it difficult to obtain my divorce.” When the youth arrived at the villa, the party were assembled at supper. The great saloon, crowded with guests and hurrying menials, was a scene of joyous but reckless conviviality, the loud laughter and the louder voices of the company striking on Roland's ear with a grating discordance he had never experienced before. The sounds of that festivity he had been wont to recognize as the pleasant evidence of free and high-souled enjoyment, now jarred heavily on his senses, and he wondered within himself how long he had lived in such companionship.

Well knowing that the supper-party would not remain long at table, while high play continued to have its hold upon the guests, he strolled into one of the shady alleys, watching from time to time for the breaking up of the entertainment At last some two or three arose, and, preceded by servants with lighted flambeaux, took the way towards the gaming-table. They were speedily followed by others, so that in a brief space—except by the usual group of hard-drinking souls, who ventured upon no stake save that of health—the room was deserted.

He looked eagerly for Don Pedro, but could not see him, as it was occasionally his practice to retire to his library long before his guests sought their repose. Roland made a circuit of the villa, and soon came to the door of this apartment, which led into a small flower-garden. Tapping gently here, he received a summons to enter, and found himself before Don Pedro, who, seated before a table, appeared deeply immersed in matters of business.

Roland did not need the cold and almost stern reception of his host to make him feel his intrusion very painfully; and he hastened to express his extreme regret that he should be compelled by any circumstances to trespass on leisure so evidently destined for privacy. “But a few moments' patient hearing,” continued he, “will show that, to me at least, the object of this visit did not admit of delay.”

“Be seated, senhor; and, if I may ask it without incivility, be brief, for I have weighty matters before me.”

“I will endeavor to be so,” said Roland, civilly, and resumed: “This evening, Don Pedro, has seen the last of twenty-eight thousand Spanish dollars, which, five weeks since, I carried here along with me. They were my share, as commander of the 'Esmeralda,' when she captured a Mexican bark, in May last. They were won with hard blows and some danger; they were squandered in disgrace at the gaming-table.”

“Forgive me,” said Don Pedro: “you can scarcely adhere to your pledge of brevity if you permit yourself to be led away by moralizing; just say how this event concerns me, and wherefore the present visit.”

Roland became red with anger and shame, and when he resumed it was in a voice tremulous with ill-

suppressed passion. “I did not come here for your sympathy, senhor. If the circumstance I have mentioned had no relation to yourself, you had not seen me here. I say that I have now lost all that I was possessed of in the world.”

“Again I must interrupt you, Senhor Roland, by saying that these are details for Geizheimer, not for me. He, as you well know, transacts all matters of money, and if you desire a loan, or are in want of any immediate assistance, I 'm sure you 'll find him in every way disposed to meet your wishes.”

“Thanks, senhor, but I am not inclined for such aid. I will neither mortgage my blood nor my courage, nor promise three hundred per cent for the means of a night at the gambling-table.”

“Then pray, sir, how am I to understand your visit? Is it intended for the sake of retailing to me your want of fortune at play, and charging me with the results of your want of skill or luck?”

“Far from it, senhor. It is simply to make known that I am ruined; that I have nothing left me in the world; and that, as one whose fortune has deserted him, I have come to ask back that bond by which I accepted your daughter's hand in betrothal.”

A burst of laughter from Don Pedro here stopped the speaker, who, with flushed cheek and glaring eyeballs, stared at this sudden outbreak. “Do you know for what you ask me, senhor?” said Rica, smiling insolently.

“Yes, I ask for what you never could think to enforce,—to make me, a beggar, the husband of your daughter.”

“Most true; I never thought of such an alliance. I believe you were told that Columbian law gives these contracts the force of a legal claim, in the event of survivorship; and you flattered yourself, perhaps too hastily, that other ties more binding still might grow from it. If Fortune was as fickle with you here as at the card-table, the fault is not in me.”

“But of what avail is it now?” said Roland, passionately. “If I died to-morrow, there is not sufficient substance left to buy a suit of mourning for my poor widow.”

“She could, perhaps, dispense with outward grief,” said Pedro, sneeringly.

“I say again,” cried Roland, with increased agitation, “this bond is not worth the paper it is written on. I leave the service; I sail into another latitude, and it is invalid,—a mere mockery!”

“Not so fast, sir,” said Pedro, slowly: “there is a redeeming clause, by which you, on paying seventy thousand doubloons, are released of your contract, with my concurrence. Mark that well,—with my concurrence it must be. Now, I have the opinion of learned counsel, in countries where mayhap your adventurous fancy has already carried you, that this clause embraces the option which side of the contract I should desire to enforce.”

“Such may be your law here; I can have little doubt that any infamy may pass for justice in this favored region,” said Roland; “but I 'll never believe that so base a judgment could be uttered where civilization prevails. At all events, I 'll try the case. I now tell you frankly, that, tomorrow, I mean to resign my rank and commission in this service; I mean to quit this country, with no intention ever to revisit it. If you still choose to retain a contract whose illegality needs no stronger proof than that it affects to bind one party only, I 'll not waste further time by thinking of it.”

“I will keep it, senhor,” interrupted Pedro, calmly. “I knew a youth, once, who had as humble an opinion of his fortunes as you have now; and yet he died,—not in this service, indeed, but in these seas,—and his fortune well requited the trouble of its claimant.”

“I have no right to trespass longer on you, sir,” said Roland, bowing. “I wish I could thank you for all your hospitality to me with a more fitting courtesy; I must confess myself your debtor without hope of repayment.”

“Have you signified to Don Gomez Noronja your intention to resign?”

“I shall do it within half an hour.”

“You forget that your resignation must be accepted by the Minister; that no peremptory permission can be accorded by a captain in commission, save under a guarantee of ten thousand crowns for a captain, and seven for a lieutenant, the sum to be estreated if the individual quit the service without leave. This, at least, is law you cannot dispute.”

Roland hung down his head, thunderstruck by an announcement which, at one swoop, dashed away all his hopes. As he stood silent and overwhelmed, Don Pedro continued, “You see, sir, that the service knows how to value its officers, even when they set little store by the service. Knowing that young men are fickle and fanciful, with caprices that carry them faster than sound judgment, they have made the enactment I speak of. And, even were you to give the preliminary notice, where will you be when the time expires? In what parallel south of Cape Horn? Among the islands of the Southern Pacific; perhaps upon the coast of Africa? No, no; take my advice: do not abandon your career; it is one in which you have already won distinction. Losses at play are easily repaired in these seas. Our navy—”

“Is nothing better than a system of piracy!” broke in Roland, savagely. “So long as, in ignorance of its real character, I walked beneath your flag, the heaviest crime which could be imputed to me was but the folly of a rash-brained boy. I feel that I know better now; I'll serve under it no more.”

“Dangerous words, these, senhor, if reported in the quarter where they would be noticed.”

Roland turned an indignant glance at him as he uttered this threat, and with an expression so full of passion that Rica, for a few seconds, seemed to feel that he had gone too far. “I did but suggest caution, senhor,” said he, timidly.

“Take care that you practise as well as preach the habit,” muttered Roland, “or you'll find that you have exploded your own mine.”

This, which he uttered as he left the room, was in reality nothing more than a vague menace; but it was understood in a very different sense by Pedro, who stood pale and trembling with agitation, gazing at the door by which the youth departed. At last he moved forward, and opening it, called out, “Senhor Roland! Roland, come back! Let me speak to you again.” But already he was far beyond hearing, as with all his speed

he hastened down the alley.

Don Pedro's resolves were soon formed; he rang his bell at once, and, summoning a servant, asked if Don Gomez Noronja was still at table?

“He has retired to his room, senhor,” was the reply.

A few momenta after, Rica entered the chamber of his guest, where he remained in close conversation till nigh daybreak. As he reached his own apartment the sound of horses' feet and carriage wheels was heard upon the gravel, and, throwing up the window, Rica called out,—

“Is that Don Enrique?”

“Yes, senhor, taking French leave, as you would call it. A bad return for a Spanish welcome; but duty leaves no alternative.”

“Are you for the coast, then?”

“With all speed. Our captain received important despatches in the night We shall be afloat before forty hours. Adios!”

The farewell was cordially re-echoed by Rica, who closed the window, muttering to himself, “So! all will go well at last.”

While Enrique was making all the speed towards the seashore a light calèche and four horses could accomplish, Roland was pacing with impatient steps the little plot of grass where so soon he expected to find himself in deadly conflict with his enemy.

Never was a man's mind more suited to the purpose for which he waited. Dejected, insulted, and ruined in one night, he had little to live for, and felt far less eager to be revenged of his adversary, than to rid himself of a hated existence. It was to no purpose that he could say, and say truly, that he had never cared for any of these things, of which he now saw himself stripped. His liking for Maritaña had never gone beyond great admiration for her beauty, and a certain spiteful pleasure in exciting those bursts of passion over which she exercised not the slightest control. It was caprice, not love; the delight of a schoolboy in the power to torment, without the wish to retain. His self-love, then, it was, was wounded on finding that she, with whose temper he had sported, could turn so terribly upon himself. The same feeling was outraged by Enrique, who seemed to know and exult over his defeat. These sources of bitterness, being all aggravated by the insulting manner of Don Pedro, made up a mass of indignant and angry feelings which warred and goaded him almost to madness.

The long-expected dawn broke slowly, and although, a few moments after sunrise, the whole sky became of a rich rose color, these few moments seemed like an age to the impatient thoughts of him who thirsted for his vengeance.

He walked hastily up and down the space, waiting now and again to listen, and then, disappointed, resumed his path, with some gesture of impatience. At last he heard footsteps approaching. They came nearer and nearer; and now he could hear the branches of the trees bend and crack, as some one forced a passage through them. A swelling feeling about the heart bespoke the anxiety with which he listened, when a figure appeared which even at a glance he knew to be not Enrique's. As the man approached be took off his hat respectfully and presented a letter.

“From Don Enrique?” said Roland, and then, tearing open the paper, he read,—

Amigo Mio,—Not mine the fault that I do not stand before you now instead of these few lines; but Noronja has received news of these Chilian fellows, and sent me to get the craft ready for sea at once. We shall meet, then, in a few hours; and, if so, let it be as comrades. The service and our own rules forbid a duel so long as we are afloat and on duty. Whatever be your humor when next we touch shore again, rely upon finding me ready to meet it, either as an enemy or as

Your friend,

Enrique da Cordova.

A single exclamation of disappointment broke from Roland, but the moment after all former anger was gone. The old spirit of comrade-affection began to seek its accustomed channels, and he left the spot, happy to think how different had been his feeling than if he were quitting it with the blood of his shipmate on his hands.

Although he now saw that his continuance in the service for the present was inevitable, he had fully made up his mind to leave it, and, with it, habits of life whose low excesses had now become intolerable. So long as the spirit of adventure and daring sustained him, so long the respite of a few months' shore life was a season of pleasure and delight; but as by degrees the real character of his associates became clearer, and he saw in them men who cared for enterprise no further than for its gain, and calculated each hazardous exploit by its profit, he felt that he was now following the career of a bravo who hires out his arm and sells his courage. This revolted every sentiment of his mind, and, come what would, he resolved to abandon it. In these day-dreams of a new existence the memory of two years passed in the Pampas constantly mingled, and he could not help contrasting the happy and healthful contentment of the simple hunter with the voluptuous but cankered pleasures of the wealthy buccaneer. Once more beneath the wooded shades of the tall banana, he thought how free and peaceful his days would glide by, free from the rude conflicts he now witnessed, and the miserable jealousies of these ill-assorted companionships. For some hours he wandered, revolving thoughts like these; and at length turned his steps towards the villa, determined, so long as his captain remained, that he would take up his quarters at Barcelonetta, nor in future accept of the hospitality of Don Rica's house. With this intention he was returning to arrange for the removal of his luggage, when his attention was excited by the loud cracking of whips, and the shrill cries that accompanied the sounds of “The post! the post!”

In a moment every window of the villa was thrown open, and beads, in every species of night-gear, and every stage of sleepy astonishment, thrust out; for the post, be it observed, was but a monthly phenomenon, and the arrival of letters was very often the signal for a total break-up of the whole household.

The long wagon, drawn by four black mules, and driven by a fellow whose wide-tasselled sombrero and long moustaches seemed to savor more of the character of a melodrama than real life, stopped before the chief entrance of the villa, and was immediately surrounded by the guests, whose hurried wardrobe could only be excused in so mild a climate.

“Anything for me, Truxillo?” cried one, holding up a dollar temptingly between finger and thumb.

“Where are my cigarettes?”

“And my mantle?”

“And my gun?”

“And the senhora's embroidered slippers?” cried a maid, as she ransacked every corner where the packages lay.

The driver, however, paid little attention to these various demands, but, loosening the bridles of his beasts, he proceeded to wash their mouths with some water fetched from the fountain, coolly telling the applicants that they might help themselves, only to spare something for the people of Barcelonetta, for he knew there was a letter or two for that place.

“What have we here?” cried one of the guests, as a mass of something enveloped in a horse-sheet lay rolled up in the foot of the calèche, where the driver sat.

“Ah, par Dios!” cried the man, laughing, “I had nearly forgotten that fellow. He is asleep, poor devil! He nearly died of cold in the night!”

“Who is he—what is he?”

“A traveller from beyond San Luis in search of Don Pedro.”

“Of me?” said Don Pedro, whose agitation became, in spite of all his efforts, visible to every one; at the same instant that, pulling back the cloak rudely, he gazed at the sleeping stranger,—“I never saw him before.”

“Come, awake—stir up, senhor!” said the driver, poking the passenger very unceremoniously with his whip. “We are arrived; this is the Villa de las Noches Entretenidas; here is Don Pedro himself!”

“The Lord be praised!” said a short, round-faced little man, who, with a nightcap drawn over his ears, and a huge cravat enveloping his chin, now struggled to look around him. “At last!” sighed he; “I 'm sure I almost gave up all hope of it.” These words were spoken in English; but even that evidence was not necessary to show that the little plump figure in drab gaiters and shorts was not a Spaniard.

“Are you Don Peter, sir,—are you really Don Peter?” said he, rubbing his eyes, and looking hurriedly around to assure himself he was not dreaming.

“What is your business with me—or have you any?” said Rica, in a voice barely above a whisper.

“Have I!—Did I come six thousand miles in search of you? Oh, dear! oh, dear! I can scarcely think it all over, even now. But still there may be nothing done if he isn't here.”

“What do you mean?” said Rica, impatiently.

“Mr. Roland Cashel; Roland Cashel, Esq., I should call him now, sir.”

“That 's my name!” said the youth, forcing his way through the crowd, and standing in front of the traveller.

The little man put his hand into a breast-pocket, and drew out a little book, opening which he began to read, comparing the detail, as he went on, with the object before him:—

“Six foot and an inch in height, at least, olive-brown complexion, dark eyes and hair, straight nose, short upper lip, frowns slightly when he speaks;—just talk a little, will you?”

Cashel could not help smiling at the request; when the other added, “Shows his teeth greatly when he laughs.”

“Am I a runaway negro from New Orleans that you have taken my portrait so accurately, sir?”

“Got that at Demerara,” said the little man, putting up the book, “and must say it was very near indeed!”

“I have been at Demerara,” said Cashel, hoping by the admission to obtain some further insight into the traveller's intentions.

“I know that,” said the little man. “I tracked you thence to St Kitts, then to Antigua. I lost you there, but I got up the scent again in Honduras, but only for a short time, and had to try Demerara again; then I dodged down the coast by Pernambuco, but lost you entirely in June,—some damned Indian expedition, I believe. But I met a fellow at New Orleans who had seen you at St. Louis, and so I tracked away south—”

“And, in one word, having found me, what was the cause of so much solicitude, sir?” said Cashel, who felt by no means comfortable at such a hot and unwearied pursuit.

“This can all be better said in the house,” interposed Don Rica, who, relieved of any uneasiness on his own account, had suddenly resumed his habitual quiet demeanor.

“So I 'm thinking too!” said the traveller; “but let me first land my portmanteau; all the papers are there. I have not lost sight of it since I started.”

The parcels were carefully removed under his own inspection, and, accompanied by Don Pedro Rica and Roland, the little man entered the villa.

There could be no greater contrast than that between the calm and placid bearing Don Pedro had now assumed, and the agitated and anxious appearance which Cashel exhibited. The very last interview he had sustained in that same spot still dwelt upon his mind; and when he declined Don Pedro's polite request to be seated, and stood with folded arms before the table, which the traveller had now covered with his papers, a prisoner awaiting the words of his judgment could not have endured a more intense feeling of anxiety.

“'Roland Cashel, born in York, a. d. 18—, son of Godfrey Cashel and Sarah, his wife,'” read the little man;

then murmured to himself, “Certificate of baptism, signed by Joshua Gorgeous, Prebendary of the Cathedral; all right, so far. Now we come to the wanderings. Your father was quartered at Port-au-Prince, in the year 18—, I believe?”

“He was. I was then nine years old,” said Cashel.

“Quite correct; he died there, I understand?”

Cashel assented by a nod.

“Upon which event you joined, or was supposed to join, the 'Brown Peg,' a sloop in the African trade, wrecked off Fernando Po same winter?”

“Yes; she was scuttled by the second mate, in a mutiny. But what has all this secret history of me to mean? Did you come here, sir, to glean particulars to write my life and adventures?”

“I crave your pardon most humbly, Mr. Cashel,” said the little man, in a perfect agony of humiliation. “I was only recapitulating a few collateral circumstances, by way of proof. I was, so to say, testing—that is, I was—”

“Satisfying yourself as to this gentleman's identity,” added Don Pedro.

“Exactly so, sir; the very words upon the tip of my tongue,—satisfying myself that you were the individual alluded to here”—as he spoke, he drew forth a copy of the “Times” newspaper, whose well-worn and much-thumbed edges bespoke frequent reference—“in this advertisement,” said he, handing the paper to Don Pedro, who at once read aloud,—

> *“Reward of £500.—Any person giving such information as may lead to the discovery of a young gentleman named Roland Cashel, who served for some years on board of various merchant vessels in the Levant, the African, and the West India trade, and was seen in New Orleans in the autumn of 18—, will receive the above reward. He was last heard of in Mexico, but it is believed that he has since entered the Chilian or Columbian service. He is well known in the Spanish Main, and in many of the cities on the coast, as the Caballero.”*

Cashel's face was one burning surface of scarlet as he heard the words of an advertisement which, in his ideas, at once associated him with runaway negroes and escaped felons; and it was with something like suffocation that he restrained his temper as he asked why, and by whose authority, he was thus described?

The little man looked amazed and confounded at a question which, it would seem, he believed his information had long since anticipated.

“Mr. Cashel wishes to know the object of this inquiry,—who sent you hither, in fact,” said Don Rica, beginning himself to lose patience at the slowness of the stranger's apprehension.

“Mr. Kennyfeck, of Dublin, the law agent, sent me.”

“Upon what grounds,—with what purpose?”

“To tell him that the suit is gained; that he is now the rightful owner of the whole of the Godfrey and Godfrey Browne estates, and lands of Ben Currig, Tulough Callaghan, Knock Swinery, Kildallooran, Tullimeoran, Ballycanderigan, with all the manorial rights, privileges, and perquisites appertaining to,—in a word, sir, for I see your impatience, to something, a mere trifle, under seventeen thousand per annum, not to speak of a sum, at present not exactly known, in bank, besides foreign bonds and securities to a large amount.”

While Mr. Simms recited this, with the practised volubility of one who had often gone over the same catalogue before, Cashel stood amazed, and almost stupefied, unable to grasp in his mind the full extent of his good fortune, but catching, here and there, glimpses of the truth, in the few circumstances of family history alluded to. Not so, Don Rica; neither confusion nor hesitation troubled the free working of his acute faculties, but he sat still, patiently watching the effect of this intelligence on the youth before him. At length, perceiving that he did not speak, he himself turned towards the stranger, and said,—

“You are, doubtless, a man of the world, sir, and need no apologies for my remarking that good news demands a scrutiny not less searching than its opposite. As the *friend* of Senhor Cashel,”—here he turned a glance beneath his heavy brows at the youth, who, however, seemed not to notice the word,—“as his friend, I repeat, deeply interested in whatever affects him, I may, perhaps, be permitted to ask the details of this very remarkable event.”

“If you mean the trial, sir,—or rather the trials, for there were three at bar, not to mention a suit in equity and a bill of discovery—”

“No, I should be sorry to trespass so far upon you,” interrupted Rica. “What I meant was something in the shape of an assurance,—something like satisfactory proof that this narrative, so agreeable to believe, should have all the foundation we wish it.”

“Nothing easier,” said Mr. Simms, producing an enormous black leather pocket-book from the breast of his coat, and opening it leisurely on the table before him. “Here are, I fancy, documents quite sufficient to answer all your inquiries. This is the memorandum of the verdict taken at Bath, with the note of the Attorney-General, and the point reserved, in which motion for a new trial was made.”

“What is this?” asked Cashel, now speaking for the first time, as he took up a small book of strange shape, and looked curiously at it.

“Check-book of the bank of Fordyce and Grange, Lombard Street,” replied Simms; “and here, the authority by which you are at liberty to draw on the firm for the balance already in their hands, amounting to—let me see “—here he rapidly set down certain figures on the corner of a piece of paper, and with the speed of lightning performed a sum in arithmetic—“the sum of one hundred and twenty-three thousand pounds seven and elevenpence, errors excepted.”

“This sum is mine!” cried Cashel, as his eyes flashed fire, and his dark cheek grew darker with excitement.

“It is only a moiety of your funded property,” said Simms. “Castellan and Biggen, the notaries, certify to a much larger amount in the Three per Cents.”

“And I am at liberty to draw at once for whatever amount I require?”

“Within that sum, certainly. Though, if you desire more, I 'm sure they 'll not refuse your order.”

“Leave us for a moment, sir,” said Cashel, in an accent whose trembling eagerness bespoke the agitation he labored under. “I have something of importance to tell this gentleman.”

“If you will step this way, sir,” said Don Rica, politely. “I have ordered some refreshment in this room, and I believe you will find it awaiting you.”

Mr. Simms gladly accepted the offered hospitality, and retired. The door was not well closed, when Don Rica Advanced with extended hands towards Cashel, and said:

“With all my heart I give you joy; such good fortune as this may, indeed, obliterate every little cloud that has passed between us, and make us once more the friends we have ever been.”

Cashel crossed his arms on his breast, and coldly replied, “I thank you. But a few hours back, and one-half as much kindness would have made a child of me in feeling. Now it serves only to arouse my indignation and my Anger.”

“Are you indeed so unjust, so ungenerous as this!” exclaimed Rica, in a tone whose anguish seemed wrung from the very heart.

“Unjust,—ungenerous! how?” cried Cashel, passionately.

“Both, sir,” said Rica, in a voice of almost commanding severity. “Unjust to suppose that in thwarting your last resolve to leave a service in which you have already won fame and honor, I was not your best and truest friend; that in offering every opposition in my power to such a hot-headed resolution, I was not consulting your best interests; ungenerous to imagine that I could feel any other sentiment than delight at your altered fortunes, I, who gave you all that was dearest and nearest to me on earth, my child,—my Maritaña.”

Had it not been for the passionate emotion of the last few words, Cashel's anger would have suggested a reply not less indignant than his question; but the sight of the hard, the stern, the unflinching Pedro Rica, as he now stood,—his face covered by his hands, while his strong chest heaved and throbbed with convulsive energy,—this was more than he felt prepared to look on. It was then only by a great effort he could say, “You seem to forget, Senhor Rica, how differently you interpreted this same contract but a few hours ago. You told me then—I think I hear the words still ringing in my ears—that you never thought of such an alliance; that your calculation took a less flattering estimate of my relationship.”

“I spoke in anger, Roland,—anger caused by your passionate resolve. Remember, too, that I preferred holding you to your contract, in preference to allowing you to redeem it by paying the penalty.”

“Easy alternative,” said Cashel, with a scornful laugh; “you scarcely expected a beggar, a ruined gambler, could pay seventy thousand doubloons. But times are changed, sir. I am rich now,—rich enough to double the sum you stipulated for. Although I well know the contract is not worth the pen that wrote it, I am willing to recognize it, at least so far as the forfeit is concerned.”

“My poor child, my darling Maritaña,” said Pedro, but in a voice barely audible. The words seemed the feeble utterance of a breaking heart.

“Sorrow not for her, senhor,” said Cashel, hastily. “She has no griefs herself on such a score. It is but a few hours since she told me so.”

Don Pedro was silent; but a mournful shake of the head and a still more mournful smile seemed to intimate his dissent.

“I tell you, sir, that your own scorn of my alliance was inferior to hers!” cried Cashel, in a voice of deep exasperation. “She even went so far as to say that she was a party to the contract only on the condition of its utter worthlessness. Do not, then, let me hear of regrets for *her*.”

“And you believe this?”

“I believe what I have myself witnessed.”

“What, then, if you be a witness to the very opposite? What if your ears reveal to you the evidence as strongly against, as now you deem it in favor of, your opinion?”

“I do not catch your meaning.”

“I would say, what if from Maritaña's own lips you heard an avowal of her affection, would you conceive yourself at liberty to redeem a contract to which you were only one party, and by mere money—I care not how large you call the sum—to reject the heart you have made your own?”

“No, no, this cannot be,” cried Cashel, struggling in a conflict of uncertainty and fear.

“I know my daughter, sir,” said Pedro, with an air of pride he well knew when and how to assume.

“If I but thought so,” muttered Cashel to himself; and low as the words were, Rica heard them.

“I ask you for nothing short of your own conviction,—the conviction of your own ears and eyes. You shall, if you please, remain concealed in her apartment while I question her on the subject of this attachment. If you ever supposed me base enough to coerce her judgment, you know *her* too well to believe it to be possible. But I will not insult myself by either supposition. I offer you this test of what I have said: accept it if you will, and with this condition, that you shall then be free to tear this contract, if you like, but never believe that I can barter the acknowledged affection of my child, and take money for her misery.”

Cashel was moved by the truth-like energy of the words he heard; the very aspect of emotion in one he had never seen save calm, cold, and self-possessed, had its influence on him, and he replied, “I consent.” So faintly, however, were the words uttered that he was obliged to repeat them ere they reached Don Pedro's ears.

“I will come for you after supper this evening,” said Rica. “Let me find you in the arbor at the end of the 'hacienda.' Till then, *adios*.” So saying, he motioned to Cashel to follow the stranger. Roland obeyed the suggestion, and they parted.

CHAPTER III. MR. SIMMS ON LIFE AT THE VILLA

He told them of men that cared not a d—n
For the law or the new police,
And had very few scruples for killing a lamb,
If they fancied they wanted the fleece.

Sir Peter's Lament

When Roland Cashel rejoined Mr. Simms, he found that worthy individual solacing himself for the privations of prairie travel, by such a breakfast as only Don Pedro's larder would produce. Surrounded by various dishes whose appetizing qualities might have suffered some impairment from a more accurate knowledge of their contents,—sucking monkeys and young squirrels among the number,—he tasted and sipped, and sipped again, till between the seductions of sangaree and Curaçoa punch, he had produced that pleasing frame of mind when even a less gorgeous scene than the windows of the villa displayed before him would have appeared delightful. Whether poor Mr. Simms's excess—and such we are compelled to confess it was—could be excused on the score of long fasting, or the consciousness that he had a right to some indulgence in the hour of victory, he assuredly revelled in the fullest enjoyment of this luxurious banquet, and, as Cashel entered the room, had reached the delicious dreamland of misty consciousness, where his late adventures and his former life became most pleasingly commingled, and jaguars, alligators, gambusinos, and rancheros, danced through his brain in company with Barons of the Exchequer and Masters in Chancery.

Elevated by the scenes of danger he had passed through,—some real, the far greater number imaginary,—into the dignity of a hero, he preferred rather to discuss prairie life and scenes in the Havannah, to dwelling on the topics so nearly interesting to Cashel. Nor was Roland a very patient listener to digressions, which, at every moment, left the high-road, and wandered into every absurd by-path of personal history.

“I always thought, sir,” said Simms, “and used to say it everywhere, too, what a splendid change for you this piece of good fortune would be, springing at a bound, as a body might say, from a powder-monkey into the wealth of a peer of the realm; but, egad, when I see the glorious life you lead hereabouts, such grog, such tipple, capital house, magnificent country, and, if I may pronounce from the view beneath my window, no lack of company, too! I begin to feel doubts about it.”

If Cashel was scarcely pleased at the allusions to himself in this speech, he speedily forgave them in his amusement at the commentary Simms passed on life at the villa; but yet would willingly have turned from either theme to that most engrossing one,—the circumstances of his altered fortune. Simms, however, was above such grovelling subjects; and, as he sat, glass in hand, gazing out upon the garden, where strolling parties came and went, and loitering groups lingered in the shade, he really fancied the scene a perfect paradise.

“Very hard to leave this, you'll find it!” exclaimed Simms. “I can well imagine life here must be rare fun. How jolly they do seem down there!” said he, with a half-longing look at the strange figures, who now and then favored him with a salute or a gesture of the hand, as they passed.

“Come, let us join them,” said Cashel, who, despairing of recalling him to the wished-for topic, was fain to consent to indulge the stranger's humor.

“All naval men?” asked Simms, as they issued forth into the lawn.

“Most of them are sailors!” said Cashel, equivocating.

“That's a fine-looking old fellow beneath the beech-tree, with the long Turkish pipe in his mouth. He's captain of a seventy-four, I take it.”

“He's a Greek merchantman,” whispered Cashel; “don't look so hard at him, for he observes you, and is somewhat irascible in temper, if stared at.”

“Indeed! I should n't have thought—”

“No matter, do as I tell you; he stabbed a travelling artist the other day, who fancied he was a fine study, and wished to make a drawing of his head.”

Simms's jaw dropped suddenly, and a sickly faintness stole over him, that even all his late potations could not supply courage enough to hear such a story unmoved.

“And who is he, sir, yonder?” asked he, as a youth, with no other clothing than a shirt and trousers, was fencing against a tree, practising, by bounds and springs, every imaginable species of attack and assault.

“A young Spaniard from the Basque,” said Cashel, coolly; “he has a duel to-morrow with some fellow in Barcelonetta, and he 's getting his wrist into play.” Then calling out, he said, “Ah, José, you mean to let blood, I see!”

“He's only a student,” said the youth, with an insolent toss of his head. “But who have we here?”

“A friend and countryman of mine, Mr. Simms,” said Cashel, introducing the little man, who performed a whole circuit round the young Spaniard in salutations.

“Come to join us?” asked the youth, surveying him with cool impertinence. “What in the devil's name hast thou done that thou shouldst leave the Old World at thy time of life? Virtuous living or hypocrisy ought to have become a habit with thee ere now, old boy, eh?”

“He's only on a visit,” said Cashel, laughing; “he can return to good society, not like all of us here.”

“Would you infer from that, sir—”

“Keep your temper, José,” said Cashel, with an indescribable assumption of insolent superiority; “or, if you cannot, keep your courage for the students, whose broils best suit you.”

“You presume somewhat too far on your skill with the rapier, Senhor Cashel,” said the other, but in a voice far less elevated than before.

“You can test the presumption at any moment,” said Cashel, insolently; “now, if you like it.”

“Oh, Mr. Cashel! oh, Mr. Roland! for mercy's sake, don't!” exclaimed Simms.

“Never fear,” interposed Cashel; “that excellent young man has better principles than you fancy, and never neglects, though he sometimes forgets, himself.”

So saying, he leisurely passed his arm beneath Simms's, and led him forward.

“Good day, Senhor Cashel,” said a tall and well-dressed man, who made his salutations with a certain air of distinction that induced Simms to inquire who and what he was.

“A general in the service of one of the minor States of Germany,” said Cashel; “a man of great professional skill, and, it is said, of great personal bravery.”

“And in what capacity is he here?”

“A refugee. His sentence to be shot was commuted to imprisonment for life. He made his escape from Spandau, and came here.”

“What was his crime?”

“Treachery,—the very basest one can well conceive; he commanded the fort of Bergstein, which the French attacked on their advance in the second Austrian campaign. The assailants had no heavy artillery, nor any material for escalade; but they had money, and gold proved a better battering-train than lead. Plittersdorf—that's the general's name—fired over their heads till he had expended all his ammunition, and then surrendered, with the garrison, as prisoners of war. The French, however, exchanged him afterwards, and he very nearly paid the penalty of his false faith.”

“And now is he shunned,—do people avoid him?”

“How should they? How many here are privileged to look down on a traitor? Is it the runaway merchant, the defaulting bank clerk, the filching commissary, that can say shame to one whose crime stands higher in the scale of offence? The best we can know of any one here is, that his rascality took an aspiring turn; and yet there are some fellows one would not like to think ill of. Here comes one such; and as I have something like business to treat of with him, I 'll ask you to wait for me, on this bench, till I join you.”

Without waiting for any reply, Cashel hastened forward, and taking off his hat, saluted a sallow-looking man of some eight-and-forty or fifty years of age, who, in a loose morning-gown, and with a book in his hand, was strolling along in one of the alleys.

“Ha, lieutenant,” said the other, as, lifting up his eyes, he recognized Cashel,—“making the most of these short hours of pleasure, eh? You 've heard the news, I suppose; we shall be soon afloat again.”

“So I've heard, captain!” replied Cashel; “but I believe we have taken our last cruise together.”

“How so, lad? *You* look well, and in spirits; and as for myself, I never felt in better humor than to try a bout with our friends on the western coast.”

“You have no friend, captain, can better like to hear you say so; and as for me, the chances of fortune have changed. I have discovered that I need neither risk head nor limbs for gold; a worthy man has arrived here to-day with tidings that I am the owner of a large estate, and more money than I shall well know how to squander, and so—”

“And so you 'll leave us for the land where men have learned that art? Quite right, Cashel. At your age a man can accustom himself to any and everything; at mine—a little later—at mine, for instance, the task is harder. I remember myself, some years ago, fancying that I should enjoy prodigiously that life of voluptuous civilization they possess in the Old World, where men's wants are met ere they are well felt, and hundreds—ay, thousands—are toiling and thinking to minister to the rich man's pleasures. It so chanced that I took a prize a few weeks after; she was a Portuguese barque with specie, broad doubloons and gold bars for the mint at Lisbon, and so I threw up my command and went over to France and to Paris. The first dash was glorious; all was new, glittering, and splendid; every sense steeped in a voluptuous entrancement; thought was out of the question, and one only could wonder at the barbarism that before seemed to represent life, and sorrow for years lost and wasted in grosser enjoyment. Then came a reaction, at first slight, but each day stronger; the headache of the debauch, the doubt of your mistress's fidelity, your friend's truth, your own enduring good fortune,—all these lie in wait together, and spring out on you in some gloomy hour, like Malays boarding a vessel at night, and crowding down from maintop and mizen! There is no withstanding; you must strike or fly. I took the last alternative, and, leaving my splendid quarters one morning at daybreak, hastened to Havre. Not a thought of regret crossed me; so quiet a life seemed to sap my very courage, and prey upon my vitals; that same night I swung once more in a hammock, with the rushing water beside my ear, and never again tried those dissipations that pall from their very excess; for, after all, no pleasure is lasting which is not dashed with the sense of danger.”

While he was yet speaking, a female figure, closely veiled, passed close to where they stood, and, without attracting any notice, slipped into Cashel's hand a slip of paper. Few as the words it contained were, they seemed to excite his very deepest emotion, and it was with a faltering voice he asked the captain by what step he could most speedily obtain his release from the service?

A tiresome statement of official forms was the answer; but Roland's impatience did not hear it out, as he said,—

“And is there no other way,—by gold, for instance?”

A cold shrug of the shoulders met this sally, and the captain said,—

“To corrupt the officials of the Government is called treason by our laws, and is punishable by death, just like desertion.” \

“Therefore is desertion the better course, as it involves none but one,” said Cashel, laughing, as he turned away.

CHAPTER IV. THE KENNYFECK HOUSEHOLD

Man, being reasonable, must dine out;
The best of life is but a dinner-party.

Amphytrion, Canto IV.

It was about half-past six of an autumn evening, just as the gray twilight was darkening into the gloom that precedes night, that a servant, dressed in the most decorous black, drew down the window-blinds of a large and splendidly furnished drawing-room of a house in Merrion Square, Dublin.

Having arranged certain portly deep-cushioned chairs into the orderly disorder that invites social groupings, and having disposed various other articles of furniture according to those notions of domestic landscape so popular at the present day, he stirred the fire and withdrew,—all these motions being performed with the noiseless decorum of a church.

A glance at the apartment, even by the fitful light of the coal-fire, showed that it was richly, even magnificently, furnished. The looking-glasses were immense in size, and framed with all that the most lavish art of the carver could display. The hangings were costly Lyons silk, the sofas, tables, and cabinets were all exquisite specimens of modern skill and elegance, while the carpet almost rose above the foot in the delicate softness of its velvet pile. A harp, a grand pianoforte, and several richly-bound and gilded volumes strewed about gave evidence of tastes above the mere voluptuous enjoyment of ease, and in one window stood an embroidery-frame, with its unfinished labor, from which the threads depended in that fashion, that showed it had lately occupied the fair hands of the artist.

This very enviable apartment belonged to Mr. Mountjoy Kennyfeck, the leading solicitor of Dublin, a man who, for something more than thirty years, had stood at the head of his walk in the capital, and was reputed to be one of its most respected and richest citizens. Mrs. Mountjoy Kennyfeck—neither for our own nor our reader's convenience dare we omit the “prénom”—was of a western family considerably above that of her liege lord and master in matter of genealogy, but whose quarterings had so far survived the family acres that she was fain to accept the hand of a wealthy attorney, after having for some years been the belle of her county, and the admired beauty of Castle balls and drawing-rooms.

It had been at first, indeed, a very hard struggle for the O'Haras to adopt the style and title of Kennyfeck, and poor Matilda was pitied in all the moods and tenses for exchanging the riotous feudalism of Mayo for the decorous quietude and wealthy *insouciance* of a Dublin mansion; and the various scions of the house did not scruple to express very unqualified opinions on the subject of her fall; but Time—that heals so much—Time and Mr. Kennyfeck's claret, of which they all drank most liberally during the visits to town, assuaged the rancor of these prejudices, and “Matty,” it was hinted, might have done worse; while some hardy spirit averred that “Kennyfeck, though not one of ourselves, has a great deal of the gentleman about him, notwithstanding.”

A word of Mr. Kennyfeck himself, and even a word will almost suffice. He was a very tall, pompous-looking personage, with a retiring forehead and a large prominent nose; he wore a profusion of powder, and always dressed in the most scrupulous black; he spoke little, and that slowly; he laughed never. It was not that he was melancholy or depressed; it seemed rather that his nature had been fashioned in conformity with the onerous responsibilities of his pursuit, and that he would have deemed any exhibition of mirthful emotion unseemly and unbecoming one who, so to say, was a kind of high priest in the temple of equity. Next to the Chancellor's he venerated the decisions of Mrs. Kennyfeck; after Mrs. Kennyfeck came the Master of the Rolls. This was his brief and simple faith, and it is astonishing in what simple rules of guidance men amass vast fortunes, and obtain the highest suffrages of civic honor and respect!

Mr. Kennyfeck's family consisted of two daughters: the eldest had been a beauty for some years, and, even at the period our tale opens, had lost few of her attractions. She was tall, dark-haired, and dark-eyed, with an air of what in the Irish capital is called “decided fashion” about her, but in less competent circles might have been called almost effrontery. She looked strangers very steadily in the face, spoke with a voice full, firm, and unabashed,—no matter what the subject, or who the audience,—and gave her opinions on people and events with a careless indifference to consequences that many mistook for high genius rebellious against control.

Olivia, three years younger than her sister, had just come out; and whether that her beauty—and she was very handsome—required a different style, or that she saw more clearly “the mistake” in Miss Kennyfeck's manner, but she took a path perfectly her own. She was tenderness itself; a delicacy too susceptible for this work-a-day world pervaded all she said and did,—a retiring sensitiveness that she knew, as she plaintively said, would never “let her be loved,” overlaid her nature, and made her the victim of her own feelings. Her sketches, everlasting Madonnas dissolved in tears; her music, the most mournful of the melodies; her reading, the most disastrously ending of modern poems,—all accorded with this tone, which, after all, scarcely consorted well with a very blooming cheek, bright hazel eyes, and an air and carriage that showed a full consciousness of her captivations, and no small reliance on her capacity to exercise them.

A brief interval after the servant left the room, the door opened, and Mrs. Kennyfeck entered. She was dressed for dinner, and if not exactly attired for the reception of a large company, exhibited, in various details of her costume, unequivocal signs of more than common care. A massive diamond brooch fastened the front of her dark velvet dress, and on her fingers several rings of great value glittered. Miss Kennyfeck, too, who followed her, was, though simply, most becomingly dressed; the light and floating material of her robe contrasting well with the more stately folds of the matronly costume of her mother.

“I am surprised they are not here before this,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, lying back in the deep recess of a luxurious chair, and placing a screen between herself and the fire. “Your father said positively on the 5th, and as the weather has been most favorable, I cannot understand the delay. The packets arrive at four, I think?”

“Yes, at four, and the carriage left this at three to fetch them.”

“Read the note again,—he writes so very briefly always. I 'm sure I wish the dear man would understand that I am not a client, and that a letter is not exactly all it might be, because it can be charged its thirteen-and-fourpence, or six-and-eightpence, whatever it is.”

Miss Kennyfeck took an open note from the chimney, and read:—

Dear Mrs. Kennyfeck,—We have made all the necessary arrangements in London, and shall leave on the 2nd, so as to arrive at Merrion Square by the 5th. Mr. C— would, I believe, rather have remained another day in town; but there was no possibility of doing so, as the “Chancellor” will sit on Tuesday. Love to the girls, and believe me, yours very truly,

M. Kennyfeck.

Invite Jones and Softly to meet us at dinner.

The clock on the mantelpiece now struck seven; and scarcely had the last chime died away as a carriage drove up to the door.

“Here they come, I suppose,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a half-sigh.

“No, mamma; it is a hackney-coach. Mr. Jones, or Mr. Softly, perhaps.”

“Oh, dear! I had forgotten them. How absurd it was to ask these people, and your father not here.”

The door opened, and the servant announced the Rev. Mr. Knox Softly. A very tall, handsome young man entered, and made a most respectful but cordial salutation to the ladies. He was in look and mien the *beau idéal* of health, strength, and activity, with bright, full blue eyes, and cheeks rosy as the May. His voice, however, was subdued to the dulcet accent of a low whisper, and his step, as he crossed the room, had the stealthy noiselessness of a cat's approach.

“Mr. Kennyfeck quite restored, I hope, from the fatigue of his journey?”

“We 've not seen him yet,” replied his lady, almost tartly. “He ought to have been here at four o'clock, and yet it's past seven.”

“I think I hear a carriage.”

“Another ———,” hackney, Miss Kennyfeck was about to say, when she stopped herself, and, at the instant, Counsellor Clare Jones was announced.

This gentleman was a rising light of the Irish bar, who had the good fortune to attract Mr. Kennyfeck's attention, and was suddenly transferred from the dull duties of civil bills and declarations to business of a more profitable kind. He had been somewhat successful in his college career,—carried off some minor honors; was a noisy member of a debating society; wrote leaders for some provincial papers; and with overbearing powers of impudence, and a good memory, was a very likely candidate for high forensic honor.

Unlike the first arrival, the Counsellor had few, if any, of the forms of good society in his manner or address. His costume, too, was singularly negligent; and as he ran a very dubious hand through a mass of thick and tangled hair on entering, it was easy to see that the greatest part of his toilet was then and there performed. The splashed appearance of his nether garments, and of shoes that might have done honor to snipe-shooting, also showed that the carriage which brought him was a mere ceremonial observance, and, as he would himself say, “the act of conveyance was a surplusage.”

Those who saw him in court pronounced him the most unabashed and cool of men; but there was certainly a somewhat of haste and impetuosity in his drawing-room manner that even a weak observer would have ascribed to awkwardness.

“How do you do, Mrs. Kennyfeck?—how do you do, Miss Kennyfeck?—glad to see you. Ah! Mr. Softly,—well, I hope? Is he come—has he arrived?” A shake of the head replied in the negative. “Very strange; I can't understand it. We have a consultation with the Solicitor-General to-morrow, and a meeting in chambers at four.”

“I should n't wonder if Mr. Cashel detained papa; he is very young, you know, and London must be so new and strange to him, poor lad!”

“Yes; but your father would scarce permit it,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, smartly. “I rather think it must have been some accidental circumstance; coaches are constantly upsetting, and post-horses cannot always be had.”

Mr. Knox Softly smiled benignly, as though to say in these suggestions Mrs. Kennyfeck was displaying a very laudable spirit of uncertainty as to the course of human events.

“Here 's Olivia,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as her younger daughter entered. “Let us hear her impressions,—full of forebodings, I don't doubt.”

Miss Olivia Kennyfeck performed her salutations to the guests with the most faultless grace, throwing into her courtesy to the curate a certain air of filial reverence very pretty to behold, and only a little objectionable on the score of the gentleman's youth and personal attractions; and then, turning to her mother said,—

“You are not uneasy, mamma, I hope? Though, after all, this is about the period of the equinox.”

“Nonsense, child! packets are never lost nowadays in the Irish Channel. It's merely some sudden freak of gayety,—some London distraction detains them. Will you touch that bell, Mr. Clare Jones? It is better to order dinner.”

There was something peremptory in the lady's tone and manner that rather damped the efforts at small-talk,—never very vigorous or well-sustained at these ante-dinner moments; nor were any of the party very

sorry when the servant announced that the soup was served.

CHAPTER V. HOW ROLAND BECAME ENTITLED TO THE GODFREY BROWNE PROPERTY.

The sherry iced,—the company still colder.

Bell: Images.

The party who now took their seats at table were not made of those ingredients whose admixture accomplishes a social meeting. Their natures, pursuits, and tastes were only sufficiently unlike to suggest want of agreement, without possessing the broad contrasts that invite conversation by their own contrariety. Besides this, there was a sense of constraint over every one, from the absence of the host and his expected guest; and lastly, the very aspect of a gorgeously decorated table, with vacant places, has always a chilling influence over those who sit around. A certain amount of propinquity is as essential to conversation as good roads and easy distances are a necessary condition to a visiting neighborhood. If you cannot address him or her who sits beside you without attracting the attention of the whole table to your remark, you are equally debarred from the commonplaces that induce table-talk, or the smart thing that cannot well be said too publicly.

The dinner here proceeded in very stately quietude, nor were the efforts of Mr. Jones to introduce a conversational spirit at all successful; indeed, that gifted gentleman would have willingly exchanged the unexceptionable cookery and admirably conditioned wine before him for the riotous freedom of a bar mess,—where sour sherry and nisi-prius jokes abounded, and Father Somebody's song was sure to give the scene a conviviality that only yielded its fascination to blind hookey or spoiled five.

Far otherwise the curate. The angelic smile that sat upon his features mechanically; his low, soft, liquid voice; his gentle gestures; and even his little sallies of pleasantry, were in perfect accordance with the decorous solemnity of a scene where the chink of a cut decanter, or the tingling sound of a silver dish-cover, were heard above the stillness of the company.

If, then, Mr. Knox Softly accompanied the ladies to the door, and followed them out with his eyes with an expression beaming regretfulness at their departure, the Counsellor, very differently minded, surrounded himself with an array of the dessert-dishes and decanters, and prepared to discuss his wine and walnuts to his perfect contentment.

“You have never met this Mr. Roland Cashel, I believe?” said Mr. Softly, as he filled a very large claret glass and tasted it enjoyably.

“Never,” replied Jones, whose teeth were busily engaged in smashing almonds and filberts, in open defiance of a tray of silver nutcrackers before him. “I don't think he has been in Ireland since a mere child, and very little in England.”

“Then his recovery of the estate was quite unexpected?”

“Mere accident Kennyfeck came upon the proofs when making some searches for a collateral claim. The story is very short. This lad's father, whose name was Godfrey Cashel, was a poor lieutenant in the 81st, and quartered at Bath, when he chanced to discover that a rich old bachelor there, a certain Godfrey Browne, was a distant relation of his mother. He lost no time in making his acquaintance and explaining the relationship, which, however, brought him no more substantial benefit than certain invitations to dinner and whist parties, where the unfortunate lieutenant lost his half-crowns.

“At length a note came one morning inviting him to breakfast and to 'transact a little matter of business.' Poor Godfrey read the words with every commentary that could flatter his hopes, and set out in better spirits than he had known for many a year before. What, then, was his dismay to discover that he was only wanted to witness the old gentleman's will!—a very significant proof that he was not to benefit by its provisions.

“With a very ill-repressed sigh, the poor lieutenant threw a glance over the half-opened leaves, where leasehold, and copyhold, and freehold, and every other 'hold' figured among funded property, consols, and reduced annuities,—with money lent on mortgages, shares in various companies, and What not,—a list only to be equalled by the long catalogue of those 'next of kin,' who, to the number of seventeen, were mentioned as reversionary heirs.

“'You are to sign your name here, Mr. Cashel,' said the solicitor, pointing to a carefully-scratched portion of the parchment, where already the initials were pencilled for his guidance.

“'Faith! and it's at the other side of the book I'd rather see it,' said the lieutenant, with a sigh.

“'Not, surely, after seventeen others!' exclaimed the astonished attorney.

“'Even so,—a chance is better than nothing.'

“'What's that he's saying?' interposed the old man, who sat reading his newspaper at the fire. The matter was soon explained by the attorney, and when he finished, Cashel added: 'That's just it; and I'm to sail for the Cape on the 4th of next month, and if you 'll put me down among the rest of the fellows, I 'll send you the best pipe of Constantia you ever tasted, as sure as my name is Godfrey Cashel.'

“The old man threw his spectacles up on his forehead, wiped his eyes, and then, replacing his glasses, took a deliberate survey of the poor lieutenant who had proposed such a very 'soft' bargain. 'Eh! Clinchet,' said he to the attorney, 'can we do this for him?'

“'Nothing easier, sir; let the gentleman come in last, as residuary legatee, and it alters nothing.'

“'I suppose you count on your good luck,' said old Browne, grinning.

“'Oh, then, it's not from my great experience that way.' said Cashel. 'I 've been on the “Duke's list” for promotion seventeen years already, and, for all I see, not a bit nearer than the first day; but there's no reason my poor boy should be such an unfortunate devil. Who knows but fortune may make amends to him one of these days? Come, sir, is it a bargain?'

“'To be sure. I 'm quite willing; only don't forget the Constantia. It's a wine I like a glass of very well indeed, after my dinner.'

“The remainder is easily told; the lieutenant sailed for the Cape, and kept his word, even though it cost him a debt that mortgaged his commission. Old Browne gave a great dinner when the wine arrived, and the very first name on the list of legatees, his nephew, caught a fever on his way home from it, and died in three weeks.

“Kennyfeck could tell us, if he were here, what became of each of them in succession; four were lost, out yachting, at once; but, singular as it may seem, in nineteen years from the day of that will, every life lapsed, and, stranger still, without heirs; and the fortune has now descended to poor Godfrey Cashel's boy, the lieutenant himself having died in the West Indies, where he exchanged into a native regiment. That is the whole story; and probably in a romance one would say that the thing was exaggerated, so much more strange is truth than fiction.”

“And what kind of education did the young man get?”

“I suppose very little, if any. So long as his father lived, he of course held the position of an officer's son,—poor, but in the rank of gentleman. After that, without parents,—his mother died when he was an infant,—he was thrown upon the world, and, after various vicissitudes, became a cabin boy on board of a merchantman; then he was said to be a mate of a vessel in the African trade employed on the Gold Coast,—just as probably a slaver; and, last of all, he was lieutenant in the Columbian navy,—which, I take it, is a very good name for piracy. It was in the Havannah we got a trace of him, and I assure you, strange as it may sound, Kennyfeck's agent had no small difficulty in persuading him to abandon that very free-and-easy service, to assume the rights and immunities of a very large property.

“Kennyfeck was to meet him on his arrival in England, about ten days ago, and they spent a few days in London, and were—But hark! there comes a carriage now,—yes, I know the step of his horses; here they are!”

CHAPTER VI. A FRACAS IN THE BETTING-RING.

Ne'er mind his torn, ill-fashioned doublet,
Beshrew me! if he 's not a pretty man.

Don Lopez.

The movement and bustle in the hall showed that Mr. Jones's surmise was correct; for scarcely had the carriage stopped than the street-door was flung wide open, and Mr. Pearse, the butler, followed by a strong detachment of bright-liveried menials, stood bowing their respectful compliments to their master and his guest. As Mr. Kennyfeck entered the house, he walked slowly and with difficulty, endeavoring at the same time to avoid all scrutiny of his appearance as he passed through the crowded hall; but, although his hat was pressed firmly over his brows, it could not entirely conceal a very suspiciously tinted margin around one eye; while the care with which he defended his left arm, and which he carried in his waistcoat, looked like injury there also.

He, however, made an attempt at a little sprightliness of manner, as, shaking his companion's hand with cordial warmth, he said,—

“Welcome to Ireland, Mr. Cashel. I hope I shall very often experience the happiness of seeing you under this roof.”

The person addressed was a remarkably handsome young man, whose air and carriage bespoke, however, much more the confidence that results from a sense of personal gifts, and a bold, daring temperament, than that more tempered ease which is the consequence of fashionable breeding.

Mr. Kennyfeck's felicitations on their arrival were scarce uttered ere Cashel had sufficiently recovered from his surprise at the unexpected magnificence of the house to make any reply; for, although as yet advanced no further than the hall, a marble group by Canova, a centre lamp of costly Sèvres, and some chairs of carved ebony served to indicate the expensive style of the remainder of the mansion.

While Cashel, then, muttered his acknowledgments, he added to himself, but in a voice scarcely less loud,—

“Devilish good crib, this, Master Kennyfeck.”

“Pearse,” said the host, “is dinner ready?”

“My mistress and the young ladies have dined, sir; but Mr. Jones and Mr. Softly are in the parlor.”

“Well, let us have something at once; or, would you prefer, Mr. Cashel, making any change in your dress first?”

“I say dinner above all things,” said the youth, disencumbering himself of a great Mexican mantle.

“Perfectly right; quite agree with you,” said Kennyfeck, endeavoring to assume a little of his guest's dash; “and here we are. Ah, Jones, how d'ye do? Mr. Cashel, this is my friend Mr. Jones. Mr. Softly, very glad to see you. Mr. Softly.—Mr. Cashel. Don't stir, I beg; keep your places. We 'll have a bit of dinner here, and join you at your wine afterwards. Meanwhile, I 'll just step upstairs, and be back again in a moment; you'll excuse me,

I 'm sure.”

“Oh, certainly,” replied Cashel, who appeared as if he could excuse anything with a better grace than the ceremonious slowness of the butler's arrangements.

There was a pause of a few seconds as Mr. Kennyfeck left the room, broken, at last, by Mr. Jones asking if they had not been detained by contrary winds.

“No, I think not; I fancy the weather was pretty average kind of weather. Had we been expected here earlier?”

“Yes; Mrs. Kennyfeck mentioned to me Monday, and afterwards Tuesday, as the very latest day for your arrival.”

Cashel made no remark; and, soon after, Mr. Pearse's entrance with the soup put an end to the conversation. “Mr. Kennyfeck desired me to say, sir, not to wait for him; he'll be down presently.”

“What do you call this soup?”

“Mock-turtle, sir.”

“Rather too much Madeira in it for my taste; but that sha' n't prevent my having a glass of wine. Will you permit me, gentlemen?”

The parties bowed policy; but still the intercourse did not progress; and in the exchanged glances of those at the large table, and the sidelong looks Cashel occasionally threw towards them, it was easy to see that neither party had made way with the other.

“I fear Kennyfeck is not going to make his appearance,” said Cashel, as he seemed to hesitate about proceeding with his dinner.

“I should n't advise you waiting,” cried Jones; “the fish is growing cold.”

“I suspect Mr. Kennyfeck is fatigued by his journey, sir,” said Mr. Softly, in his most bland of voices; “I thought I remarked it by his face.”

“Oh, did you?” said Cashel, with a very peculiar look of knowingness.

“Yes; you are aware, Mr. Cashel,” interrupted Jones, “our friend is n't much used to that kind of thing. I suppose it's some years since he has had so much knocking about as in these last few days.”

“I fancy so,” said Cashel, with a significant smile that puzzled the lawyer exceedingly, and he ate on without making a further remark.

The two or three efforts made by Jones and Softly to converse together were, like nearly all similar attempts at perfect ease and self-possession, complete failures, and gradually slided down into monosyllables, and then to silence; when Cashel, who seemed to be enjoying his venison and Bordeaux with perfect zest, leaned back in his chair and said, “What kind of place is this same good city of Dublin? What goes forward here?”

As this question was more directly addressed to Jones, that gentleman prepared himself, not unwillingly, for an elaborate reply.

“Dublin, Mr. Cashel,” said he, pretty much in the same tone he would have used in opening an address to a jury,—

“Dublin is a city which, from a great variety of causes, will always be exposed to every variable and opposing criticism. To begin: it is provincial—”

“Is it slow?” interrupted Cashel, who had listened to this exordium with palpable signs of impatience.

“If you mean, has it its share of those habits of dissipation, those excesses so detrimental alike to health and fortune—”

“No, no; I merely ask what goes on here,—how do people amuse themselves?” said Cashel, fencing to avoid any very lengthened exposure of the other's views.

“They dine, dance, drink tea, talk politics and scandal, like other folk; but if you ask, what are the distinguishing features of the society—”

“What kind of sport does the country afford?” interrupted Roland, somewhat unceremoniously.

“Hunting, shooting, fishing, coursing—”

“What do you mean by hunting,—a fox, is it?”

“Yes, fox-hunting and hare-hunting, too.”

A very insolent laugh was Cashel's answer, as, turning to Mr. Softly, he said, “Well, I own, all this does strike me as a very tiresome kind of life. Do you like Ireland, sir?”

“I feel a deep interest in it,” said the curate, with a most solemn manner.

“Yes, that's all very well; but do you like it?”

“Were it not for its darkness,” said Mr. Softly, sighing, “I should say I liked it.”

“Darkness,” echoed Cashel,—“darkness; why, hang it, you are pretty far north here. What is the darkness you speak of?”

“I alluded to popery, sir,—to the obscuring mists of superstition and ignorance,” replied Mr. Softly, with a kind of energetic timidity that made himself blush.

“Oh—I perceive—yes—I understand,” muttered Cashel, who certainly felt all the awkwardness of a man caught in a lie.

“We have a very agreeable society among the bar men,” said Jones, returning to the charge in a new direction; “a great deal of pleasantry and fun goes on at our messes.”

“Droll fellows, I suppose,” said Cashel, carelessly. “I remember I knew a lawyer once; he was a mate of a small clipper in the African trade,—mischievous kind of devil he was too,—always setting the slaves by the ears, and getting money for settling the differences. They played him a good trick at last.” Here he laughed heartily at the recollection for several minutes.

“What was it?” asked Jones, in some curiosity to learn how the bar was respected on the banks of the Niger.

“They painted him black and sold him at Cuba,” said Cashel, who once more broke out into laughter at the excellence of the jest.

Jones's and Softly's eyes met with a most complete accordance in the glances exchanged. Meanwhile, Cashel, drawing his chair towards the larger table, filled his glass and proceeded to smash his walnuts with all the easy contentment of a man who had dined well.

“I perceive Mr. Kennyfeck is not likely to join us,” said Softly, with a half suggestive look towards the door.

“Tired, perhaps,” said Jones, affecting what he opined to be the cool indifference of the highest fashion.

“More than that, I suspect,” said Cashel, with a most unfeigned carelessness. “Did you remark his eye?”

“Yes!” exclaimed both together. “What could that mean?”

“A slight bit of a scrimmage we had on the way from town; a—”

“Mr. Kennyfeck engaged in a row!” cried Softly, almost incredible at the tidings.

“Yes. I fancy that is about the best word for it,” said Cashel, sipping his wine. “I suppose one ought not to mention these kind of things; but of course they are safe with you. They 'll never go further, I am certain.”

“Oh, never,—not a syllable,” chimed in the two.

“Well, then, on our way here, I learned that there were to be races a few miles from Coventry, and as I saw our friend Kennyfeck had no fancy for the sight, I just slipped a few half-crowns into the postboy's hand, and told him to drive there instead of taking the Liverpool road. Away we went at a good pace, and in less than an hour reached the course. I wish you saw the old gentleman's face when he awoke from a sound nap, and saw the grand stand, with its thousand faces, all in a row, and the cords, the betting-ring, and the whole circumstance of a race-ground. By good luck, too, the sharp jerk of our pull-up smashed a spring, and so we had nothing for it but to leave the chaise and wait till it could be repaired. While my servant was away in search of some kind of a drag or other, to go about the field,—there was no walking, what with the crowd and the press of horses, not to speak of the mud that rose over the ankles,—we pushed on,—that is, I did, with a stout grip of Kennyfeck's arm, lest he should escape,—we pushed on, into the ring. Here there was rare fun going forward, every fellow screaming out his bets, and booking them as fast as he could. At first, of course, the whole was all ancient Greek to me. I neither knew what they meant by the 'favorite,' or 'the odds,' or 'the field;' but one somehow always can pick up a thing quickly, if it be but 'game,' and so, by watching here, and listening there, I managed to get a kind of inkling of the whole affair, and by dint of some pushing and elbowing, I reached the very centre of the ring, where the great dons of the course were betting together.

“'Taurus even against the field,' cried one.

“'Taurus against the field,' shouted another.

“And this same cry was heard on every side.

“'Give it in fifties,—hundreds if you like better,' said a young fellow mounted on a smart-looking pony, to his friend, who appeared to reflect on the offer. 'Come, hurry on, man. Let's have a bet, just to give one an interest in the race.' The other shook his head, and the first went on, 'What a slow set, to be sure! Is no one willing to back the field, even? Come, then, here 's a hundred pound to any man who 'll take the field against Taurus, for two thousand.'

“'Let me have your cob,' said I, 'and I 'll take the bet.'

“He turned round in his saddle, and stared at me as if I were something more or less than human, while a very general roar of laughing ran around the entire circle.

“'Come away, come away at once,' whispered Kennyfeck, trembling with fright.

“'Yes, you had better move off, my friend,' said a thickset, rough-looking fellow, in a white coat.

“'What say you to five thousand, sir; does that suit your book?' cried the young fellow to me, in a most insolent tone.

“'Oh, let him alone, my Lord,' said another. 'Take no notice of him.'

“'I say, Grindle,' cried a tall thin man with moustaches, 'who let these people inside the ring?'

“'They forces their way, my Lud,' said a little knocker-kneed creature, in a coat four times too big for him, 'and I says to Bill, de—pend upon it, Bill, them's the swell mob.'

“The words were scarcely out of the fellow's mouth when a general cry of the 'swell mob' resounded on every side, and at once they closed upon us, some pushing, others elbowing, driving, and forcing, so that what with the dense crowd, and the tight hold Kennyfeck now kept of me, I was pinioned, and could do nothing. At last, by a vigorous twist, I shook them off from me, and laid two of the foremost at my feet. This I did with a Mexican trick I saw they knew nothing about. You first make a feint at the face, and then, dropping on the knee, seize the fellow by both legs, and hurl him back on his head,—just stand up, I 'll not hurt you.”

“Thank you,—I understand the description perfectly,” said Mr. Softly, pale with terror at the proposed experiment.

“Well, the remainder is soon told. They now got in upon us, and of course I need n't say we got confoundedly thrashed. Kennyfeck was tumbled about like a football; every one that had nothing else to do had a kick at him, and there 's no saying how it might have ended had not a certain Sir George Somebody recognized our poor friend, and rescued him. I 'm not quite sure that I was quite myself about this time; Kennyfeck has some story of my getting on some one's horse, and riding about the course in search of the originators of the fray. The end of it, however, was, we reached Liverpool with sorer bones than was altogether pleasant, and although, when Kennyfeck went to bed, I went to the theatre, the noise only increased my headache, and it needed a good night's sleep to set me all right again.”

“Mr. Kennyfeck taken for one of the swell mob!” exclaimed Softly, with a sort of holy horror that seemed to sum up his whole opinion of the narrative.

“Very bad, was n't it?” said Cashel, pushing the wine past; “but he's a capital fellow,—took the whole thing in such good part, and seems only anxious that the story should n't get abroad. Of course I need n't repeat my

caution on that subject?”

“Oh, certainly not! Shall we join the ladies?” said Mr. Jones, as he surveyed his whiskers and arranged the tie of his cravat before the glass.

“I'm quite ready,” said Cashel, who had quietly set down in his own mind that the ladies of the Kennyfeck family were a kind of female fac-simile of the stiff-looking old attorney, and, therefore, felt very few qualms on the subject of his disordered and slovenly appearance.

Scarcely had Cashel entered the drawing-room than he found his hand grasped in Mr. Kennyfeck's, when, with a most dulcet acccent, he said,—

“I knew you 'd forgive me,—I told Mrs. Kennyfeck you'd excuse me for not joining you at dinner; but I was really so fatigued. Mrs. Kennyfeck—Mr. Cashel. My daughter, Mr. Cashel. My daughter Olivia. Well, now, have you dined heartily?—I hope my friends here took care of you.”

“I thank you. I never dined better,—only sorry not to, have had your company. We have our apologies to make, Mrs. Kennyfeck, for not being earlier; but, of course, you 've heard that we did our very utmost.”

“Oh, yes, yes! I explained everything,” interrupted Kennyfeck, most eager to stop a possible exposure. “Mrs. Kennyfeck knows it all.”

Although Cashel's manner and address were of a kind to subject him to the most severe criticism of the ladies of the Kennyfeck family, they evinced the most laudable spirit in their hospitable and even cordial reception of him, Mrs. Kennyfeck making room for him to sit on the sofa beside her,—a post of honor that even the Castle aides-de-camp only enjoyed by great favor; while the daughters listened with an attention as flattering to *him* as it was galling to the other two guests.

Mr. Softly, however, resigned himself to this neglect as to a passing cloud of forgetfulness, and betook himself to the columns of the “Morning Post” for consolation, occasionally glancing over the margin to watch the laughing group around the fire. As for Jones; Mr. Kennyfeck had withdrawn with that gentleman into a window, where the tactics of some bill in equity engaged their attention,—manifestly, however, to the young barrister's discontent, as his frequent stolen looks towards the ladies evidenced.

It was the first time that the Kennyfecks had ever deigned to listen to any one whose claims to a hearing rested on higher grounds than the light gossip and small-talk of the capital, the small fashionable chit-chat of a provincial city, and which bears the same resemblance to the table-talk of the greater metropolis as do larks to ortolans, when disguised in the same kind of sauce; only those accustomed to the higher flavor being able to detect the difference. It was, then, with as much surprise as pleasure that they found themselves listening to the narratives in which not a single noble or lordly personage figured, nor one singular incident occurred reflecting on the taste, the wealth, or the morals of their acquaintance. It was no less a novelty, too, for Cashel to find any one a listener to descriptions of scenes and habits in whose familiarity he saw nothing strange or remarkable; so that when the young ladies, at first attracted by mere curiosity, became gradually more and more interested in his stories, his flattered vanity gave new warmth to an enthusiasm always ardent, and he spoke of prairie life and adventure with a degree of eloquence and power that might have captivated even less indulgent auditors.

It was, besides, the first time that they ever had seen great wealth unallied with immense pretension. Cashel, perhaps from character, or that his accession to fortune was too recent, and his consequent ignorance of all that money can do, whichever of these the cause, was certainly the most unassuming young man they had ever met. In comparison with him, the aides-de-camp were princes of the blood; even Mr. Jones put forth a degree of pretension on the score of his abilities, which stood in strong contrast with the unaffected and simple modesty of Roland Cashel.

It is but fair to all parties to add that dark and flashing eyes, shaded by long and drooping lashes, a high and massive forehead; a brown, almost Spanish complexion, whose character was increased by a pair of short coal-black moustaches,—did not detract from the merit of tales, which, as they chiefly related to feats of personal daring and address, were well corroborated by the admirable symmetry and handsome proportions of the relater.

Story followed story. Now the scene lay in the low and misty swamps of the Niger, where night resounds with the dull roar of the beasts of prey, and the heavy plash of the sluggish alligator on the muddy shore; now, it was in the green wood of the Spice Islands, amid an atmosphere scented with perfume, and glittering with every gorgeous hue of plumage and verdure. At one moment he would describe a chase at sea, with all its high and maddening excitement, as each new vicissitude of success or failure arose; and then he would present some little quiet picture of shore life in a land where the boundless resources of Nature supply, even anticipate, the wants and luxuries of man.

Whatever the interest, and occasionally it rose to a high pitch, that attended his narratives of danger and daring, the little sketches he gave from time to time of the domestic life of these far-away people, seemed to attract the most delighted attention of his fair hearers, particularly where his narrative touched upon the traits, whether of beauty, dress, or demeanor, that distinguish the belles of New Spain.

“How difficult,” said Miss Kennyfeck, “I could almost say, how impossible, to leave a land so abounding in the romance of life, for all the dull and commonplace realities of European existence.”

“How hard to do so without leaving behind the heart that could feel such ecstasies,” murmured Olivia, with a half-raised eyelid, and a glance that made Cashel flush with delight.

“How shall we ever make Ireland compensate you for quitting so lovely a country!” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a smile rarely accorded to anything lower than a viscount.

“We have a Mexican proverb, madam,” said Cashel, gayly, “which says, 'Wherever the sun shines, bright eyes shine also.' But enough of these tiresome memories, in which my egotism will always involve me. Shall we have a fandango?”

“I don't know it; I never saw it danced.”

“Well, the manolo, then.”

“Nor that either,” said both girls, laughing.

“Well, will you learn? I'll teach you the manolo. It's very simple. If you 'll play the air, Miss Kennyfeck,—it runs thus.” Here he opened the pianoforte, and, after a few chords, struck with a masterly finger, he played a little Spanish dance; but with a spirit of execution, and in such an exciting character of time and measure, that a general exclamation of delight broke from the whole room, Mr. Jones himself forgetting all rivalry, and Mr. Softly laying down his newspaper to listen, and for a moment carried away by the fascination of the spirit-stirring melody.

“That is the manolo; come, now, and let me teach you, first the air, and then the dance.”

“Oh, I never could succeed to give it that character of bold and haughty defiance it breathes from you,” said Miss Kennyfeck.

“Nay, nay, a man's hand is always so rude and heavy, it needs the taper finger of a lady,”—here Cashel bent, and kissed the hand he held, but with such a deference and respect in the salute, that deprived the action, so novel to our eyes, of any appearance of a liberty,—“of a lady,” he resumed, “to impart the ringing brilliancy of the saucy manolo.”

“Then play it over once more, and I 'll try,” said Miss Kennyfeck, who was a most accomplished musician, and had even already caught up the greater part of the air.

Cashel obeyed, and again the plaudits followed even more enthusiastically than the first time. With a precision that called forth many a hearty “bravo” from Roland, Miss Kennyfeck played over the air, catching up all the spirit of its transitions from gay to plaintive, and from tender to a strain bold, daring, and energetic.

“Now for the dance,” exclaimed Cashel, eagerly, as he busied himself in removing chairs and pushing back sofas. “Will you be kind enough to assist me with this table?”

Mr. Softly, the gentleman thus addressed, rose to comply, his face exhibiting a very amusing struggle between shame and astonishment at the position he occupied. The space cleared, Roland took Olivia's hand, and led her forward with an air of exceeding deference.

“Now, Miss Kenny feck, the step is the easiest thing in the world. It goes so,—one—two; one—two—three; and then change—Exactly, quite right; you have it perfectly. This is, as it were, an introduction to the dance; but the same step is preserved throughout, merely changing its time with the measure.”

It would be as impossible to follow as it would be unfair to weary the reader with the lesson which now began; and yet we would like to linger on the theme, as our memory brings up every graceful gesture and every proud attitude of the fascinating manolo. Representing, as it does, by pantomimic action a little episode of devotion, in which pursuit and flight, entreaty, rejection, seductive softness, haughty defiance, timid fear, and an even insolent boldness alternate and succeed each other, all the movements which expressive action can command, whether of figure or feature, are called forth. Now, it is the retiring delicacy of shrinking, timid loveliness, half hoping, halt fearing, to be pursued; now the stately defiance of haughty beauty, demanding homage as its due. At one moment the winning seductiveness that invites pursuit, and then, sudden as the lightning, the disdain that repels advance.

Not the least interesting part of the present scene was to watch how Olivia, who at first made each step and gesture with diffidence and fear, as she went on, became, as it were, seized with the characteristic spirit of the measure; her features varying with each motive of the music, her eyes at one instant half closed in dreamy languor, and at the next flashing in all the brilliancy of conscious beauty. As for Roland, forgetting, as well he might, all his functions as teacher, he moved with the enthusiastic spirit of the dance,—his rapturous gaze displaying the admiration that fettered him; and when at last, as it were, yielding to long-proved devotion, she gave her hand, it needed the explanation of its being a Mexican fashion to excuse the ardor with which he pressed it to his lips.

Mrs. Kennyfeck's applause, however, was none the less warm; and if any of the company disapproved, they prudently said nothing,—even Mr. Softly, who only evidenced his feeling by a somewhat hasty resumption of the “Morning Post,” while the elder sister, rising from the piano, whispered, as she passed her sister, “Bad jockey-ship, Livy, dear, to make fast running so early.”

“And that is the—What d'ye call it, Mr. Cashel?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck.

“The manolo, madam. It is of Italian origin, rather than Spanish,—Calabrian, I fancy; but, in Mexico, it has become national, and well suits the changeful temper of our Spanish belles, and the style of their light and floating costume.”

“Yes, I suspect it has a better effect with short drapery than with the sweeping folds of our less picturesque dress,” said Miss Kennyfeck, who, for reasons we must not inquire, took a pleasure in qualifying her approval.

“I never saw it appear more graceful,” said Cashel, with a blunt abruptness far more flattering than a studied compliment.

Olivia blushed; Mrs. Kennyfeck looked happy, and the elder sister bit her lips, and threw up her eyebrows, with an expression we cannot attempt to render in words.

“May I not have the honor of introducing you to the manolo?” said Cashel, presenting himself before her with a deep bow.

“Thank you, I prefer being a spectator; besides, we could have no music,—my sister does not play.”

Olivia blushed; and, in her hasty look, there was an expression of gently conveyed reproach, as though to say, “This is unfair.”

“Do you like music, Mr. Cashel?” continued Miss Kennyfeck, who saw the slight cloud of disappointment that crossed Roland's features. “Oh, I 'm certain you do, and I know you sing!”

“Yes,” said Cashel, carelessly, “as every one sings in that merry land I come from; but I fear the wild carollings of a ranchero would scarce find acceptance in the polished ears of Europe.”

“What are the melodies like, then?” asked Miss Kennyfeck, throwing into the question a most eager interest.

“You shall hear, if you like,” said Roland, taking up a guitar, and striking a few full chords with a practised

hand. “This is one of the war-songs;” and without further preface he began. Had he even been less gifted than he was as to voice and musical taste, there was enough in the bold and manly energy of his manner, in the fiery daring of his dark eyes, and the expressive earnestness of his whole bearing, to attract the admiration of his hearers. But, besides these advantages, he was not unskilled in the science of music, and even made so poor an instrument a full and masterly accompaniment, imitating, as few but Spaniards can do, the distant sound of drums, the dropping fire of cannon, the wild abrupt changes of battle, and the low plaintive sounds of suffering and defeat; so that, as he concluded, the whole character of the performance had ceased to be regarded as a mere musical display, but had the absolute effect of a powerfully told story.

The Kennyfecks had often been called on in society to award their praises to amateur performances, in whose applause, be it said, *en passant*, a grateful sense of their being concluded always contributes the enthusiasm; but real admiration and pleasure now made them silent, and as their eyes first turned on the singer and then met, there was a world of intelligence in that one quiet, fleeting glance that revealed more of secret thought and feeling than we, as mere chroniclers of events, dare inquire into.

Whether it was that this silence, prolonged for some seconds, suggested the move, or that Mr. Jones began to feel how ignoble a part he had been cast for in the whole evening's entertainment, but he rose to take his leave at once, throwing into his manner a certain air of easy self-sufficiency, with which in the “courts” he had often dismissed a witness under cross-examination, and by a mere look and gesture contrived to disparage his testimony.

None, save Miss Kennyfeck, perceived his tactic. She saw it, however, and, with a readiness all her own, replied by a slight elevation of the eyebrow. Jones saw his “signal acknowledged,” and went home contented. Poor man, he was not the first who has been taken into partnership because his small resources were all “ready,” and who is ejected from the firm when wider and grander speculations are entered on. I am not certain either that he will be the last!

Mr. Softly next withdrew, his leave-taking having all the blended humility and cordiality of his first arrival; and now Mr. Kennyfeck was awakened out of a very sound nap by his wife saying in his ear, “Will you ask Mr. Cashel if he 'll take a biscuit and a glass of wine before he retires?”

The proposition was politely declined, and after a very cordial hand-shaking with all the members of the family, Cashel said his good-night and retired.

CHAPTER VII. PEEPS BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

Ich möchte ihn im Schlafrock sehen.

Der Reisende Teufel.

(I 'd like to see him in his robe-de-chambre.)

(The Travelling Devil.)

There has always appeared to us something of treachery, not to speak of indelicacy, in the privileges authors are wont to assume in following their characters into their most secret retirement, watching there their every movement and gesture, overhearing their confidential whisperings,—nay, sometimes sapping their very thoughts, for the mere indulgence of a prying, intrusive curiosity.

For this reason, highly appreciating, as we must do, the admirable wit of the “Diable Boiteux,” and the pleasant familiar humor of the “Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin,” we never could entirely reconcile ourselves to the means by which such amusing views of life were obtained, while we entertain grave doubts if we,—that is, the world at large,—have any right to form our judgments of people from any other evidence than what is before the public. It appears to us somewhat as if, that following Romeo or Desdemona into the Green-room, we should be severe upon the want of keeping which suggested the indulgence of a cigar or a pot of porter, and angry at the high-flown illusions so grossly routed and dispelled.

“Act well your part; there all the honour lies,” said the poet moralist; but it's rather hard to say that you are to “act” it off as well as on the stage; and if it be true that no man is a hero to his valet, the valet should say nothing about it; and this is the very offence we think novel-writers commit, everlastingly stripping off the decorations and destroying the illusions they take such trouble to create, for little else than the vain boastfulness of saying, See, upon what flimsy materials I can move you to sentiments of grief, laughter, pity, or contempt. Behold of what vulgar ingredients are made up the highest aspirations of genius,—the most graceful fascinations of beauty.

Having denounced, by this recorded protest, the practice, and disclaiming, as we must do, all desire to benefit by its enjoyment, we desire our reader, particularly if he be of the less worthy gender, to feel a due sense of the obligation he owes us, if we claim his company for half an hour on such a voyage of discovery. Step softly, there is no excuse for noise, as the stair-carpet is thick, and not a sound need be heard. Gently, as you pass that green door,—that is the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Kennyfeck. We will not linger there, nor invade the sanctity of those precincts, within which the monotonous tones of Mrs. K. are heard, revelling in that species of domestic eloquence which, like the liberty of the press, is oftener pleasant to those who employ, than to those who receive its judgments. Here for a few minutes let us stay. This is Roland Cashel's apartment; and, strange enough, instead of sleeping, he is up at his table, writing, too,—he, of all men the least epistolary. There may be no great indication of character in mere handwriting, but the manner, the gesture, the degree of rapidity of the writer, as seen at the moment, are all full of individuality. Mark, then, with what speed his pen moves; not the daisy-cutting sling of the accomplished rider, but the slashing gallop of the heavy charger. Many a blot, never an erasure,—so, there it goes,—“Yours ever, Roland Cashel.” And now, he begins another.

Come, these are no times for squeamishness. Let us anticipate “Sir James,” and read before he seals it.

Dublin. My dear Comrade,—We are neither of us very gifted letter-writers, but events are always enough to tell, even when style be wanting; and here am I, so overwhelmed by the rush of new sensations that I know not where to begin, or how to tell what has really happened since we parted, nor distinguish actual stubborn facts from my own fancies. My brief note from Porto Giacomo told you that I had succeeded to something like fifteen thousand pounds a year. I believe it is rather more, with a good round sum, I don't know how much, in bank; and now, here I am,' just arrived, but marvellously at home, in the house of the worthy fellow that has established my claim.

If I only knew so much of my good luck, I 'd say it was no bad thing to be pleasantly domesticated in a capital mansion, with every refinement and luxury at hand, and two such girls, the daughters! Oh, amigo mio, you'd think wondrous little of the Barcelonetta belles, if I could show you these damsels! Such tempting shyness; such shrinking, playful modesty; and then so frank, without that slap-dash abruptness! Never mind,—I own freely that Maritaña is lovely; there is not such a mouth—as to a foot—well, well. I wish I could take a peep at you all again, just as night closes, and she comes out to take her walk upon the grass, and hear her singing as she went, or watch her as she danced the manolo, which—by the way—one of the girls here caught up wonderfully, and in almost an instant too. But the manolo, with a long, sweeping, flounced, and furbelowed petticoat! Only think of the absurdity! Not but she looked exceedingly pretty the while, but how much better had she, if one could only have cut half a yard off her drapery!

Have you received the pistols I sent from London? I hope you 'll think them handsome,—I know they are true, having tried them at thirty-five, and even fifty paces. The yataghan I 'm certain you 'll admire; it has the peculiar handle and hilt you 're fond of. Pray let our friends on the Chilian side learn something of the qualities of the blade itself. I have been thinking since about the emeralds—and perhaps Maritaña may refuse them. If so, do what you will with them so that I hear no more of the matter. And now for the bond: release me from that tie by all means. It is not that I really feel it in the light of a contract,—Maritaña never did; but I have it ever on my mind, like a debt. I give you full powers: draw upon me for the sum you please, and I promise not to dishonor the check. Pedro likes a good bargain, and don't balk him!

I don't know what your own views are in that quarter, but I tell you frankly that Maritaña has higher and bolder aspirations than either you or I were likely to aid her in attaining. She is a proud girl, Enrique, and will never care for any man that is not able and willing to elevate her into a very different sphere from that she moves in. I never actually loved her,—I certainly do not do so now,—and yet I cannot get her out of my head.

Before I forget it, let me ask you to pay Ruy Dias two hundred doubloons for me. The horse I killed was not worth forty; but, these are not times for bargaining, and the fellow didn't want to part with the beast Alconetti—the Italian in the Plaza—has something against me,—pay it too; and now that I am on the subject of debts, whenever you next cruise off Ventillanos, send a party on shore to catch the dean, and give him four-and-twenty with a rope's end,—say it is from me; he 'll know why, and so shall you, when you inform me that it has been cleverly effected.

Above all, my dear boy, write; I so long to hear about you all, and to know all that has happened since I left you. Send the old trunks with my uniform to the agents in the Havannah; I 'd like to see them once more. François may keep anything else of mine, except what you would like to select as a “souvenir.” Don't let Rica write to me. I feel I should have no chance in a correspondence with him; nor need I have any, because whatever you say, I agree to,—remember that.

If you can manage about the emeralds, it would be the most gratifying news to me. You might tell her that we are so certain of never meeting again, and that all is now over forever, and so on,—it would have an air of unkindness to reject them. Besides, I see no reason why she should! No matter; I needn't multiply reasons, where, if one will not suffice, a thousand must fail, and the chances are, if she suspect my anxiety on the subject, it will decide her against me. Do it, then, all in your own way.

Have I said all I wanted? Heaven knows! My head is full; my heart, too, is not without its load. I wish you were here. I wish it for many reasons. I already begin to suspect you are right about the sudden effect a spring into wealth may produce; but I hope that all you said on that score may not

be true. If I thought so, I 'd—No matter, I 'll endeavor to show that you are unjust, and that is better. Yours ever,

Roland Cashel.

Don Enrique da Cordova,

Lieutenant of the Columbian frigate "Esmeralda." Care of Messrs. Eustache et Le Moine, merchants, Havannah.

The next epistle which followed was far more brief. It was thus:—

Messrs. Vanderhaeghen und Droek, Antwerp.

Enclosed is an order on Hamerton for seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-eight gulden, principal and interest for three years, of an unjust demand made by you on me before the tribunal of Bruges.

You failed, even with all the aid of your knavish laws and more knavish countrymen, to establish this iniquitous claim, and only succeeded in exhibiting yourselves as rogues and swindlers,—good burgher-like qualities in your commercial city.

I have now paid what I never owed; but there still remains between us an unsettled score. Let my present punctuality guarantee the honorable intentions I entertain of settling it one day; till when, as you have shown yourselves my enemy,

Believe me to be yours, Roland Cashel.

The order on the banker ran as follows:—

Pay to Vanderhaeghen und Droek, two of the greatest knaves alive, seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-eight gulden, being the principal and interest for three years of a dishonest claim made upon Roland Cashel. To Hamerton and Co., Cheapside.

With all that soothing consciousness we hear is the result of good actions, Cashel lay down on his bed immediately on concluding this last epistle, and was fast asleep almost before the superscription was dried.

And now, worthy reader, another peep, and we have done. Ascending cautiously the stairs, you pass through a little conservatory, at the end of which a heavy cloth curtain conceals a door. It is that of a dressing-room, off which, at opposite sides, two bedrooms lie. This same dressing-room, with its rose-colored curtains and ottoman, its little toilet-tables of satin-wood, its mirrors framed in alabaster, its cabinets of buhl, and the book-shelves so coquettishly curtained with Malines lace, is the common property of the two sisters whom we so lately introduced to your notice.

There were they wont to sit for hours after the return from a ball, discussing the people they had met, their dress, their manner, their foibles and flirtations; criticising with no mean acuteness all the varied games of match-making mammas and intriguing aunts, and canvassing the schemes and snares so rife around them. And oh, ye simple worshippers of muslin-robed innocence! oh, ye devoted slaves of ringleted loveliness and blooming freshness! bethink ye what wily projects lie crouching in hearts that would seem the very homes of careless happiness; what calculations; what devices; how many subtleties that only beauty wields, or simple man is vanquished by!

It was considerably past midnight as the two girls sat at the fire, their dressing-gowns and slippered feet showing that they had prepared for bed; but the long luxuriant hair, as yet uncurled, flowed in heavy masses on their neck and shoulders. They did not, as usual, converse freely together; a silence and a kind of constraint sat upon each, and although Olivia held a book before her, it was less for the purpose of reading than as a screen against the fire, while her sister sat with folded arms and gently drooping head, apparently lost in thought. It was after a very lengthened silence, and in a voice which showed that the speaker was following up some train of thought, Miss Kennyfeck said,—

"And do you really think him handsome, Olivia?"

"Of whom are you speaking, dear?" said Olivia, with the very softest accent.

Miss Kennyfeck started; her pale cheeks became slightly red as, with a most keen irony, she replied, "Could you not guess? Can I mean any one but Mr. Clare Jones?"

"Oh, he's a downright fright," answered the other; "but what could have made you think of him?"

"I was not thinking of him, nor were you either, sister dear," said Miss Kennyfeck, fixing her eyes full upon her; "we were both thinking of the same person. Come, what use in such subterfuges? Honesty, Livy, may not be the 'best policy,' but it has one great advantage,—it saves a deal of time; and so I repeat my question, do you think him handsome?"

"If you mean Mr. Cashel, dearest," said the younger, half bashfully, "I rather incline to say he is. His eyes are very good; his forehead and brow—"

"There,—no inventory, I beg,—the man is very well-looking, I dare say, but I own he strikes me as *tant soit peu sauvage*. Don't you think so?"

"True, his manners—"

"Why, he has none; the man has a certain rakish, free-and-easy demeanor that, with somewhat more breeding, would rise as high as 'tigerism,' but now is detestable vulgarity."

"Oh, dearest, you are severe."

"I rather suspect that you are partial."

"I, my dear! not I, in the least. He is not, by any means, the style of person I like. He can be very amusing,

perhaps; he certainly is very odd, very original.”

“He is very rich, Livy,” said the elder sister, with a most dry gravity.

“That can scarcely be called a fault, still less a misfortune,” replied Olivia, slyly.

“Well, well, let us have done with aphorisms, and speak openly. If you are really pleased with his manner and address, say so at once, and I 'll promise never to criticise too closely a demeanor which, I vow, does not impress me highly,—only be candid.”

“But I do not see any occasion for such candor, my dear. He is no more to me than he is to *you*. I ask no protestations from *you* about this Mr. Roland Cashel.”

Miss Kennyfeck bit her lip and seemed to repress a rising temptation to reply, but was silent for a moment, when she said, in a careless, easy tone,—

“Do you know, Livy dearest, that this same manolo you danced this evening is not by any means a graceful performance to look at, at least when danced with long, sweeping drapery, flapping here and flouncing there. It may suit those half-dressed Mexican damsels who want to display a high arched instep and a rounded ankle, and who know that they are not transgressing the ordinary limits of decorum in the display; but certainly your friend Mr. Softly did not accord all his approval. Did you remark him?”

“I did not; I was too much engaged in learning the figure: but Mr. Softly disapproves of all dancing.”

“Oh, I know he does,” yawned Miss Kennyfeck, as if the very mention of his name suggested sleep; “the dear man has his own notions of pleasantry,—little holy jokes about Adam and Eve. There is nothing so intolerable to me as the insipid playfulness of your young parson, except, perhaps, the coarse fun of your rising barrister. How I hate Mr. Clare Jones!”

“He is very underbred.”

“He is worse; the rudest person I ever met,—so familiar.”

“Why will he always insist on shaking hands?”

“Why will he not at least wash his own, occasionally?”

“And then his jests from the Queen's Bench,—the last *mot*—I'm sure I often wished it were so literally—of some stupid Chief Justice. Well, really, in comparison, your savage friend is a mirror of good looks and good manners.”

“Good night, my dear,” said Olivia, rising, as though to decline a renewal of the combat.

“Good night,” echoed her sister, bluntly, “and pleasant dreams of 'Roland the brave, Roland the true;' the latter quality being the one more in request at this moment.” And so, humming the well-known air, she took her candle and retired.

CHAPTER VIII. LOVE v. LAW

Ay! marry—they have wiles,
Compared to which, our schemes are honesty.

The Lawyer's Daughter.

Notwithstanding all that we hear said against castle-building, how few among the unbought pleasures of life are so amusing, nor are we certain that these shadowy speculations—these “white lies” that we tell to our own conscience—are not so many incentives to noble deeds and generous actions. These “imaginary conversations” lift us out of the jog-trot path of daily intercourse, and call up hopes and aspirations that lie buried under the heavy load of wearisome commonplaces of which life is made up, and thus permit a man, immersed as he may be in the fatigues of a profession, or a counting-house, harassed by law, or worried by the Three per Cents, to be a hero to his own heart at least for a few minutes once a week.

But if “castle-building” be so pleasurable when a mere visionary scheme, what is it when it comes associated with all the necessary conditions for accomplishment,—when not alone the plan and elevation of the edifice are there, but all the materials and every appliance to realize the conception?

Just fancy yourself “two or three and twenty,” waking out of a sound and dreamless sleep, to see the mellow sun of an autumnal morning straining its rays through the curtains of your bedroom. Conceive the short and easy struggle by which, banishing all load of cares and duties in which you were once immersed, you spring, as by a bound, to the joyous fact that you are the owner of a princely fortune, with health and ardent spirit, a temper capable of, nay, eager for engagement, a fearless courage, and a heart unchilled. Think of this, and say, Is not the first waking half-hour of such thoughts the brightest spot of a whole existence? Such was the frame of mind in which our hero awoke, and lay for some time to revel in! We could not, if we would, follow the complex tissue of day-dreams that wandered over every clime, and in the luxuriant rapture of power created scenes of pleasure, of ingredients the most far-fetched and remote. The “actual” demands our attention more urgently than the “ideal,” so that we are constrained to follow the unpoetical steps of so ignoble a personage as Mr. Phillis,—Cashel's new valet,—who now broke in upon his master's reveries as he entered with hot water and the morning papers.

“What have you got there?” cried Cashel, not altogether pleased at the intrusion.

“The morning papers! Lord Ettlecombe “—his former master, and his universal type—“always read the 'Post,' sir, before he got out of bed.”

“Well, let me see it,” said Cashel, who, already impressed with the necessity of conforming to a new code, was satisfied to take the law even from so humble an authority as his own man.

“Yes, sir. Our arrival is announced very handsomely among the fashionable intelligence, and the 'Dublin

Mail' has copied the paragraph stating that we are speedily about to visit our Irish estates."

"Ah, indeed," said Cashel, somewhat flattered at his newborn notoriety; "where is all this?"

"Here, sir, under 'Movements in High Life': 'The Duke of Uxoter to Lord Debbington's beautiful villa at Maulish; Sir Harry and Lady Emeline Morpas, etc.; Rosenorris; Lord Fetcherton—'No, here we have it, sir, —'Mr. Roland Cashel and suite'—Kennyfeck and self, sir—'from Mivart's, for Ireland. We understand that this millionnaire proprietor is now about to visit his estates in this country, preparatory to taking up a residence finally amongst us. If report speak truly, he is as accomplished as wealthy, and will be a very welcome accession to the ranks of our country gentry.'"

"How strange that these worthy people should affect to know or care anything about me or my future intentions," said Cashel, innocently.

"Oh, sir, they really know nothing,—that little thing is mine."

"Yours,—how yours?"

"Why, I wrote it, sir. When I lived with Sir Giles Heathcote, we always fired off a certain number of these signal-guns when we came to a new place. Once the thing was set a-going, the newspaper fellows followed up the lead themselves. They look upon a well-known name as of the same value as a fire or a case of larceny. I have known a case of seduction by a marquis to take the 'pas' of the last murder in the Edgware Road."

"I have no fancy for this species of publicity," said Cashel, seriously.

"Believe me, sir, there is nothing to be done without it. The Press, sir, is the fourth estate. They can ignore anything nowadays, from a speech in Parliament to the last novel; from the young beauty just come out, to the newly-launched line-of-battle ship. A friend of mine, some time back, tried the thing to his cost, sir. He invented an admirable moustache-paste; he even paid a guinea to an Oxford man for a Greek name for it; well, sir, he would not advertise in the dailies, but only in bills. Mark the consequence. One of the morning journals, in announcing the arrival of the Prince of Koemundkuttingen on a visit to Colonel Sibthorp, mentioned that in the fraternal embrace of these two distinguished personages their moustaches, anointed with the new patent adhesive Eukautherostickostecon, became actually so fastened together (as the fellow said, like two clothes-brushes) that after a quarter of an hour's vain struggle they had to be cut asunder. From that moment, sir, the paste was done up; he sold it as harness stuff the week after, and left the hair and beard line altogether."

As Cashel's dressing proceeded, Mr. Phillis continued to impose upon him those various hints and suggestions respecting costume for which that accomplished gentleman's gentleman was renowned.

"Excuse me, but you are not going to wear that coat, I hope. A morning dress should always incline to what artists call 'neutral tints;' there should also be nothing striking, nothing that would particularly catch the eye, except in those peculiar cases where the wearer, adopting a certain color, not usually seen, adheres strictly to it, Just as we see my Lord Blenneville with his old coffee-colored cut-away, and Sir Francis Heming with his light-blue frock; Colonel Mordaunt's Hessians are the same kind of thing."

"This is all mere trifling," said Casbel, impatiently; "I don't intend to dress like the show-figure in a tailor's shop, to be stared at."

"Exactly so, sir; that is what I have been saying: any notoriety is to be avoided where a gentleman has a real position. Now, with a dark frock, gray trousers, and this plain single-breasted vest, your costume is correct."

If Cashel appeared to submit to these dictations with impatience, he really received them as laws to which he was, in virtue of his station, to be bound. He had taken Mr. Phillis exactly as he had engaged the services of a celebrated French cook, as a person to whom a "department" was to be intrusted; and feeling that he was about to enter on a world whose habits of thinking and prejudices were all strange, he resolved to accept of guidance, with the implicitness that he would have shown in taking a pilot to navigate him through a newly visited channel. Between the sense of submission, and a certain feeling of shame at the mock importance of these considerations, Casbel exhibited many symptoms of impatience, as Mr. Phillis continued his revelations on dress, and was sincerely happy when that refined individual, having slowly surveyed him, pronounced a faint, "Yes, very near it," and withdrew.

There was a half glimmering suspicion, like a struggling ray of sunlight stealing through a torn and ragged cloud, breaking on Roland's mind that if wealth were to entail a great many requirements, no matter how small each, of obedience to the world's prescription, that he, for one, would prefer his untrammelled freedom to any amount of riches. This was but a fleeting doubt, which he had no time to dwell upon, for already he was informed by the butler that Mrs. Kennyfeck was waiting breakfast for him.

Descending the stairs rapidly, he had just reached the landing opposite the drawing-room, when he heard the sounds of a guitar accompaniment, and the sweet silvery tones of a female voice. He listened, and to his amazement heard that the singer was endeavoring, and with considerable success, too, to remember his own Mexican air that he had sung the preceding evening.

Somehow, it struck him he had never thought the melody so pretty before; there was a tenderness in the plaintive parts he could not have conceived. Not so the singer; for after a few efforts to imitate one of Roland's bolder passages, she drew her finger impatiently across the chords, and exclaimed, "It is of no use; it is only the caballero himself can do it."

"Let him teach you, then!" cried Cashel, as he sprang into the room, wild with delight.

"Oh, Mr. Cashel, what a start you 've given me!" said Olivia Kennyfeck, as, covered with blushes, and trembling with agitation, she leaned on the back of a chair.

"Oh, pray forgive me," said he, eagerly; "but I was so surprised, so delighted to hear you recalling that little song, I really forgot everything else. Have I startled you, then?"

"Oh, no; it's nothing. I was trying a few chords. I thought I was quite alone."

"But you'll permit me to teach you some of our Mexican songs, won't you? I should be so charmed to hear them sung as you could sing them."

“It is too kind of you,” said she, timidly; “but I am no musician. My sister is a most skilful performer, but I really know nothing; a simple ballad and a canzonette are the extent of my efforts.”

“For our prairie songs, it is the feeling supplies all the character. They are wild, fanciful things, with no higher pretensions than to recall some trait of the land they belong to; and I should be so flattered if you would take an interest in the Far West.”

“How you must love it! How you must long to return to it!” said Olivia, raising her long drooping lashes, and letting her eyes rest, with an expression of tender melancholy, on Cashel.

What he might have said there is no guessing,—nay, for his sake, and for hers too, it is better not even to speculate on it; but ere he could reply, another speaker joined in the colloquy, saying,—

“Good morning, Mr. Cashel. Pray don't forget, when the lesson is over, that we are waiting breakfast.” So saying, and with a laugh of saucy raillery, Miss Kennyfeck passed down the stairs, not remaining to hear his answer.

“Oh, Mr. Cashel!” exclaimed Olivia, with a tone half reproachful, half shy, “we shall be scolded,—at least, I shall,” added she. “It is the unforgivable offence in this house to be late at breakfast.”

Cashel would very willingly have risked all the consequences of delay for a few minutes longer of their interview; but already she had tripped on downstairs, and with such speed as to enter the breakfast-parlor a few seconds before him. Roland was welcomed by the family without the slightest shade of dissatisfaction at his late appearance, cordial greetings and friendly inquiries as to how he had rested pouring in on every side.

“What 's to be done with Mr. Cashel to-day? I hope he is not to be teased by business people and red-tapery,” said Mrs. Kenny feck to her husband.

“I am afraid,” said the silky attorney, “I am very much afraid I must trespass on his kindness to accompany me to the Master's office. There are some little matters which will not wait.”

“Oh, they must,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, peremptorily. “Who is the Master,—Liddard, is n't it? Well, tell him to put it off; Mr. Cashel must really have a little peace and quietness after all his fatigues.”

“It will only take an hour, at most, Mrs. Kennyfeck,” remonstrated her submissive mate.

“Well, that is nothing,” cried Cashel. “I 'm not in the least tired, and the day is long enough for everything.”

“Then we have a little affair which we can manage at home here about the mortgages. I told you—”

“I believe you did,” replied Cashel, laughing; “but I don't remember a word of it. It's about paying some money, isn't it?”

“Yes, it's the redemption of two very heavy claims,” exclaimed Kennyfeck, perfectly shocked at the indifference displayed by the young man,—“claims for which we are paying five and a half per cent.”

“And it would be better to clear them off?” said Cashel, assuming a show of interest in the matter he was far from feeling.

“Of course it would. There is a very large sum lying to your credit at Falkner's, for which you receive only three per cent.”

“Don't you perceive how tiresome you are, dear Mr. Kennyfeck?” said his wife. “Mr. Cashel is bored to death with all this.”

“Oh, no! not in the least, madam. It ought to interest me immensely; and so all these things will, I 'm sure. But I was just thinking at what hour that fellow we met on the packet was to show us those horses he spoke of?”

“At four,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, with a half-sigh of resignation; “but you 'll have ample time for that. I shall only ask you to attend at the judge's chambers after our consultation.”

“Well, you are really intolerable!” cried his wife. “Why cannot you and Jones, and the rest of you, do all this tiresome nonsense, and leave Mr. Cashel to us? I want to bring him out to visit two or three people; and the girls have been planning a canter in the park.”

“The canter, by all means,” said Cashel. “I 'm sure, my dear Mr. Kennyfeck, you 'll do everything far better without me. I have no head for anything like business; and so pray, let me accompany the riding-party.”

“The attendance at the Master's is peremptory,” sighed the attorney,—“there is no deferring that; and as to the mortgages, the funds are falling every hour. I should seriously advise selling out at once.”

“Well, sell out, in Heaven's name! Do all and anything you like, and I promise my most unqualified satisfaction at the result.”

“There, now,” interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck, authoritatively, “don't worry any more; you see how tiresome you are!”

And poor Mr. Kennyfeck seemed to see and feel it too; for he hung his head, and sipped his tea in silence.

“To-day we dine alone, Mr. Cashel,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck; “but to-morrow I will try to show you some of the Dublin notorieties,—at least, such as are to be had in the season. On Friday we plan a little country party into Wicklow, and have promised to keep Saturday free, if the Blackenburgs want us.”

“What shall we say, then, about Tubberbeg, Mr. Cashel?” said Kennyfeck, withdrawing him into a window-recess. “We ought to give the answer at once.”

“Faith! I forgot all about it,” said Cashel. “Is that the fishery you told me of?”

“Oh, no!” sighed the disconsolate man of law. “It's the farm on the terminable lease, at present held by Hugh Corrigan; he asks for a renewal.”

“Well, let him have it,” said Cashel, bluntly, while his eyes were turned towards the fire, where the two sisters, with arms entwined, stood in the most graceful of attitudes.

“Yes, but have you considered the matter maturely?” rejoined Kennyfeck, laying his hand on Cashel's arm. “Have you taken into account that he only pays eight and seven pence per acre,—the Irish acre, too,—and that a considerable part of that land adjoining the Boat Quay is let, as building plots for two and sixpence a foot?”

“A devilish pretty foot it is, too,” murmured Cashel, musingly.

“Eh! what?” exclaimed Kennyfeck, perfectly mystified at this response.

“Oh! I meant that I agreed with you,” rejoined the young man, reddening, and endeavoring to appear deeply interested. “I quite coincide with your views, sir.”

Kennyfeck seemed surprised at this, for he had not, to his knowledge, ventured on any opinion.

“Perhaps,” said he, taking breath for a last effort, “if you 'd kindly look at the map of the estate, and just see where this farm trenches on your own limits, you could judge better about the propriety of the renewal.”

“Oh, with pleasure!” exclaimed Cashel, while he suffered himself to be led into the study, his face exhibiting very indifferent signs of satisfaction.

“Shall we assist in the consultation, Mr. Cashel?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, smiling in reply to his reluctant look at leaving.

“Oh, by all means!” cried he, enthusiastically; “do come, and give me your advice. Pray, come.”

“Come, girls,” said the mother, “although I perceive Mr. Kennyfeck is terribly shocked at the bare thought of our intrusion; but be of good courage, we only accompany Mr. Cashel to save him from any long imprisonment.” And so she moved majestically forward, her daughters following her.

An alchemist would probably have received company in his laboratory, or a hermit admitted a jovial party in his cell, with less of constraint and dissatisfaction than did Mr. Kennyfeck watch the approach of his wife and daughters to the sanctum of his study.

Save at rare intervals, when a disconsolate widow had come to resolve a question of administration, or a no less forlorn damsel had entered to consult upon an action for “breach of promise,” St. Kevin himself had never been less exposed to female intervention. It needed, then, all his reverence and fear of Mrs. Kennyfeck to sustain the shock to his feelings, as he saw her seat herself in his office-chair, and look around with the air of command that he alone used to exhibit in these regions.

“Now for this same map, Mr. Kennyfeck, and let us bear the question for which this Privy Council has been convened.”

“This is the map,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, unfolding a large scroll, “and I believe a single glance will enable Mr. Cashel to perceive that some little deliberation would be advisable before continuing in possession a tenant whose holding completely destroys the best feature of the demesne. This red line here is your boundary towards the Limerick road; here, stands the house, which, from the first, was a great mistake. It is built in a hollow without a particle of view; whereas, had it been placed here, where this cross is marked, the prospect would have extended over the whole of Scariff Bay, and by the west, down to Killaloe.”

“Well, what's to prevent our building it there yet?” interrupted Cashel. “I think it would be rare fun building a house,—at least if I may judge from all the amusement I've had in constructing one of leaves and buffalo-hides, in the prairies.”

Mrs. Kennyfeck and her eldest daughter smiled their blandest approbation, while Olivia murmured in her sister's ear, “Oh, dear, he is so very natural, isn't he?”

“That will be a point for ulterior consideration,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, who saw the danger of at all wandering from the topic in hand. “Give me your attention now for one moment, Mr. Cashel. Another inconvenience in the situation of the present house is, that it stands scarcely a thousand yards from this red-and-yellow line here.”

“Well, what is that?” inquired Cashel, who already began to feel interested in the localities.

“This—and pray observe it well, sir—this red-and-yellow line, enclosing a tract which borders on the Shannon, and runs, as you may remark, into the very heart of the demesne, this is Tubberbeg, the farm in question,—not only encroaching upon your limits, but actually cutting you off from the river,—at least, your access is limited to a very circuitous road, and which opens upon a very shallow part of the stream.”

“And who or what is this tenant?” asked Cashel.

“His name is Corrigan, a gentleman by birth, but of a very limited fortune; he is now an old man, upwards of seventy, I understand.”

“And how came it that he ever obtained possession of a tract so circumstanced, marring, as you most justly observe, the whole character of the demesne?”

“That would be a long story, sir; enough, if I mention that his ancestors were the ancient owners of the entire estate, which was lost by an act of confiscation in the year forty-five. Some extenuating circumstances, however, induced the Government to confer upon a younger branch of the family a lease of this small tract called Tubberbeg, to distinguish it from Tubbermore, the larger portion; and this lease it is whose expiration, in a few years, induces the present query.”

“Has Mr. Corrigan children?”

“No; his only child, a daughter, is dead, but a granddaughter lives now with the old man.”

“Then what is it he asks? Is it a renewal of the lease, on the former terms?”

“Why, not precisely. I believe he would be willing to-pay more.”

“That's not what I mean,” replied Cashel, reddening; “I ask, what terms as to time, he seeks for. Would it content him to have the land for his own life?”

“Mr. Kennyfeck, you are really very culpable to leave Mr. Cashel to the decision of matters of this kind,—matters in which his kindliness of heart and inexperience will always betray him into a forgetfulness of his own interest. What has Mr. Cashel to think about this old creature's ancestors, who were rebels, it appears, or his daughter, or his granddaughter? Here is a simple question of a farm, which actually makes the demesne worthless, and which, by a singular piece of good fortune, is in Mr. Cashel's power to secure.”

“This is a very correct view, doubtless,” said her meek husband, submissively, “but we should also remember—”

“We have nothing to remember,” interrupted Mrs. Kenny-feck, stoutly; “nothing, save his interests, who, as I have observed, is of too generous a nature to be trusted with such matters.”

“Is there no other farm,—have we nothing on the property he 'd like as well as this?” asked Cashel.

“I fear not. The attachment to a place inhabited for centuries by his ancestry—”

“By his fiddlestick!” struck in Mrs. Kennyfeck; “two and sixpence an acre difference would be all the necessary compensation. Mr. Kennyfeck, how can you trifle in this manner, when you know how it will injure the demesne!”

“Oh, ruin it utterly!” exclaimed Miss Kennyfeck.

“It completely cuts off the beautiful river and those dear islands,” said Olivia.

“So it does,” said Cashel, musing.

“I wonder are they wooded? I declare I believe they are. Papa, are these little scrubby things meant to represent trees?”

“Oaks and chestnut-trees,” responded Mr. Kennyfeck, gravely.

“Oh, how I should love a cottage on that island,—a real Swiss cottage, with its carved galleries and deep-eaved roof. Who owns these delicious islands?”

“Mr. Cashel, my dear,” said papa, still bent on examining the map.

“Do I, indeed!” cried Roland, in an ecstasy. “Then you shall have your wish, Miss Kenny feck. I promise you the prettiest Swiss cottage that your own taste can devise.”

“Oh, dear, oh, pray forgive me!”

“Oh, Mr. Roland Cashel, don't think of such a thing! Olivia was merely speaking at random. How silly, child, you are to talk that way!”

“Really, mamma, I had not the slightest suspicion—I would n't for the world have said anything if I thought —”

“Of course not, dear; but pray be guarded. Indeed, I own I never did hear you make a lapse of the kind before. But you see, Mr. Cashel, you have really made us forget that we were strangers but yesterday, and you are paying the penalty of your own exceeding kindness. Forget, then, I beseech you, this first transgression.”

“I shall assuredly keep my promise, madam,” said Cashel, proudly; “and I have only to hope Miss Kennyfeck will not offend me by declining so very humble a present. Now, sir, for our worthy friend Mr. Corrigan.”

“Too fast, a great deal to fast, love,” whispered the elder sister in the ear of the younger, and who, to the credit of her tact and ingenuity be it spoken, only gave the most heavenly smile in reply.

“I really am puzzled, sir, what advice to give,” said the attorney, musing.

“I have no difficulties of this sentimental kind,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a glance of profound depreciation towards her husband; “and I beg Mr. Cashel to remember that the opportunity now offered will possibly never occur again. If the old man is to retain his farm, of course Mr. Cashel would not think of building a new mansion, which must be ill-circumstanced; from what I can hear of the present house, it is equally certain that he would not reside in that.”

“Is it so very bad?” asked Cashel, smiling.

“It was ill-planned originally, added to in, if possible, worse taste, and then suffered to fall into ruin. It is now something more than eighty years since it saw any other inhabitant than a caretaker.”

“Well, the picture is certainly not seductive. I rather opine that the best thing we can do is to throw this old rumbling concern down, at all events; and now once more,—what shall we do with Mr. Corrigan?”

“I should advise you not giving any reply before you visit the property yourself. All business matters will be completed here, I trust, by Saturday. What, then, if we go over on Monday to Tubbermore?”

“Agreed. I have a kind of anxiety to look at the place,—indeed, a mere glance would decide me if I ever care to return to it again.”

“Then, I perceive, our counsel is of no avail here,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, rising, with a very ill-concealed chagrin.

“Nay, madam, don't say so. You never got so far as to give it,” cried Cashel.

“Oh, yes, you forget that I said it would be absurd to hesitate about resuming possession.”

“Unquestionably,” echoed Miss Kennyfeck. “It is merely to indulge an old man's caprice at the cost of your own comfort and convenience.”

“But he may cling to the spot, sister dear,” said Olivia, in an accent only loud enough to be audible by Cashel.

“You are right,” said Roland, in her ear, with a look that spoke his approval far more eloquently.

Although Miss Kennyfeck had heard nothing that passed, her quickness detected the looks of intelligence that were so speedily interchanged, and as she left the room she took occasion to whisper, “Do take advice, dear; there is no keeping up a pace like that.”

CHAPTER IX. AN EXCITING ADVENTURE

“Bravo, Toro.”

As it chanced that many of Mr. Kennyfeck's clients were Western gentlemen, whose tastes have an

unequivocal tendency to all matters relating to horse-flesh, his stable was not less choicely furnished than his cellar; for, besides being always able to command the shrewdest judgments when he decided to make a purchase, many an outstanding balance of long duration, many a debt significantly pencilled “doubtful” or “bad,” in his note-book, was cleared off by some tall, sinewy steeplechaser from Galway, or some redoubted performer with the “Blazers.”

So well known was this fact that several needed no other standard of a neighbor's circumstances, than whether he had contributed or not to the Kennyfeck stud. This brief explanation we have been induced to make, to account for the sporting character of a stable whose proprietor never was once seen in the saddle. Far otherwise the ladies of the house; the mother and daughters, but in particular the elder, rode with all the native grace of Galway; and as they were invariably well mounted, and their grooms the smartest and best appointed, their “turn-out” was the admiration of the capital.

It was in vain that the English officials at the Castle, whose superlative tastes were wont to overshadow mere Irish pretension, endeavored to compete with these noted equestrians. Secretaries' wives and chamberlains' daughters, however they might domineer in other matters, were here, at least, surpassed, and it was a conceded fact, that the Kennyfecks rode better, dressed better, and looked better on horseback than any other girls in the country. If all the critics as to horsemanship pronounced the elder unequivocally the superior rider, mere admirers of gracefulness preferred the younger sister, who, less courageous and self-possessed, invested her skill with a certain character of timidity that increased the interest her appearance excited.

They never rode out without an immense *cortège* of followers, every well-looking and well-mounted man about town deeming it his *devoir* to join this party, just as the box of the reigning belle at the opera is besieged by assiduous visitors The very being seen in this train was a kind of brevet promotion in fashionable esteem, to which each newly-arrived cornet aspired, and thus the party usually presented a group of brilliant uniforms and dancing plumes that rivalled in brilliancy, and far excelled in amusement, the staff of the viceroy himself.

It would be uufair to suppose that, with all their natural innocence and artlessness, they were entirely ignorant of the sway they thus exercised; indeed, such a degree of modesty would have trenched upon the incredulous, for how could they doubt what commanders of the forces and deputy-assistant-adjutants assured them, still less question the veracity of a prince royal, who positively asserted that they “rode better than Quentin's daughter”?

It was thus a source of no small excitement among the mounted loungers of the capital, when the Kennyfecks issued forth on horseback, and not, as usual, making the tour of the “Square” to collect their forces, they rode at once down Grafton Street, accompanied by a single cavalier.

“Who have the Kennyfeck girls got with them?” said a thin-waisted-looking aide-de-camp to a lanky, well-whiskered fellow in a dragoon undress, at the Castle gate.

“He is new to me—never saw him before. I say, Lucas, who is that tall fellow on Kennyfeck's brown horse—do you know him?”

“Don't know—can't say,” drawled out a very diminutive hussar cornet.

“He has a look of Merrington,” said another, joining the party.

“Not a bit of it; he's much larger. I should n't wonder if he's one of the Esterhazys they've caught. There is one of them over here—a Paul or a Nicholas, of the younger branch;—but here 's Linton, he 'll tell us, if any man can.”

This speech was addressed to a very dapper, well-dressed man of about thirty, mounted on a small thoroughbred pony, whose splashed and heaving flanks bespoke a hasty ride.

“I say, Tom, you met the Kennyfecks,—who was that with them?”

“Don't you know him, my Lord?” said a sharp, ringing voice; “that's our newly-arrived millionnaire,—Roland Cashel, our Tipperary Croesus,—the man with I won't say how many hundred thousands a year, and millions in bank besides.”

“The devil it is—a good-looking fellow, too.”

“Spooney, I should say,” drawled out the hussar, caressing his moustache.

“One need n't be as smart a fellow as you, Wheeler, with forty thousand a year,” said Linton, with a sly glance at the others.

“You don't suppose, Tom,” said the former speaker, “that the Kennyfecks have any designs in that quarter,—egad! that would be rather aspiring, eh?”

“Very unwise in us to permit it, my Lord,” said Linton, in a low tone. “That's a dish will bear carving, and let every one have his share.”

My Lord laughed with a low cunning laugh at the suggestion, and nodded an easy assent.

Meanwhile the Kennyfecks rode slowly on, and crossing Essex Bridge continued their way at a foot pace towards the park, passing in front of the Four Courts, where a very large knot of idlers uncovered their heads in polite salutation as they went.

“That's Kennyfeck's newly-discovered client,” cried one; “a great card, if they can only secure him for one of the girls.”

“I say, did you remark how the eldest had him engaged? She never noticed any of us.”

“I back Olivia,” said another; “she's a quiet one, but devilish sly for all that.”

“Depend upon it,” interposed an older speaker, “the fellow is up to all that sort of thing.”

“Jones met him at dinner yesterday at Kennyfeck's, and says he is a regular soft one, and if the girls don't run an opposition to each other, one is sure to win.”

“Why not toss up for him, then? that would be fairer.”

“Ay, and more sisterly, too,” said the elder speaker. “Jones would be right glad to claim the beaten horse.”

“Jones, indeed,—I can tell you they detest Jones,” said a young fellow.

“They told you so, eh, Hammond?” said another; while a very hearty laugh at the discomfited youth broke from the remainder.

And now to follow our mounted friends, who, having reached the park, continued still at a walking pace to thread the greasy paths that led through that pleasant tract; now hid amid the shade of ancient thorn-trees, now gaining the open expanse of plain with its bold background of blue mountains.

From the evident attention bestowed by the two sisters, it was clear that Cashel was narrating something of interest, for he spoke of an event which had happened to himself in his prairie life; and this alone, independent of all else, was enough to make the theme amusing.

“Does this convey any idea of a prairie, Mr. Cashel?” said Miss Kennyfeck, as they emerged from a grove of beech-trees, and came upon the wide and stretching plain, so well known to Dubliners as the Fifteen Acres, but which is, in reality, much greater in extent. “I have always fancied this great grassy expanse must be like a prairie.”

“About as like as yonder cattle to a herd of wild buffaloes,” replied Roland, smiling.

“Then what is a prairie like? Do tell us,” said Olivia, eagerly.

“I can scarcely do so, nor, if I were a painter, do I suppose that I could make a picture of one, because it is less the presence than the total absence of all features of landscape that constitutes the wild and lonely solitude of a prairie. But fancy a great plain—gently—very gently undulating,—not a tree, not a shrub, not a stream to break the dreary uniformity; sometimes, but even that rarely, a little muddy pond of rain-water, stagnant and yellow, is met with, but only seen soon after heavy showers, for the hot sun rapidly absorbs it. The only vegetation a short yellowed burnt-up grass,—not a wild flower or a daisy, if you travelled hundreds of hundreds of miles. On you go, days and days, but the scene never changes. Large cloud shadows rest upon the barren expanse, and move slowly and sluggishly away, or sometimes a sharp and pelting shower is borne along, traversing hundreds of miles in its course; but these are the only traits of motion in the death-like stillness. At last, perhaps after weeks of wandering, you descry, a long way off, some dark objects dotting the surface,—these are buffaloes; or at sunset, when the thin atmosphere makes everything sharp and distinct, some black spectral shapes seem to glide between you and the red twilight,—these are Indian hunters, seen miles off, and by some strange law of nature they are presented to the vision when far, far beyond the range of sight. Such strange apparitions, the consequence of refraction, have led to the most absurd superstitions; and all the stories the Germans tell you of their wild huntsmen are nothing to the tales every trapper can recount of war parties seen in the air, and tribes of red men in pursuit of deer and buffaloes, through the clear sky of an autumn evening.”

“And have you yourself met with these wild children of the desert?” said Olivia; “have you ever been amongst them?”

“Somewhat longer than I fancied,” replied Roland, smiling. “I was a prisoner once with the Camanches.”

“Oh, let us hear all about it,—how did it happen?” cried both together.

“It happened absurdly enough, at least you will say so, when I tell you; but to a prairie-hunter the adventure would seem nothing singular. It chanced that some years ago I made one of a hunting-party into the Rocky Mountains, and finally as far as Pueblo Santo, the last station before entering the hunting-grounds of the Camanches, a very fierce tribe, and one with whom all the American traders have failed to establish any relations of friendship or commerce. They care nothing for the inventions of civilization, and, unlike all other Indians, prefer their own bows and arrows to firearms.

“We had been now four days within their boundary, and yet never met one of the tribe. Some averred that they always learned by the scouts whenever any invasion took place, and retired till they were in sufficient force to pour down and crush the intruders. Others, who proved better informed, said that they were hunting in a remote tract, several days' journey distant. We were doubly disappointed, for besides not seeing the Camanches, for which we had a great curiosity, we did not discover any game. The two or three trails we followed led to nothing, nor could a hoof-track be seen for miles and miles of prairie. In this state of discomfiture, we were sitting one evening around our fires, and debating with ourselves whether to turn back or go on, when, the dispute waxing warm between those of different opinions, I, who hated all disagreements of the kind, slipped quietly away, and throwing the bridle on my horse, I set out for a solitary ramble over the prairie.

“I have the whole scene before me this instant,—the solemn desolation of that dreary track; for scarcely had I gone a mile over what seemed a perfectly level plain, when the swelling inequalities of the ground shut out the watch-fires of my companions, and now there was nothing to be seen but the vast expanse of land and sky, each colored with the same dull leaden tint of coming night; no horizon was visible, not a star appeared, and in the midst of this gray monotony, a stillness prevailed that smote the heart with something more appalling than mere fear. No storm that ever I listened to at sea, not the loudest thunder that ever crashed, or the heaviest sea that ever broke upon a leeward shore at midnight, ever chilled my blood like that terrible stillness. I thought that the dreadful roll of an avalanche or the heaving ground-swell of an earthquake had been easier to bear. I believe I actually prayed for something like sound to relieve the horrible tension of my nerves, when, just as if my wish was heard, a low booming sound, like the sea within a rocky cavern, came borne along on the night wind. Then it lulled again, and after a time grew louder. This happened two or three times, so that, half suspecting some self-delusion, I stopped my ears, and then on removing my hands, I heard the noise increasing till it swelled into one dull roaring sound, that made the very air vibrate. I thought it must be an earthquake, of which it is said many occur in these regions, but, from the dreary uniformity, leave no trace behind.

“I resolved to regain my companions at once; danger is always easier to confront in company, and so I turned my horse's head to go back. The noise was now deafening, and so stunning that the very ground seemed to give it forth. My poor horse became terrified, his flanks heaved, and he labored in his stride as if overcome by fatigue. This again induced me to suspect an earthquake, for I knew by what singular instincts animals are apprised of its approach. I therefore gave him the spur, and urged him on with every effort, when

suddenly he made a tremendous bound to one side, and set off with the speed of a racer. Stretched to his fullest stride, I was perfectly powerless to restrain him; meanwhile, the loud thundering sounds filled the entire air,—more deafening than the greatest artillery; the crashing uproar smote my ears, and made my brain ring with the vibration, and then suddenly the whole plain grew dark behind and at either side of me, the shadow swept on and on, nearer and nearer, as the sounds increased, till the black surface seemed, as it were, about to close around me; and now I perceived that the great prairie, far as my eyes could stretch, was covered by a herd of wild buffaloes; struck by some sudden terror, they had taken what is called 'the Stampedo,' and set out at full speed. In an instant they were around me on every side,—a great moving sea of dark-backed monsters,—roaring in terrible uproar, and tossing their savage heads wildly to and fro, in all the paroxysm of terror. To return, or even to extricate myself, was impossible; the dense mass pressed like a wall at either side of me, and I was borne along in the midst of the heaving herd, without the slightest hope of rescue. I cannot—you would not ask me, if even I could—recall the terrors of that dreadful night, which in its dark hours compassed the agonies of years. Until the moon got up, I hoped that the herd might pass on, and at last leave me at liberty behind; but when she rose, and I looked back, I saw the dark sea of hides, as if covering the whole wide prairie, while the deep thunder from afar mingled with the louder bellowing of the herd around me.

“I suppose my reeling brain became maddened by the excitement; for even yet, when by any accident I suffer slight illness, terrible fancies of that dreadful scene come back; and I have been told that, in my wild cries and shouts, I seem encouraging and urging on the infuriate herd, and by my gestures appearing to control and direct their headlong course. Had it been possible, I believe I should have thrown myself to the earth and sought death at once, even in this dreadful form, than live to die the thousand deaths of agony that night inflicted; but this could not be, and so, as day broke, I was still carried on, not, indeed, with the same speed as before; weariness weighed on the vast moving mass, but the pressure of those behind still drove them onward. I thought the long hours of darkness were terrible; and the appalling gloom of night added tortures to my sufferings; but the glare of daylight, the burning sun, and the clouds of dust were still worse. I remember, too, when exhaustion had nearly spent my last frail energy, and when my powerless hands, letting fall the bridle, dropped heavily to my side, that the herd suddenly halted,—halted, as if arrested by some gigantic hand; and then the pressure became so dreadful that my bones seemed almost bursting from my flesh, and I screamed aloud in my agony. After this, I remember little else. The other events of that terrible ride are like the shadowy spectres of a magic lantern; vague memories of sufferings, pangs that even yet chill my blood, steal over me, but unconnected and incoherent, so that when, as I afterwards heard, the herd dashed into the Camanche encampment, I have no recollection of anything, except the terror-struck faces of the red men, as they bent before me, and seemed to worship me as a deity. Yes, this terrible tribe, who had scarcely ever been known to spare a white man, not only did not injure, but they treated me with the tenderest care and attention. A singular incident had favored me. One of the wise men had foretold some days before that a herd of wild buffaloes, sent by their god, Anadongu, would speedily appear, and rescue the tribe from the horrors of impending starvation. The prediction was possibly based upon some optical delusion, like that I have mentioned. Whatever its origin, the accomplishment was hailed with ecstasy; and I myself, a poor, almost dying creature, stained with blood, crushed and speechless, was regarded as their deliverer and preserver.”

“How long did you remain amongst them?” cried Miss Kennyfeck.

“And how did you escape?” asked Olivia.

“Were they always equally kind?”

“Were you sorry to leave them?” were the questions rapidly poured in ere Cashel could reply to any one of them.

“I have often heard,” said Miss Kennyfeck, “that the greater mental ability of the white man is certain to secure him an ascendancy over the minds of savage tribes, and that, if he be spared at first, he is sure in the end to become their chief.”

“I believe they actually worship any display of intelligence above their own,” said Olivia.

“These are exaggerated accounts,” said Cashel, smiling. “Marriage is, among savage as among civilized nations, a great stepping-stone to eminence. When a white man is allied with a princess—”

“Oh, how shocking!” cried both together. “I'm sure no person, anything akin to a gentleman, could dream of such a thing,” said Miss Kennyfeck.

“It happens now and then, notwithstanding,” said Cashel, with a most provoking gravity.

While the sisters would have been well pleased had Cashel's personal revelations continued on this theme, they did not venture to explore so dangerous a path, and were both silent. Roland, too, appeared buried in some recollection of the past, for he rode on for some time without speaking,—a preoccupation on his part which seemed in no wise agreeable to his fair companions.

“There are the MacFarlines, Livy,” said Miss Kennyfeck; “and Linton, and Lord Charles, and the rest of them. I declare, I believe they see us, and are coming this way.”

“What a bore! Is there no means of escape? Mr. Cashel, pray invent one.”

“I beg pardon. What was it you said? I have been dreaming for the last three minutes.”

“Pleasant dreams I 'm certain they were,” said Miss Kennyfeck, with a very significant smile; “evoked, doubtless, by some little memory of your life among the Cainanches.”

Cashel started and grew red, while his astonishment rendered him speechless.

“Here they come; how provoking!” exclaimed Livy.

“Who are coming?”

“Some friends of ours, who, strange to say, have the misfortune to be peculiarly disagreeable to my sister Livy to-day, although I have certainly seen Lord Charles contrive to make his company less distasteful at other times.”

“Oh, my dear Caroline, you know perfectly well—” broke in Olivia, with a tone of unfeigned reproach.

“Let us ride for it, then,” said Miss Kepnyfeck, without permitting her to finish. “Now, Mr. Cashel, a canter, —a gallop, if you will.”

“Quite ready,” said Cashel, his animation at once returning at the bare mention; and away they set, down a gentle slope with wooded sides, then they gained another grassy plain, skirted with trees, at the end of which a small picturesque cottage stood, the residence of a ranger; passing this, they arrived at a thick wood, and then slackened their pace, as all pursuit might be deemed fruitless. This portion of the park, unlike the rest, seemed devoted to various experiments in agriculture and gardening. Here were little enclosed plots of Indian corn and Swedish turnips; here, small plantations of fruit trees. Each succeeding secretary seemed to have left behind him some trace of his own favorite system for the improvement of Ireland, and one might recall the names of long-departed officials in little experimental specimens of drainage, or fencing, or drill culture around. Less interested by these patchwork devices, Cashel stood gazing on a beautiful white bull, who grazed in a little paddock carefully fenced by a strong oak paling. Although of a small breed, he was a perfect specimen of strength and proportion, his massive and muscular neck and powerful loins contrasting with the lanky and tendinous form of the wild animal of the prairies.

The girls had not remarked that Roland, beckoning to his servant, despatched him at full speed on an errand, for each was loitering about, amusing herself with some object of the scene.

“What has fascinated you yonder?” said Miss Kennyfeck, riding up to where Roland still stood in wondering admiration at the noble animal.

“The handsomest bull I ever saw!” cried he, in all the ecstasy of a 'Torero;' “who ever beheld such a magnificent fellow? Mark the breadth of his chest, and the immense fore-arm. See how he lashes his tail about. No need of bandilleros to rouse your temper.”.

“Is there no danger of the creature springing over the paling?” said Olivia, drawing closer to Cashel, and looking at him with a most trustful dependence.

Alas for Roland's gallantry, he answered the words and not the glance that accompanied them.

“No; he'd never think of it, if not excited to some excess of passion. I 'd not answer for his patience, or our safety either, if really provoked. See! is not that glorious?” This burst of enthusiasm was called forth by the bull, seized with some sudden caprice, taking a circuit of the paddock at full speed, his head now raised majestically aloft, and now bent to the ground; he snatched some tufts of the grass as he went, and flung them from him in wild sport.

“Bravo, toro!” cried Cashel, in all the excitement of delight and admiration. “Viva el toro!” shouted he. “Not a 'Corrida' of the Old World or the New ever saw a braver beast.”

Whether in compliance with his humor, or that she really caught up the enthusiasm from Cashel, Miss Kennyfeck joined in all his admiration, and seemed to watch the playful pranks of the great animal with delight.

“How you would enjoy a real 'toro machia!'” said Cashel, as he turned towards her, and felt that she was far handsomer than he had ever believed before. Indeed, the heightened color of exercise, and the flashing brilliancy of her eyes, made her seem so without the additional charm derived from sympathy with his humor.

“I should delight in it,” cried she, with enthusiasm. “Oh, if I could but see one!”

Cashel drew nearer as she spoke, his dark and piercing eyes fixed with a look of steadfast admiration, when in a low half-whisper he said, “Would you really like it? Have these wild and desperate games an attraction for you?”

“Oh, do not ask me,” said she, in the same low voice. “Why should I confess a wish for that which never can be.”

“How can you say that? Have not far greater and less likely things happened to almost all of us? Think of me, for instance. Travelling with the Gambusinos a few months back, and now—now *your* companion here.”

If there was not a great deal in the mere words themselves, there was enough in the look of the speaker to make them deeply felt. How much further Cashel might have adventured, and with what additional speculations invested the future, is not for us to say; for just then his groom rode up at speed, holding in his hands a great coil of rope, to one end of which a small round ball of wood was fastened.

“What is that for, Mr. Cashel?” inquired both the girls together, as they saw him adjust the coils lightly on his left arm, and poise the ball in his right hand.

“Cannot you guess what it means?” said Roland, smiling. “Have you never heard of a lasso?”

“A lasso!” exclaimed both in amazement “You surely could never intend—”

“You shall see,” cried he, as he made three or four casts with the rope in the air, and caught up the loops again with astonishing dexterity. “Now only promise me not to be afraid, nor, if possible, let a cry escape, and I'll show you some rare sport Just take your places here; the horses will stand perfectly quiet.” Without waiting for a reply, he ordered the grooms to remain at either side of the young ladies, and then dismounting, he forced open the lock and led his horse into the paddock. This done, he leisurely closed the gate and mounted, every motion being as free from haste and excitement as if made upon the high-road. As for the bull, at the noise of the gate on its hinges, he lifted up his head; but as it were indifferent to the cause, he resumed his grazing attitude the moment after.

Cashel's first care seemed to be to reconnoitre the ground; for at a slow walk he traversed the space in various directions, carefully examining the footing and watching for any accidental circumstance that might vary the surface. He then rode up to the paling, where in unfeigned terror the two girls sat, silently following him in every motion.

“Now, remember,” said he, smiling, “no fears, no terrors. If you were to make me nervous, I should probably miss my cast, and the disgrace, not to speak of anything else, would be dreadful.”

“Oh, we 'll behave very well,” said Miss Kennyfeck, trying to assume a composure that her pale cheek and compressed lips very ill corroborated. As for Olivia, too terrified for words, she merely looked at him, while

the tears rolled heavily down her cheeks.

“Now, to see if my hand has not forgot its cunning!” said Roland, as he pressed his horse's flanks, and, pushing into a half-gallop, made a circuit around the bull. The scene was a picturesque as well as an exciting one. The mettlesome horse, on which the rider sat with consummate ease; in his right hand the loose coils of the lasso, with which to accustom his horse he flourished and shook around the head and ears of the animal as he went; while, with head bent down, and the strong neck slightly retracted, the bull seemed to watch him as he passed, and at length, slowly turning, continued to fix his eyes upon the daring intruder. Gradually narrowing his circle, Cashel was cautiously approaching within a suitable distance for the cast, when the bull, as it were losing patience, gave one short hoarse cry and made at him, so sudden the spring, and so infuriate the action, that a scream from both the sisters together showed how near the danger must have appeared. Roland, however, had foreseen from the attitude of the beast what was coming, and by a rapid wheel escaped the charge, and passed close beside the creature's flank, unharmed. Twice or thrice the same manouvre occurred with the same result; and although the horse was terrified to that degree that his sides were one sheet of foam, the control of the rider was perfect, and his every gesture bespoke ease and confidence.

Suddenly the bull stopped, and retiring till his haunches-touched the paling, he seemed surveying the field, and contemplating another and more successful mode of attack. The concentrated passion of the creature's attitude at this moment was very fine, as with red eyeballs and frothed lips he stood, slowly and in heavy strokes lashing his flanks with his long tail.

“Is he tired?” said Miss Kennyfeck, as Cashel stood close to the paling, and breathed his horse, for what he foresaw might be a sharp encounter.

“No! far from it,” answered Roland; “the fellow has the cunning of an old 'Corridor;' you 'll soon see him attack.”

The words were not well uttered, when, with a low deep roar, the bull bounded forward, not in a straight line, however, but zigzagging from left to right, and right to left, as if with the intention of pinning the horseman into a corner. The terrific springs of the great beast, and his still more terrific cries, appeared to paralyze the horse, who stood; immovable, nor was it till the savage animal had approached within a few yards of him, that at last he reared up straight, and then, as if overcome by terror, dashed off at speed, the bull following.

The scene was now one of almost maddening excitement; for, although the speed of the horse far exceeded that of his pursuer, the bull, by taking a small circle, was rapidly gaining on him, and, before the third circuit of the field was made, was actually almost side by side. Roland saw all his danger; he knew well that the slightest swerve, a “single mistake,” would be fatal; but he had been trained to peril, and this was not the first time he had played for life and won. It was then, just at the instant when the bull, narrowing his distance, was ready, by one bound, to drive his horns into the horse's flank, that the youth suddenly reined up, and throwing the horse nearly on his haunches, suffered his pursuer to shoot ahead. The same instant, at least so it seemed, he rose in his stirrups, and winding the rope three or four times above his head, hurled it forth. Away went the floating coils through the air, and with a sharp snap, they caught the animal's fore-legs in their fast embrace. Maddened by the restraint, he plunged forward, but ere he gained the ground, a dexterous pull of the lasso jerked the legs backwards, and the huge beast fell floundering to the earth. The stunning force seemed enough to have extinguished life, and he lay, indeed, motionless for a few seconds, when, by a mighty effort, he strove to burst his bonds. Roland, meanwhile, after a severe struggle to induce his horse to approach, abandoned the effort, sprang to the ground, and by three or four adroit turns of the lasso over the head and between the horns, completely fettered him, and at each fresh struggle passing new turns of the rope, he so bound him that the creature lay panting and powerless, his quivering sides and distended nostrils breathing the deep rage that possessed him.

“Ah, Mosquito mio,”—the Toridor's usual pet name for a young bull,—“you were an easy victory after all, though I believe with a little more practice of the game I should only get off second best.”

There was, if we must confess it, a certain little bit of boastfulness in the speech, the truth being that the struggle, though brief, had been a sharp one, and so Cashel's air and look bespoke it, as he led his horse out of the paddock.

It would be a somewhat nice point—happily, it is not requisite to decide it—whether Roland was more flattered by the enthusiastic praise of the elder sister, or touched by the silent but eloquent look with which Olivia received him.

“What a splendid sight, what a noble achievement!” said Miss Kennyfeck. “How I thank you for thus giving me, as it were, a peep into Spain, and letting me feel the glorious enthusiasm a deed of heroism can inspire!”

“Are you certain you are not hurt?” whispered Olivia; “the creature's horns certainly grazed you. Oh dear! how terrible it was at one moment!”

“Are you going to leave him in his toils?” said Miss Kennyfeck.

“Oh, certainly,” replied Cashel, laughing; “I commit the pleasant office of liberating him to other hands.” And so saying, he carelessly mounted his horse, while they pressed him with a hundred questions and inquiries about the late combat.

“I shall be amused to hear the reports that will be current to-morrow,” said Miss Kennyfeck, “about this affair. I 'm certain the truth will be the last to ooze out. My groom says that the creature belongs to the Lord Lieutenant, and if so, there will be no end to the stories.”

Cashel did not seem as much impressed as the sisters expected at this announcement, nor at all aware that he had been constructively affronting the Vice-Majesty of the land, and so he chatted away in pleasant indifference while they continued their ride towards home.

CHAPTER X. THE COMING DINNER-PARTY DISCUSSED

How kindness all its spirit lends,
When we discuss our dearest friends,
Not meanly faults and follies hiding,
But frankly owning each backsliding,
Confessing with polite compassion,
“They 're very bad, but still the fashion.”

The Mode.

The Kennyfecks were without strangers that day, and Cashel, who was now, as it were by unanimous election, received into the bosom of the family, enjoyed for the first time in his life a peep into the science of dinner-giving, in the discussions occasioned by the approaching banquet.

No sooner were they assembled around the drawing-room fire, than Mrs. Kennyfeck, whose whole soul was occupied by the one event, took occasion, as it were by pure accident, to remember that they “were to have some people to-morrow.” Now, the easy *nonchalance* of the reminiscence and the shortness of the invitation would seem to imply that it was merely one of those slight deviations from daily routine which adds two or three guests to the family table; and so, indeed, did it impress Cashel, who little knew that the dinner in question had been devised, planned, and arranged full three weeks before, and the company packed with a degree of care and selection that evinced all the importance of the event.

Time was when the Irish capital enjoyed, and justly, the highest reputation for all that constitutes social success; when around the dinner-tables of the city were met men of the highest order of intelligence, men pleased to exercise, without effort or display, all the charm of wit and eloquence, and to make society a brilliant reunion of those gifts which, in the wider sphere of active life, won fame and honors.

As the race of these bright conversers died out,—for, alas! they belonged to a past era,—their places were assumed by others of very dissimilar tastes. Many educated at English universities brought back with them to Ireland the more reserved and cautious demeanor of the other country, and thus, if not by their influence, by their mere presence, threw a degree of constraint over the tone of society, which, in destroying its freedom, despoiled it of all its charm.

Fashion, that idol of an Englishman's heart, soon became an Irish deity too, and it now grew the “ton” to be English, or at least what was supposed to be such, in dress and manner, in hours, accent, and demeanor. The attempt was never successful; the reserve and placidity which sit with gracefulness on the high-bred Englishman, was a stiff, uncourteous manner in the more cordial and volatile Irishman. His own demeanor was a tree that would not bear grafting, and the fruit lost all its raciness by the admixture.

The English officials at the Castle, the little staff of a commander of the forces, a newly-made bishop, fresh from Oxford, even the officers of the last arrived dragoon regiment, became, by right of “accent,” the types of manner and breeding in circles where, in the actual enjoyment of social qualities, they were manifestly beneath those over whom they held sway; however, they were stamped at the metropolitan mint, and the competitors were deemed a mere depreciated currency which a few years more would cancel forever.

Mrs. Kennyfeck, as a fashionable dinner-giver, of course selected her company from this more choice section; a fact which deserves to be recorded, to the credit of her hospitality; for it was a very rare occurrence indeed, when she found herself invited by any of those distinguished personages who figured the oftenest at her own table. They thought, perhaps justly, that their condescension was sufficiently great to demand no further acknowledgment; and that, as virtue is said to be its own reward, theirs was abundantly exhibited in the frankness with which they ate Kennyfeck's venison, and drank his Burgundy, both of which were excellent.

Every one dined there, because they knew “they 'd meet every one.” A pretender in the world of fashion, unlike a pretender to monarchy, is sure to have the best company in his *salon*; and so, although you might have met many at the tables of the first men of the country, who were there by virtue of their talents or abilities, at Kennyfeck's the company was sure to be “select.” They could not afford dilution, lest they should find themselves at ease!

“Olivia, pray take that newspaper from Mr. Kennyfeck, and let us hear who he has asked to dinner to-morrow,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, gracefully imitating an attitude of Lady Londonderry in the “Book of Beauty.”

Mr. Kennyfeck heard the request, and started; his surprise had not been greater if the Chancellor had addressed him as “Tom.” It was the first time in his life that an allusion had ever been made to the bare possibility of his inviting the company of a grand dinner; a prerogative he had never so much as dreamed of, and now he actually heard his wife refer to him, as if he were even a party to the deed.

“Invite! Mrs. Kennyfeck. I 'm sure I never thought—”

“No matter what you thought,” said his spouse, reddening at his stupidity. “I wanted to remember who are coming, that we may let Mr. Cashel learn something of our Dublin folk.”

“Here's a list, mamma,” said Olivia; “and I believe there are no apologies. Shall I read it?”

“Do so, child,” said she, but evidently out of humor that the delightful little display of indifference and ignorance should not have succeeded better.

“Sir Andrew and Lady Janet MacFarline, of course!” cried Miss Kennyfeck; “ain't they first?”

“They are,” replied her sister.

“Sir Andrew, Mr. Cashel,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, “is a very distinguished officer,—a K.C.B., and something else besides. He was in all the Duke's battles in Spain; a most gallant officer, but a little rough in manner,—Scotch, you know. Lady Janet was sister to Lord—What is that lord, Caroline? I always forget.”

“Dumkeeran, mamma.”

“Yes, that's it She is a charming person, but very proud,—very proud, indeed; will not visit with the Dublin

people. With us, I must say, I have never seen anything like her kindness; we are absolutely like sisters. Go on, Olivia.”

“Lord Charles Frobisher.”

“And the Honorable Elliot St. John,” chimed in her sister; “Damon and Pythias, where a dinner is concerned.” This was said in a whisper.

“They are aides-de-camp to the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Charles is younger brother to the Duke of Derwent; quite a man of fashion, and so amusing. Oh, he 's delightful!”

“Charming!” duetted the two sisters.

“Mr. St. John is a very nice person too; but one never knows him like Lord Charles: he is more reserved. Olivia, however, says he has a great deal in him.”

“Oh, mamma! I 'm sure I don't know; I only thought him much more conversable than he gets credit for.”

“Well, I meant no more,” said her mother, who did not fancy the gathering gloom on Cashel's face at this allusion; “read on again, child.”

“Lord Chief Justice Malone.”

“Oh, Mr. Kennyfeck,” said she, playfully, “this is *your* doing; I suspected, from your confusion awhile ago, what you were at.” Then, turning to Roland, she said, “He is always playing us this trick, Mr. Cashel; whenever we have a few friends together, he will insist upon inviting some of his old bar cronies!”

A deep groan from Mr. Kennyfeck at the terrible profanity of thus styling the chief of the Common Pleas, made every one start; but even this, like a skilful tactician, Mrs. Kennyfeck turned to her own advantage.

“Pray don't sigh that way. He is a most excellent person, a great lawyer, and, they say, must eventually have the peerage.” She nodded to Olivia to proceed, who read on.

“The Attorney-General and Mrs. Knivett.”

“Oh, really, Mr. Kennyfeck, this is pushing prerogative; don't you think so, Mr. Cashel? Not but, you know, the Attorney-General is a great personage in this poor country; he is member for—where is it?”

“Baldoyle, mamma.”

“Yes, member for Baldoyle; and she was a Miss Gamett, of Red Gamett, in Antrim; a most respectable connection; so I think we may forgive him. Yes, Mr. Kennyfeck, you are, at least, reprieved.”

“Here come the Whites, mamma. I suppose we may reckon on both, though she, as usual, sends her hopes and fears about being with us at dinner, but will be delighted to come in the evening.”

“That apology is stereotyped,” broke in Miss Kennyfeck, “as well as the little simpering speech she makes on entering the drawing-room. 'So you see, my dear Mrs. Kennyfeck, there is no resisting you. Colonel White assured me that your pleasant dinners always set him up for a month,—he, he, he.'”

If Cashel had not laughed heartily at the lisping imitation, it is possible Mrs. Kennyfeck might have been displeased; but as the quiz “took,” she showed no umbrage whatever.

“The Honorable Downie Meek, Under Secretary of State,” read Olivia, with a little more of emphasis than on the last-mentioned names.

“A person you'll be charmed with, Mr. Cashel,—so highly informed, so well bred, so perfectly habituated to move in the very highest circles,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, giving herself, as she spoke, certain graces of gesture which she deemed illustrative of distinguished fashion.

“A cucumber dressed in oil,” whispered Miss Kennyfeck, who showed more than once a degree of impatience at these eulogistic descriptions.

“The Dean of Dramcondera, your great favorite, mamma.”

“So he is, my dear. Now, Mr. Cashel, I shall insist upon you liking my Dean. I call him *my* Dean, because one day last spring—”

“Mrs. Biles wants to speak to you, ma'am, for a minute,” said the butler from behind the chair; and although the interruption was anything but pleasant, yet the summons must be obeyed, for Mrs. Biles was the housekeeper, and any approach to treating her with indifference or contempt on the eve of a great dinner would be about as impolitic as insulting a general who was about to command in a great battle; so that Mrs. Kennyfeck rose to comply, not even venturing a word of complaint, lest the formidable functionary should hear of it, and take her revenge on the made dishes.

“Now for the Dean. Is mamma out of hearing?” said Miss Kennyfeck, who rejoiced at the casual opportunity of a little portrait-painting in a different style. “Conceive a tall, pompous man, with large white features, and a high bald head with a conical top; a sharp, clear, but unpleasant voice, always uttering grave nonsense, or sublime absurdity. He was a brilliant light at Oxford, and came over to illumine our darkness, and if pedantry could only supply the deficiency in the potato crop, he would be a providence to the land. His affectation is to know everything, from chuck-farthing to conic sections, and so to diffuse his information as always to talk science to young ladies, and discuss the royal game of goose with Lords of the Treasury. His failures in these attempts at Admirable Crichtonism would abash even confidence great as his, but that he is surrounded by a little staff of admirers, who fend off the sneers of the audience, and, like buffers, break the rude shocks of worldly collision. Socially, he is the tyrant of this capital; for having learning enough to be more than a match for those he encounters, and skill enough to give his paradoxes a mock air of authority, he usurps a degree of dictation and rule that makes society mere slavery. You 'll meet him to-morrow evening, and you'll see if he does not know more of Mexico and Savannah life than you do. Take care, I say, that you venture not into the wilds of the Pampas; for you'll have his companionship, not as fellow-traveller, but as guide and instructor. As for myself, whenever I read in the papers of meetings to petition Parliament to repeal this or redress that, in the name of 'Justice to Ireland,' I ask, why does nobody pray for the recall of the Dean of Drumcondera?”

“Here's mamma,” whispered Olivia, as the drawing-room door opened.

“We've done the Dean, mamma,” said Miss Kennyfeck, with calm composure.

“Well, don't you feel that you love him already? Mr. Cashel, confess that you participate in all my raptures.

Oh dear! I do so admire talent and genius," exclaimed Mrs. Kennyfeck, theatrically.

Cashel smiled, and muttered something unintelligible; and Olivia read on, but with a rapidity that showed the names required no special notice. "The Craufurds, the Smythes, Mrs. Felix Brown, Lady Emmeline Grove."

"Oh, that dear Lady Emmeline! a most gifted creature; she 's the authoress of some sweet poems. She wrote that touching sonnet in the 'Nobility's Gallery of Loveliness,' beginning, 'Twin Sister of the Evening Star.' I'm sure you know it."

"I 'm unfortunate enough never to have seen it," said Cashel.

"Well, you shall see the writer to-morrow evening; I must really take care that you are acquainted. People will tell you that she is affected, and takes airs of authorship; but remember her literary success,—think of her contributions to the 'Court Journal.'"

"Those sweet flatteries of the nobility that Linton calls court-plaster, mamma," said Miss Kennyfeck, laughing maliciously.

"Linton is very abusive," said her mother, tartly; "he never has a good word for any one."

"He used to be a pet of yours, mamma," insinuated Olivia.

"So he was till he became so intimate with those atrocious Fothergills."

"Who is he?" said Cashel.

"He's a son of Sir George Linton."

"That's one story, mamma; but as nobody ever saw the aforesaid Sir George, the presumption is it may be incorrect. The last version is that he was found, like Moses, the discoverer being Lady Harriet Dropmore, who, with a humanity never to be forgotten,"—"or forgiven," whispered Olivia, "for she has been often taunted with it,"—"took care of the creature, and had it reared,—nay, better again, she sent it to Rugby and to Cambridge, got it into Parliament for Elmwood, and has now made it Master of the Horse in Ireland."

"He is the most sarcastic person I ever met."

"It is such an easy talent," said Miss Kennyfeck; "the worst of wine makes capital vinegar."

"Then here follow a set of soldier people," said Olivia,—"hussars and Queen's Bays, and a Captain Tanker of the Royal Navy,—oh, I remember, he has but one arm,—and then the Pelertons and the Cuffes."

"Well, are we at the end of our muster-roll?"

"Yes, we have nearly reached the dregs of the cup. I see Mr. Knox Softly, and the Townleys!"

"Oh, the Townleys! Poor Mrs. Townley, with her yellow turban and red feathers, that Lord Dunbrock mistook for a *vol-au-vent* garnished with shrimps."

"Caroline!" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, reprovingly, for her daughter's sallies had more than once verged upon the exhaustion of her patience.

"We shall not weary you with any description of the 'refreshers,' Mr. Cashel."

"Pray who and what are they?" inquired Cashel.

"The 'refreshers' are that amiable but undervalued class in society who are always asked for the evening when the other members of the family are invited to dine. They are the young lady and young gentleman class,—the household with ten daughters, and a governess that sings like, anything but, Persiani. They are briefless barristers, with smart whiskers; and young men reading for the Church, with moustaches; infantry officers, old maids, fellows of college, and the gentleman who tells Irish stories."

"Caroline, I really must request—"

"But, mamma, Mr. Cashel surely ought to learn the map of the country he is to live in."

"I am delighted to acquire my geography so pleasantly," cried Cashel. "Pray go on."

"I am bound over," said she, smiling; "mamma is looking penknives at me, so I suppose I must stop. But as to these same 'refreshers,' you will easily distinguish them from the dinner company. The young ladies are always fresher in their white muslin; they walk about in gangs, and eat a prodigious deal of bread-and-butter at tea. Well, I have done, mamma, though I 'm sure I was not aware of my transgressions."

"I declare Mr. Kennyfeck is asleep again.—Mr. Kenny-feck, have the goodness to wake up and say who is to make the whist-table for Lady Blennerbore."

"Yes, my Lord," said Mr. Kennyfeck, waking up and rubbing his eyes, "we'll take a verdict for the plaintiff, leaving the points reserved."

A very general laugh here recalled him to himself, as with extreme confusion he continued, "I was so fatigued in the Rolls to-day. It was an argument relative to a trust, Mr. Cashel, which it is of great moment you should be relieved of."

"Oh, never trouble your head about it now, sir," said Cashel, good-naturedly. "I am quite grieved at the weariness and fatigue my affairs are costing you."

"I was asking about Lady Blennerbore's whist," interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck. "Who have you for her party besides the Chief Justice?"

"Major M'Cartney says he can't afford it, mamma," said the eldest daughter, slyly. "She is so very lucky with the honors!"

"Where is Thorpe?" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, not deigning to notice this speech,—"he used to like his rubber."

"He told me," said Miss Kennyfeck, "that he would n't play with her Ladyship any more; that one had some chance formerly, but that since she has had that touch of the palsy, she does what she likes with the Kings and Aces."

"This is atrocious; never let me hear it again," said the mamma, indignantly; "at all events, old Mr. Moore Hacket will do."

"Poor old man, he is so blind that he has to thumb the cards all over to try and know them by the feel, and

then he always washes the King and Queen's faces with a snuffy handkerchief, so that the others are sneezing at every trick they play."

"Caroline, you permit yourself to take the most improper freedoms; I desire that we may have no more of this."

"I rather like old Mr. Hacket," said the incorrigible assailant; "he mistook Mr. Pottinger's bald and polished head for a silver salver, and laid his teacup on it, the last evening he was here."

If Cashel could not help smiling at Miss Kennyfeck's sallies, he felt it was in rather a strange spirit of hospitality the approaching entertainment was given, since few of the guests were spared the most slighting sarcasms, and scarcely for any was there professed the least friendship or affection. He was, however, very new to "the world," and the strange understanding on which its daily intercourse, its social life of dinners, visits, and *déjeuners* subsists, was perfectly unknown to him. He had much to learn; but as his nature was of an inquiring character, he was as equal as he was well inclined to its task. It was then, with less enjoyment of the scene for its absurdity, than actually as an occasion to acquire knowledge of people and modes of living hitherto unknown, he listened gravely to the present discussion, and sat with attentive ears to hear who was to take in Lady Janet, and whether Sir Archy should precede the Chief Justice or not; if a Dragoon Colonel should take the *pas* of an Attorney-General, and whether it made the same difference in an individual's rank that it did in his comfort, that he was on the half-pay list When real rank is concerned, few things are easier than the arrangement of such details; the rules are simple, the exceptions few, if any; but in a society where the distinctions are inappreciable, where the designations are purely professional, an algebraic equation is simpler of solution than such difficulties.

Then came a very animated debate as to the places at table, wherein lay the extreme difficulty of having every one away from the fire and nobody in a draught, except, of course, those little valued guests who really appeared to play the ignoble part of mortar in a great edifice, being merely the cohesive ingredient that averted friction between more important materials. Next came the oft-disputed question as to whether the champagne should be served with the *petits pâtés*, after the fish, or at a remote stage of the second course, the young ladies being eager advocates of the former, Mrs. Kennyfeck as firmly denouncing the practice as a new-fangled thing, that "the Dean" himself said he had never seen at Christchurch; but the really great debate arose on a still more knotty point, and one on which it appeared the family had brought in various bills, without ever discovering the real remedy. It was by what means—of course, moral force means—it were possible to induce old Lady Blennerbore to rise from table whenever Mrs. Kennyfeck had decreed that move to be necessary.

It was really moving to listen to Mrs. Kennyfeck's narratives of signals unnoticed and signs unattended to; that even on the very last day her Ladyship had dined there, Mrs. Kennyfeck had done little else for three quarters of an hour than half stand and sit down again, to the misery of herself and the discomfort of her neighbors.

"Poor dear old thing," said Olivia, "she is so very nearsighted."

"Not a bit of it," said her sister; "don't tell me of bad sight that can distinguish the decanter of port from the claret, which I have seen her do some half-dozen times without one blunder."

"I 'd certainly stop the supplies," said Cashel; "wouldn't that do?"

"Impossible!" said Miss Kennyfeck; "you couldn't starve the whole garrison for one refractory subject."

"Mr. Linton's plan was a perfect failure, too," said Mrs. Kennyfeck. "He thought by the introduction of some topic ladies do not usually discuss that she would certainly withdraw; on the contrary, her Ladyship called out to me, 'I see your impatience, my dear, but I must hear the end of this naughty story.' We tried the French plan, too, and made the gentlemen rise with us; but really they were so rude and ill-tempered the entire evening after, I 'll never venture on it again."

Here the whole party sighed and were silent, as if the wished-for mode of relief were as distant as ever.

"Must we really ask those Claridge girls to sing, mamma?" said Miss Kennyfeck, after a long pause.

"Of course you must. They were taught by Costa, and they are always asked wherever they go."

"As a matter of curiosity, Mr. Cashel, the thing is worth hearing. Paganini's monocorde was nothing to it, for they 'll go through a whole scena of Donizetti with only one note in their voice. Oh dear! how very tiresome it all is; the same little scene of pressings and refusals and entreaties and rejections, and the oft-repeated dispute of the sisters between 'Notte divina' and 'Non vedro mai,' ending in that Tyrolese thing, which is on every organ in the streets, and has not the merit of the little shaved dog with the hat in his mouth, to make it droll. And then"—here Miss Kennyfeck caught a side glance of a most rebuking frown on her mother's face, so that adroitly addressing herself to Cashel, she seemed unaware of it,—"and then, when the singing is over, and those who detest music are taking their revenge by abusing the singers, and people are endeavoring to patch up the interrupted chattings,—then, I suppose, we are quite suddenly, without the slightest premeditation, to suggest a quadrille or carpet-dance. This is to be proposed as a most new and original idea that never occurred to any one before, and is certain to be hailed with a warm enthusiasm; all the young ladies smiling and smirking, and the gentlemen fumbling for their soiled kid gloves,—clean ones would destroy the merit of the impromptu."

"I 'm certain Mr. Cashel's impression of our society here will scarcely be flattering, from what he has heard this evening," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, rising.

"He'll see with his own eyes to-morrow night," said Miss Kennyfeck, coolly.

"Will you favor me with a little of your time in the morning?" said Mr. Kennyfeck to Cashel. "I find that I cannot avoid troubling you; there are several documents for signature, and if you could devote an hour, or, if possible, two—"

"I am perfectly at your orders," said Cashel; "the ladies say that they will not ride, and therefore dispose of me as you like."

A hearty good-night followed, and the party broke up.

CHAPTER XI. A DRIVE WITH THE LADIES.

Geld kann vieles in der Welt.

—Wiener Lied.

(Money can do much in this world.)

When Cashel descended the stairs to breakfast, he took a peep into the drawing-room as he went, some slight hope of seeing Olivia, perhaps, suggesting the step. He was disappointed, however; except a servant arranging candies in the lustres, the room was empty. The same fate awaited him in the breakfast-room, where a small table, most significantly laid for two, showed that a *tête-à-tête* with his host was in store for him. No wonder, then, if Mr. Kennyfeck saw something of impatience in the air of his young guest, whose eyes turned to the door each time it opened, or were as hastily directed to the garden at each stir without,—evident signs of thoughts directed in channels different from the worthy solicitor's.

Confess, my dear reader,—if you be of the sex to judge of these matters,—confess it is excessively provoking when you have prepared your mind, sharpened your wit—perhaps, too, curled your whiskers—with a latent hope that you are to meet and converse with two very handsome and sprightly girls, that the interview is converted into a scene with “Papa.” For ourselves, who acknowledge to have a kind of Catholicism in these affairs, who like the dear creatures in all the flaunting dash of a riding-hat and habit, cantering away of a breezy day, with laughing voice and half-uncurled hair; who delight to see them lounging in a britzska or lolling in a phaeton; who gaze with rapture on charms heightened by the blaze of full-dress, and splendid in all the brilliancy of jewels and flowers,—we own that we have a kind of fondness, almost amounting to a preference, for the prim coquettishness of a morning-dress—some light muslin thing, floating and gauzy—showing the figure to perfection, and in its simplicity suiting well the two braids of hair so innocently banded on the cheeks. There is something of conscious power in the quiet garb, a sense of trustfulness; it is like the warrior advancing without his weapons to a conference that is exceedingly pleasing, seeming to say, You see that I am not a being of tulle, and gauze, and point de Bruxelles, of white satin, and turquoise, and pink camellias, but a creature whose duties may be in the daily round of life, meant to sit beside on a grassy slope as much as on a velvet ottoman, to talk with as well as flirt with.

We have no means of knowing if Cashel was of our mind, and whether these demi-toilette visions were as suggestive to his as they are to our imagination, but that he bore his disappointment with a very bad grace we can perfectly answer for, and showed, by his distracted manner and inattentive air, that the papa's companionship was a very poor substitute for the daughters'.

It must be owned, too, that Mr. Kennyfeck was scarcely a brilliant converser, nor, had he been so, was the matter under consideration of a kind to develop and display his abilities. The worthy solicitor had often promised himself the pleasure he now enjoyed of recounting the whole story of the law proceedings. It was the great event of his own life, “his Waterloo,” and he dwelt on every detail with a prosy dalliance that was death to the listener. Legal subtleties, shrewd and cunning devices of crafty counsellors, all the artful dodges of the profession, Cashel heard with a scornful indifference or a downright apathy, and it demanded all Mr. Kennyfeck's own enthusiasm in the case to make him persist in a narrative so uninteresting to its only auditor.

“I fear I weary you, Mr. Cashel,” said the solicitor, “with these details, but I really supposed that you must feel desirous of knowing not only the exact circumstances of your estate, but of learning the very singular history by which your claim was substantiated.”

“If I am to be frank,” said Cashel, boldly, “I must tell you that these things possess not the slightest interest for me. When I was a gambler—which, unfortunately, I was at one time—whether I won or lost, I never could endure to discuss the game after it was over. So long as there was a goal to reach, few men could feel more ardor in the pursuit. I believe I have the passion for success as strong as my neighbors, but the struggle over, the prize won, whether by myself or another it mattered not, it ceased to have any hold upon me. I could address myself to a new contest, but never look back on the old one.”

“So that,” said Kennyfeck, drawing a long breath to conceal a sigh, “I am to conclude that this is a topic you would not desire to renew. Well, I yield of course; only pray how am I to obtain your opinion on questions concerning your property?”

“My opinions,” said Cashel, “must be mere arbitrary decisions, come to without any knowledge; that you are well aware of. I know nothing of this country,—neither its interests, its feelings, nor its tastes. I know just as little of what wealth will do, and what it will not do. Tell me, therefore, in a few words, what other men, situated as I am, would pursue,—what habits they would adopt, how live, and with whom. If I can conform, without any great sacrifice of personal freedom, I 'll do so, because I know of no slavery so bad as notoriety. Just then give me your counsel, and I ask, intending to follow it.”

Few men were less able than Mr. Kennyfeck to offer a valuable opinion on these difficult subjects, but the daily routine of his professional life had made him acquainted with a certain detail that seemed, to himself at least, an undeviating rule of procedure. He knew that, to the heir of a large estate coming of age, a wife and a seat in Parliament were the two first objects. He had so often been engaged in drawing up settlements for the one, and raising money for the other contingency, that they became as associated in his mind with one-and-twenty years of age as though intended by Nature to denote it.

With some reserve, which we must not scrutinize, he began with the political object.

“I suppose, sir,” said he, “you will desire to enter Parliament?”

“I should like it,” said Cashel, earnestly, “if a sense of inferiority would not weigh too heavily on me to

compensate for the pleasure. With an education so neglected as mine, I should run the hazard of either unjustly depreciating my own judgment, or what is worse, esteeming it at more than its worth. Now, though I suspect that the interest of politics would have a great attraction for me, I should always occupy too humble a station regarding them, to make that interest a high one. Omit Parliament, then, and what next?”

“The duties of a country gentleman are various and important—the management of your estates—”

“This I must leave in your hands,” said Cashel, abruptly. “Suggest something else.”

“Well, of course, these come in a far less important category; but the style of your living, the maintenance of a house befitting your rank and property, the reception of your country neighbors,—all these are duties.”

“I am very ignorant of forms,” said Cashel, haughtily; “but I opine that if a man spare no money, with a good cook, a good cellar, a good stable, and *carte blanche* from the owner to make free with everything, these duties are not very difficult to perform.”

Had Mr. Kennyfeck known more of such matters, he might have told him that something was still wanting,—that something which can throw its perfume of good-breeding and elegance over the humble dinner-party in a cottage, and yet be absent from the gorgeous splendor of a banquet in a palace. Mr. Kennyfeck did not know this, so he accorded his fullest assent to Cashel's opinion.

“What comes next?” said Roland, impatiently, “for as I am neither politician nor country gentleman, nor can I make a pursuit of mere hospitality, I really do not see what career is open to me.”

Mr. Kennyfeck had been on the eve of introducing the topic of marriage, when this sally suddenly routed the attempt. The man who saw nothing to occupy him in politics, property, or social intercourse would scarcely deem a wife an all-sufficient ambition. Mr. Kennyfeck was posed.

“I see, sir, your task is a hard one; it is no less than to try and conform my savage tastes and habits to civilized usages,—a difficult thing, I am certain; however, I promise compliance with any ritual for a while. I have often been told that the possession of fortune in these countries imposes more restraints in the shape of duties than does poverty elsewhere. Let me try the problem for myself. Now, dictate, and I obey.”

“After all,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, taking courage, “few men would deem it a hard condition in which to find themselves master of above £16,000 a year, to enter Parliament, to keep a good house, and marry—as every man in your circumstances may—the person of his choice.”

“Oh! Is matrimony another article of the code?” said Cashel, smiling. “Well, that is the greatest feature, because the others are things to abandon, if not found to suit your temper or inclination—but a wife—that does look somewhat more permanent. No matter, I'll adventure all and everything—of course depending on your guidance for the path.”

Mr. Kennyfeck was too happy at these signs of confidence to neglect an opportunity for strengthening the ties, and commenced a very prudent harangue upon the necessity of Cashel's using great caution in his first steps, and not committing himself by anything like political pledges, till he had firmly decided which side to adopt. “As to society,” said he, “of course you will select those who please you most for your intimates; but in politics there are many considerations very different from mere liking. Be only guarded, however, in the beginning, and you risk nothing by waiting.”

“And as to the other count in the indictment,” said Cashel, interrupting a rather prosy dissertation about political parties,—“as to the other count—matrimony I mean. I conclude, as the world is so exceedingly kind as to take a profound interest in all the sayings and doings of a man with money, that perhaps it is not indifferent regarding so eventful a step as his marriage. Now, pray, Mr. Kennyfeck, having entered Parliament, kept open house, hunted, shot, raced, dined, gambled, duelled, and the rest, to please society, how must I satisfy its exigencies in this last particular? I mean, is there any particular style of lady,—tall, short, brunette or fair, dark-eyed or blue-eyed,—or what, in short, is the person I must marry if I would avoid transgressing any of those formidable rules which seem to regulate every action of your lives, and, if I may believe Mr. Phillis, superintend the very color of your cravat and the shape of your hat?”

“Oh, believe me,” replied Mr. Kennyfeck with a bland persuasiveness, “fashion is only exigeant in small matters; the really momentous affairs of life are always at a man's own disposal. Whoever is fortunate enough to be Mr. Cashel's choice, becomes, by the fact, as elevated above envious criticisms as she will be above the sphere where they alone prevail.”

“So far that is very flattering. Now for another point. There is an old shipmate of mine—a young Spanish officer—who has lived rather a rakish kind of life. I 'm not quite sure if he has not had a brush or two with our flag, for he dealt a little in ebony—you understand—the slave-trade, I mean. How would these fine gentlemen, I should like to know, receive him? Would they look coldly and distantly at him? I should naturally wish to see him at my house, but not that he might be offered anything like slight or insult.”

“I should defer it, certainly. I would recommend you not pressing this visit, till you have surrounded yourself with a certain set, a party by whom you will be known and upheld.”

“So then, if I understand you aright, I must obtain a kind of security for my social good conduct before the world will trust me? Now, this does seem rather hard, particularly as no man is guilty till he has been convicted.”

“The bail-bond is little else than a matter of form,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, smiling, and glad to cap an allusion which his professional pursuits made easy of comprehension.

“Well,” sighed Cashel, “I'm not quite certain that this same world of yours and I shall be long friends, if even we begin as such. I have all my life been somewhat of a rebel, except where authority was lax enough to make resistance unnecessary. How am I to get on here, hemmed in and fenced by a hundred restrictions?”

Mr. Kennyfeck could not explain to him that these barriers were less restrictions against personal liberty than defences against aggression; so he only murmured some commonplaces about “getting habituated,” and “time,” and so on, and apologized for what he, in reality, might have expatiated on as privileges.

“My mistress wishes to know, sir,” said a footman, at this juncture, “if Mr. Cashel will drive out with her? the carriage is at the door.”

“Delighted!” cried Cashel, looking at the same time most uncourteously pleased to get away from his tiresome companion.

Cashel found Mrs. Kennyfeck and her daughters seated in a handsome barouche, whose appointments, bating, perhaps, some little exuberance in display, were all perfect. The ladies, too, were most becomingly attired, and the transition from the tittle cobwebbed den of the solicitor to the free air and pleasant companionship, excited his spirits to the utmost.

“How bored you must have been by that interview!” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as they drove away.

“Why do you say so?” said Cashel, smiling.

“You looked so weary, so thoroughly tired out, when you joined us. I'm certain Mr. Kennyfeck has been reading aloud all the deeds and documents of the trial, and reciting the hundred-and-one difficulties which his surpassing acuteness, poor dear man! could alone overcome.”

“No, indeed you wrong him,” said Roland, with a laugh; “he scarcely alluded to what he might have reasonably dwelt upon with pride, and what demands all my gratitude. He was rather giving me, what I so much stand in need of, a little lecture on my duties and devoirs as a possessor of fortune; a code, I shame to confess, perfectly strange to me.”

A very significant glance from Mrs. Kennyfeck towards the girls revealed the full measure of her contempt for the hardihood of poor Mr. Kennyfeck's daring; but quickly assuming a smile, she said, “And are we to be permitted to hear what these excellent counsels were, or are these what the Admiralty calls 'secret instructions'?”

“Not in the least. Mr. Kennyfeck sees plainly enough—it is but too palpable—that I am as ignorant of this new world as he himself would be, if dropped down suddenly in an Indian encampment, and that as the thing I detest most in this life is any unnecessary notoriety, I want to do as far as in me lies, like my neighbors. I own to you that the little sketch with which he favored me is not too fascinating, but he assures me that with time and patience and zeal I'll get over my difficulties, and make a very tolerable country gentleman.”

“But, my *dear* Mr. Cashel,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a great emphasis on the epithet, “why do you think of listening to Mr. Kennyfeck on such a subject? Poor man, he takes all his notions of men and manners from the Exchequer and Common Pleas.”

“Papa's models are all in horse-hair wigs,—fat mummies in ermine!” said Miss Kennyfeck.

“When Mr. Cashel knows Lord Charles,” said Olivia.

“Or Mr. Linton—”

“Or the Dean,” broke in Mrs. Kennyfeck; “for although a Churchman, his information on every subject is boundless.”

Miss Kennyfeck gave a sly look towards Cashel, which very probably entered a dissent to her mamma's opinion.

“If I were you,” resumed she, tenderly, “I know what I should do; coolly rejecting all their counsels, I should fashion my life as it pleased myself to live, well assured that in following my bent I should find plenty of people only too happy to lend me their companionship. Just reflect, for a moment, how very agreeable you can make your house, without in the least compromising any taste or inclination of your own; without, in fact, occupying your mind on the subject.”

“But the world,” remarked Mrs. Kennyfeck, “must be cared for! It would not do for one in Mr. Cashel's station to form his associates only among those whose agreeability is their recommendation.”

“Then let him know the Dean, mamma,” said Miss Kennyfeck, slyly.

“Yes, my dear,” rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, not detecting the sarcasm, “I cannot fancy one more capable of affording judicious counsel. You spoke about ordering plate, Mr. Cashel; but of course you will apply to Storr and Mortimer. Everything is so much better in London; otherwise, here we are at Leonard's.”

The carriage drove up, as she spoke, to the door of a very splendid-looking shop, where in all the attractive display modern taste has invented, plate and jewellery glittered and dazzled.

“It was part of Mr. Kennyfeck's counsel this morning,” said Cashel, “that I should purchase anything I want in Ireland, so far, at least, as practicable; so, if you will aid me in choosing, we 'll take the present opportunity.”

Mrs. Kennyfeck was overjoyed at the bare mention of such an occasion of display, and sailed into the shop with an air that spoke plain as words themselves, “I'm come to make your fortune.” So palpable, indeed, was the manner of her approach, that the shopman hastily retired to seek the proprietor of the establishment,—a little pompous man, with a bald head,—who, having a great number of “bad debts” among his high clients, had taken to treating great folk with a very cool assumption of equality.

“Mr. Cashel is come to look about some plate, Mr. Leonard. Let us see your book of drawings; and have you those models you made for Lord Kellorane?”

“We have better, ma'am,” said Leonard. “We have the plate itself. If you will step upstairs. It is all laid out on the tables. The fact is”—here he dropped his voice—“his lordship's marriage with Miss Fenchurch is broken off, and he will not want the plate, and we have his orders to sell it at once.”

“And is that beautiful pony-phaeton, with the two black Arabians, to be sold?” asked Miss Kennyfeck, eagerly. “He only drove them once, I think.”

“Yes, madam, everything: they are all to be auctioned at Dycer's to-day.”

“At what hour?” inquired Cashel.

“At three, precisely, sir.”

“Then it wants but five minutes of the time,” said Cashel, looking at his watch.

“But the plate, sir? Such an opportunity may never occur again,” broke in Leonard, fearful of seeing his customer depart unprofitably.

“Oh, to be sure. Let us see it,” said Cashel, as he handed Mrs. Kennyfeck upstairs.

An exclamation of surprise and delight burst from the party at the magnificent display which greeted them on entering the room. How splendid—what taste—how very beautiful—so elegant—so massive—so chaste! and fifty other encomiastic phrases.

“Very fine, indeed, ma'am,” chimed in Leonard; “cost fifteen and seven-pence the ounce throughout, and now to be sold for thirteen shillings.”

“What is the price?” said Cashel, in a low whisper.

“There are, if I remember right, sir, but I 'll ascertain in a moment, eight thousand ounces.”

“I want to know the sum in one word,” rejoined Cashel, hastily.

“It will be something like three thousand seven hundred and—”

“Well, say three thousand seven hundred, it is mine.”

“These ice-pails are not included, sir.”

“Well, send them also, and let me know the price. How handsome that brooch is! Let me see it on your velvet dress, Mrs. Kennyfeck. Yes, that really looks well. Pray let it remain there.”

“Oh, I could not think of such a thing! It is far too costly. It is the most splendid—”

“You 'll not refuse me, I hope, a first request, madam,” said he, with a half-offended air.

Mrs. Kennyfeck, really overwhelmed by the splendor of the gift, complied with a reluctant shame.

“These are the diamonds that were ordered for the bride,” said Leonard, opening a jewel-casket, and exhibiting a most magnificent suite.

“Oh, how sorry she must be!” cried Miss Kennyfeck, as she surveyed the glittering mass.

“If she loved him,” murmured Olivia, in a low whisper, as if to herself, but overheard by Cashel, who kept his eyes towards her with an expression of deep interest.

“If the gentleman stood in need of such a set,” said Leonard, “I am empowered to dispose of them at the actual cost. It is old Mr. Fenchurch who suffers all the loss, and he can very well afford it. As a wedding present, sir—”

“But I am not going to be married, that I know of,” said Cashel, smiling.

“Perhaps not this week, sir, or the next,” rejoined the self-sufficient jeweller; “but, of course, that time will come. Two thousand pounds for such a suite is positively getting them a present, to break them up and reset them.”

“How shocking!” cried Miss Kennyfeck.

“Yes, madam; but what is to be done? They only suit large fortunes in their present form; these, unfortunately, are very rare with us.”

“A quarter past three!” exclaimed Cashel; “we shall be too late.”

“And the diamonds, sir?” said Leonard, following him downstairs.

“Do *you* think them so handsome?” said Cashel to Olivia, as she walked at his side.

“Oh, they are most beautiful,” replied she, with a bashful falling of her eyelids.

“I 'll take them also,” whispered Cashel to Leonard, who, for perhaps the only time for years past, accompanied the party, bareheaded, to their carriage, and continued bowing till they drove away.

“Dycer's,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck; “and as fast as you can.”

With all their speed they came too late. The beautiful equipage had been already disposed of, and was driving from the gate as they drew up.

“How provoking!—how terribly provoking!” exclaimed Mrs. Kennyfeck.

“I declare, I think them handsomer than ever,” said Miss Kennyfeck, as she surveyed the two well-matched and highly-bred ponies.

“Who bought them?” asked Mrs. Kennyfeck.

“I am the fortunate individual, or rather the unhappy one, who excites such warm regrets,” said Mr Linton, as he lounged on the door of the carriage. “I would I were Rothschild, or his son, or his godson, to beg your acceptance of them.”

“What did you give for them, Mr. Linton?” asked Mrs. Kennyfeck.

“How unfair to ask; and you, too, who understand these things so well.”

“I want to purchase them,” said she, laughing; “that was my reason.”

“To you, then, the price is what I have just paid,—a hundred and fifty.”

“How cheap!”

“Absolutely for nothing. I bought them on no other account. I really do not want such an equipage.”

“To be serious, then,” resumed Mrs. Kennyfeck, “we came here with Mr. Cashel to purchase them, and just arrived a few minutes too late.”

“Quite early enough to allow of my being able to render you a slight service; without, however, the satisfaction of its having demanded any effort from me. Will you present me to Mr. Cashel?” The gentlemen bowed and smiled, and Linton resumed: “If you care for the ponies, Mr. Cashel, I am delighted to say they are at your service. I really bought them, as I say, because they were going for nothing.” Cashel did not know how to return the generosity, but accepted the offer, trusting that time would open an occasion to repay the favor.

“Shall I send them home to you, or will you drive them?”

“Will you venture to accompany me?” said Cashel, turning to Olivia Kennyfeck; who, seeing at once the impropriety of a proposal which Roland's ignorance of the world alone could have committed, was silent and confused.

“Are you afraid, my dear?” inquired Mrs. Kennyfeck, to show that all other objections might be waived.

“Oh no, mamma, if you are not.”

“The ponies are perfectly quiet,” said Linton.

“I 'm certain nothing will happen,” said Miss Kennyfeck, with a most significant glance at her sister.

“Take care of her, Mr. Cashel,” said the mamma, as Roland handed the blushing girl to her place. “I have never trusted her in any one's charge before; and if I had not such implicit confidence—” Before the sentence was finished, the ponies sprang forward in a trot, the equipage in a moment fled and disappeared from view.

“A fine young fellow he seems to be,” said Linton, as he raised his hat in adieu; “and so frank, too!” There was a something in his smile that looked too intelligent, but Mrs. Kennyfeck affected not to notice it, as she said “Good-bye.”

CHAPTER XII. THE GREAT KENNYFECK DINNER.

There were lords and ladies,—I saw myself,—
A duke with his Garter, a knight with his Gaelph.
“Orders”—as bright as the eye could see,
The “Golden Fleece,” and the “Saint Esprit;”
Black Eagles, and Lions, and even a Lamb,
Such an odd-looking thing—from the great “Nizam;”
Shamrocks and Thistles there were in a heap,
And the Legion of Honor from “Louis Philippe,”
So I asked myself—Does it not seem queer,
What can bring this goodly company here?

Mrs. Thorpe's Fête at Twickenham

Although Mrs. Kennyfeck's company were invited for seven o'clock, it was already something more than half-past ere the first guest made his appearance, and he found himself alone in the drawing-room; Mrs. Kennyfeck, who was a very shrewd observer of everything in high life, having remembered that it twice occurred to herself and Mr. K. to have arrived the first at the Secretary's “Lodge,” in the Park, and that the noble hostess did not descend till at least some two or three others had joined them.

The “first man” to a dinner is the next most miserable thing to the “last man” at leaving it. The cold air of solitude, the awkwardness of seeming too eager to be punctual, the certainty, almost inevitable, that the next person who arrives is perfectly odious to you, and that you will have to sustain a *tête-à-tête* with the man of all others you dislike,—all these are the agreeables of the first man; but he who now had to sustain them was, happily, indifferent to their tortures. He was an old, very deaf gentleman, who had figured at the dinner-tables of the capital for half a century, on no one plea that any one could discover, save that he was a “Right Honorable.” The privilege of sitting at the Council had conferred the far pleasanter one of assisting at dinners; and his political career, if not very ambitious, had been, what few men can say, unruffled.

He seated himself, then, in a very well-cushioned chair, and with that easy smile of benevolent meaning which certain deaf people assume as a counterpoise for the want of colloquial gifts, prepared to be, or at least to look, a very agreeable old gentleman to the next arrival. A full quarter of an hour passed over, without anything to break the decorous stillness of the house; when suddenly the door was thrown wide, and the butler announced Sir Harvey Upton and Captain Jennings. These were two hussar officers, who entered with that admirable accompaniment of clinking sabres, sabretaches, and spurs, so essential to a cavalry appearance.

“Early, by Jove!” cried one, approaching the mirror over the chimney-piece, and arranging his moustaches, perfectly unmindful of the presence of the Right Honorable who sat near it.

“They are growing worse and worse in this house, I think,” cried the other. “The last time I dined here, we sat down at a quarter to nine.”

“It's all Linton's fault,” drawled out the first speaker; “he told a story about Long Wellesley asking some one for 'ten.' and apologizing for an early dinner, as he had to speak in the House afterwards. Who is here? Neat steppers, those horses!”

“It is Kilgoff and his new wife,—do you know her?”

“No; she's not one of those pale girls we used to ride with at Leamington?”

There was no time for reply, when the names were announced, “Lord and Lady Kilgoff!” and a very weakly looking old man, with a blue inside vest, and enormous diamond studs in his shirt, entered, supporting a very beautiful young woman, whose proud step and glancing eye were strange contrasts to his feeble and vacant expression. The hussars exchanged significant but hasty glances, and fell back, while the others advanced up the room.

“Our excellent hostess,” said my Lord, in a low but distinct voice, “will soon shame Wilton-Crescent itself in late hours. I fancy it 's nigh eight o'clock.”

“It's not their fault, poor things,” said she, lying back in a chair and disposing her magnificent dress into the most becoming folds; “people will come late do what one may.”

“They may do so, that's very true; but I would beg to observe, you need not wait for them.” This was said with a smile towards the hussars, as though to imply, “There is no reason why you should not express an opinion, if it agree with mine.”

The baronet immediately bowed, and smiling, so as to show a very white range of teeth beneath his dark

moustache, said, “In part, I agree with your Lordship, but it requires the high hand of fashion to reform the abuse.” Here a most insidious glance at her Ladyship most effectually conveyed the point of his meaning.

Just then, in all the majesty of crimson velvet, Mrs. Kennyfeck appeared, her comely person heaving under the accumulated splendor of lace, flowers, and jewelry. Her daughters, more simply but still handsomely dressed, followed, Mr. Kennyfeck bringing up the rear, in very evident confusion at having torn his kid gloves,—a misfortune which he was not clear should be buried in silence, or made the subject of public apology.

Lady Kilgoff received Mrs. Kennyfeck's excuses for being late with a very quiet, gentle smile; but my Lord, less given to forgiveness, held his watch towards Mr. Kennyfeck, and said, “There 's always an excuse for a man of business, sir, or this would be very reprehensible.” Fortunately for all parties the company now poured in faster; every instant saw some two or three arrive. Indeed, with such speed did they appear, it seemed as if they had all waited for a movement *en masse*: judges and generals, with nieces and daughters manifold, country gentlemen, cliente, the *élite* of Dublin diners-out, the Whites, the Rigbys, with their ringleted girls, the young member for Mactark, the Solicitor-General and Mrs. Knivett, and, at last, escorted by his staff of curates and small vicars, came “the Dean” himself, conducting a very learned dissertation on the musical properties of the “Chickgankazoo,”—a three-stringed instrument of an African tribe, and which he professed to think “admirably adapted for country congregations too poor to buy an organ! Any one could play it, Softly could play it, Mrs. Kennyfeck could—”

“How do you do, Mr. Dean?” said that lady, in her sweetest of voices.

The Dean accepted the offered hand, but, without attending to the salutation, went on with a very curious argument respecting the vocal chords in the human throat, which he promised to demonstrate on any thin lady in the company.

The Chief Secretary's fortunate arrival, however, rescued the devoted fair one from the Dean's scientific ardor; for Mr. Meek was a great personage in the chief circles of Dublin. Any ordinary manner, in comparison with Mr. Downie Meek's, would be as linsey-woolsey to three-pile velvet! There was a yielding softness, a delicious compliance about him, which won him the world's esteem, and pointed him out to the Cabinet as the very man to be “Secretary for Ireland.” Conciliation would be a weak word to express the *suave* but winning gentleness of his official dealings. The most frank of men, he was unbounded in professions, and if so elegant a person could have taken a hint from so humble a source, we should say that he had made his zoological studies available and imitated the cuttle-fish, since when close penned by an enemy he could always escape by muddying the water. In this great dialectic of the Castlereagh school he was perfect, and could become totally unintelligible at the shortest notice.

After a few almost whispered words to his hostess, Mr. Meek humbly requested to be presented to Mr. Cashel. Roland, who was then standing beside Miss Kennyfeck, and listening to a rather amusing catalogue of the guests, advanced to make the Secretary's acquaintance. Mr. Downie Meek's approaches were perfect, and in the few words he spoke, most favorably impressed Cashel with his unpretentious, unaffected demeanor.

“Are we waiting for any one, Mr. Kennyfeck?” said his spouse, with a delicious simplicity of voice.

“Oh, certainly!” exclaimed her less accomplished husband; “Sir Andrew and Lady Janet MacFarline and Lord Charles Frobisher have not arrived.”

“It appears to me,”—a favorite expression of his Lordship, with a strong emphasis on the pronoun,—“it appears to me,” said Lord Kilgoff, “that Sir Andrew MacFarline waits for the tattoo at the Royal Barrack to dress for dinner;” and he added, somewhat lower, “I made a vow, which I regret to have broken to-day, never to dine wherever he is invited.”

“Here they come! here they come at last,” cried out several voices together, as the heavy tread of carriage-horses was heard advancing, and the loud summons of the footman resounded through the square.

Sir Andrew and Lady Janet MacFarline were announced in Mr. Pearse's most impressive manner; and then, after a slight pause, as if to enable the company to recover themselves from the shock of such august names, Lord Charles Frobisher and Captain Foster.

Sir Andrew was a tall, raw-boned, high-cheeked old man, with a white head, red nose, and a very Scotch accent, whose manners, after forty years' training, still spoke of the time that he carried a halbert in the “Black Watch.” Lady Janet was a little, grim-faced, gray-eyed old lady, with a hunch, who, with a most inveterate peevishness of voice and a most decided tendency to make people unhappy, was the terror of the garrison.

“We hae na kept ye waitin', Mrs. Kannyfack, I humbly hope?” said Sir Andrew.

“A good forty minutes, Sir Andrew,” broke in Lord Kilgoff, showing his watch; “but you are always the last.”

“He was not recorded as such in the official despatch from 'Maida,' my Lord,” said Lady Janet, fiercely; “but with some people there is more virtue in being early at dinner than first up the breach in an assault!”

“The siege will always keep hot, my Lady,” interposed a very well-whiskered gentleman in a blue coat and two inside waistcoats; “the soup will not.”

“Ah, Mr. Linton,” said she, holding out two fingers, “why were n't you at our picnic?” Then she added, lower:

“Give me your arm in to dinner. I can't bear that tiresome old man.” Linton bowed and seemed delighted, while a scarcely perceptible motion of the brows conveyed an apology to Miss Kennyfeck.

Dinner was at length announced, and after a little of what Sir Andrew called “clubbing the battalions,” they descended in a long procession. Cashel, after vainly essaying to secure either of the Kennyfeck girls as his companion, being obliged to pair off with Mrs. White, the lady who always declined, but never failed to come.

It is a singular fact in the physiology of Amphytrionism, that second-class people can always succeed in a “great dinner,” though they fail egregiously in all attempts at a small party. We reserve the reason for another time, to record the fact that Mrs. Kennyfeck's table was both costly and splendid. The soups were admirable, the Madeira perfect in flavor, the pâtés as hot and the champagne as cold, the fish as fresh and

the venison as long kept, the curry as high seasoned and the pine-apple ice as delicately simple, as the most refined taste could demand. The material enjoyments were provided with elegance and abundance, and the guests—the little chagrin of the long waiting over—all disposed to be chatty and agreeable.

Like a tide first breaking on a low strand, in small and tiny ripples, then gradually coming bolder in, with courage more assured, and greater force, the conversation of a dinner usually runs; till at last at the high flood the great waves tumble madly one upon another, and the wild chorus of the clashing water wakes up "the spirit of the storm."

Even without the aid of the "Physiologie du Goût," people will talk of eating while they eat; and so the chitchat was *cuisine* in all its moods and tenses, each bringing to the common stock some new device in cookery, and some anecdotes of his travelled experience in "gourmandise," and while Mr. Linton and Lord Charles celebrated the skill of the "Cadran," or the "Schwan" at Vienna, the Dean was critically explaining to poor Mrs. Kennyfeck that Homer's heroes had probably the most perfect *rôti* that ever was served, the juices of the meat being preserved in such large masses.

"Soles, with a 'gratin' of fine gingerbread, I saw at Metternich's," said Mr. Linton, "and they were excellent."

"I like old Jules Perregaux's idea better, what he calls his *côtelettes à la financière*."

"What are they? I never tasted them."

"Very good mutton cutlets *en papillotte*, the envelopes being billets de banque of a thousand francs each."

"Is it permitted to help one's self twice, my Lord?"

"I called for the dish again, but found it had been too successful. De Brigues did a neat thing that way, in a little supper he gave to the artistes of the Opéra-Comique; the jellies were all served with rings in them,—turquoise, diamond, emerald, pearl, and so on,—so that the fair guests had all the excitement of a lottery as the *plat* came round to them."

"The kick-shaws required something o' that kind to make them endurable," said Sir Andrew, gruffly; "gie me a haggis, or a cockie-leekie."

"What is that?" said Miss Kennyfeck, who saw with a sharp malice how angrily Lady Janet looked at the notion of the coming explanation.

"I 'll tell ye wi' pleasure, Miss Kannyfack, hoo to mak' a cockie-leekie!"

"Cockie-leekie, *unde derivator* cockie-leekie?" cried the Dean, who, having taken a breathing canter through Homer and Horace, was quite ready for the moderns.

"What, sir?" asked Sir Andrew, not understanding the question.

"I say, what 's the derivation of your cockie-leekie,—the etymology of the phrase?"

"I dinna ken, and I dinna care. It's mair needfu' that one kens hoo to mak' it than to speer wha gave it the name of cockie-leekie."

"More properly pronounced, *coq à lécher*," said the inexorable Dean. "The dish is a French one."

"Did ever any one hear the like?" exclaimed Sir Andrew, utterly confounded by the assertion.

"I confess, Sir Andrew," said Linton, "it's rather hard on Scotland. They say you stole all your ballad-music from Italy, and now they claim your cookery for France!"

"The record," said the Attorney-General, across the table, "was tried at Trim. Your Lordships sat with the Chief Baron."

"I remember perfectly; we agreed that the King's Bench ruled right, and that the minor's claim was substantiated." Then turning to Mrs. Kennyfeck, who out of politeness had affected to take interest in what she could not even understand a syllable of, he entered into a very learned dissertation on "heritable property," and the great difficulties that lay in the way of defining its limits.

Meanwhile "pipeclay," as is not unsuitably styled mess-table talk, passed among the military, with the usual quizzing about regimental oddities. Brownrigg's cob, Hanshaw's whiskers, Talbot's buggy, and Carey's inimitable recipe for punch, the Dean throwing in his negatives here and there, to show that nothing was "too hot or too heavy" for his intellectual fingers.

"Bad law! Mr. Chief Justice," said he, in an authoritative tone. "Doves in a cot, and coneys in a warren, go to the heir. With respect to deer—"

"Oh dear, how tiresome!" whispered Mrs. White to Cashel, who most heartily assented to the exclamation.

"What's the name o' that beastie, young gentleman?" said Sir Andrew, who overheard Cashel recounting some circumstances of Mexican life.

"The chiguire,—the wild hog of the Caraccas," said Cashel. "They are a harmless sort of animal, and lead somewhat an unhappy life of it; for when they escape the crocodile in the river, they are certain to fall into the jaws of the jaguar on land."

"Pretty much like a member o' the Scotch Kirk in Ireland," said Sir Andrew, "wi' Episcopaalians on the tae haun, and Papishes on the tither. Are thae creatures gude to eat, sir?"

"The flesh is excellent," broke in the Dean. "They are the *Cavia-Capybara* of Linnaeus, and far superior to our European swine."

"I only know," said Cashel, abruptly, "that *we* never eat them, except when nothing else was to be had. They are rancid and fishy."

"A mere prejudice, sir," responded the Dean. "If you taste the chiguire, to use the vulgar name, and let him lie in steep in a white-wine vinegar, *en marinade*, as the French say—"

"Where are you to find the white-wine vinegar in the Savannahs?" said Cashel. "You forget, sir, that we are speaking of a country where a fowl roasted in its own feathers is a delicacy."

"Oh, how very singular! Do you mean that you eat it, feathers and all?" said Mrs. White.

"No, madam. It's a prairie dish, which, I assure you, after all, is not to be despised. The *plat* is made this

way. You take a fowl,—the wild turkey, when lucky enough to find one,—and cover him all over with soft red clay; the river clay is the best. You envelop him completely; in fact, you make a great ball, somewhat the size of a man's head. This done, you light a fire, and bake the mass. It requires, probably, five or six hours to make the clay perfectly hard and dry. When it cracks, the dish is done. You then break open the shell, to the outside of which the feathers adhere, and the fowl, deliciously roasted, stands before you."

"How very excellent,—*le poulet braisé* of the French, exactly," said Lord Kilgoff.

"How cruel!" "How droll!" "How very shocking!" resounded through the table; the Dean the only one silent, for it was a theme on which, most singular to say, he could neither record a denial nor a correction.

"I vote for a picnic," cried Mrs. White, "and Mr. Cashel shall cook us his *dinde à la Mexicaine*."

"An excellent thought," said several of the younger part of the company.

"A very bad one, in my notion," said Lord Kilgoff, who had no fancy for seeing her Ladyship scaling cliffs, and descending steep paths, when his own frail limbs did not permit of accompanying her. "Picnics are about as vulgar a pastime as one can imagine. Your dinner is ever a failure; your wine detestable; your table equipage arrives smashed or topsy-turvy—" "*Unde* topsy-turvy?—*unde*, topsy-turvy, Softly?" said the Dean, turning fiercely on the curate. "Whence topsyturvy? Do you give it up? Do you, Mr. Attorney? Do you, my Lord? do you give it up, eh? I thought so! Topsy-turvy, *quasi*, top side t' other way."

"It's vera ingenious," said Sir Andrew; "but I maun say I see no neecessity to be always looking back to whare a word gat his birth, parentage, or eddication."

"It suggests unpleasant associations," said Lord Kilgoff, looking maliciously towards Linton, who was playing too agreeable to her Ladyship. "The etymology is the key to the true meaning. Sir, many of those expressions popularly termed bulls—"

"Oh, *apropos* of bulls," said Mr. Meek, in his sweetest accent, "did you hear of a very singular outrage committed yesterday upon the Lord Lieutenant's beautiful Swiss bull?"

"Did the Dean pass an hour with him?" whispered Linton to Lady Janet, who hated the dignitary.

"It must have been done by mesmerism, I fancy," rejoined Mr. Meek. "The animal, a most fierce one, was discovered lying in his paddock, so perfectly fettered, head, horns, and feet, that he could not stir. There is every reason to connect the outrage with a political meaning; for in this morning's paper, 'The Green Isle,' there is a letter from Mr. O'Bleather, with a most significant allusion to the occurrence. 'The time is not distant,' says he, 'when John Bull,'—mark the phrase,—'tied, fettered, and trammelled, shall lie prostrate at the feet of the once victim of his tyranny.'"

"The sedition is most completely proven by the significance of the act," cried out the Chief Justice.

"We have, consequently, offered a reward for the discovery of the perpetrators of this insolent offence, alike a crime against property, as an act subversive of the respectful feeling due to the representative of the sovereign."

"What is the amount offered?" said Cashel.

"One hundred pounds, for such information as may lead to the conviction of the person or persons transgressing," replied the Attorney-General.

"I feel it would be very unfair to suffer the Government to proceed in an error as to the affair in question; so that I shall claim the reward, and deliver up the offender," replied Cashel, smiling.

"Who can it be?" cried Mr. Meek, in astonishment "Myself, sir," said Cashel. "If you should proceed by indictment, as you speak of, I hope the Misses Kennyfeck may not have to figure as 'aiding and abetting,' for they were present when I lassoed the animal."

"Lassoed the Swiss bull!" exclaimed several together.

"Nothing more simple," said the Dean, holding up his napkin over Mrs. Kennyfeck's head, to the manifest terror of that lady for her yellow turban. "You take the loop of a long light rope, and, measuring the distance

with your eye, you make the cast, in this manner—”

“Oh dear! oh, Mr. Dean; my bird-of-paradise plume!”

“When you represent a bull, ma'am, you should not have feathers,” rejoined the implacable Dean, with a very rough endeavor to restore the broken plume. “Had you held your head lower down, in the attitude of a bull's attack, I should have lassoed you at once, and without difficulty.”

“Lasso is part of the verb 'to weary,' 'to fatigue,' 'to *ennuyer,* in fact,” said Mr. Linton, with an admirably-put-on simplicity; and a very general smile ran through the company.

“When did you see Gosford?” said Meek, addressing one of the hussar officers, eager to relieve the momentary embarrassment.

“Not for six months; he 's in Paris now.” “Does he mention *me* in his letter to you?”

“He does,” said the other, but with an evident constraint, and a side-look as he ended.

“Yes, faith, he forgets nane of us,” said Sir Andrew, with a grin. “He asks after Kannyfack,—ould sax-and-eightpence, he ca's you,—and says he wished you were at Paris, to gie him a dinner at the—what d' ye ca' it?—the Roshy de something. I see he has a word for ye, my Lord Kilgoff. He wants to know whether my leddie is like to gie ye an heir to the ancient house o' Kilgoff, in whilk case he 'll no be so fond of playing écarté wi' George Lushington, wha has naething to pay wi' except post-obits on yer lordship,—he, he, he! Ay, and Charlie, my man,” continued he, turning to the aide-de-camp, Lord Charles Frobisher, “he asks if ye hauld four by honors as often as ye used formerly; he says there 's a fellow at Paris ye could n't hold a candle to,—he never deals the adversary a card higher than the nine.”

The whole company, probably in relief to the evident dismay created by the allusion to Lord Kilgoff, laughed heartily at this sally, and none more than the good-looking fellow the object of it.

“But what of Meek, sir?—what does he say of Downie?”

“He says vera little about Mister Meek, ava; he only inquires what changes we have in the poleetical world, and where is that d—d humbug, Downie Meek?”

Another and a heartier laugh now ran through the room, in which Mr. Downie Meek cast the most Imploring looks around him.

“Well,” cried he, at last, “that's not fair; it is really not fair of Gosford. I appeal to this excellent company if I deserve the title.”

A chorus of negatives went the round, with most energetic assurances of dissenting from the censure of the letter.

“Come now, Sir Andrew,” said Meek, who for once, losing his balance, would not even omit him in the number of approving voices,—“come, now, Sir Andrew, I ask you frankly, am I a humbug?”

“I canna tell,” said the cautious old general, with a sly shake of the head; “I can only say, sir, be ma saul, ye never humbugged *me!*”

This time the laugh was sincere, and actually shook the table. Mrs. Kennyfeck, who now saw that Sir Andrew, to use the phrase employed by his acquaintances, “was up,” determined to withdraw, and made her telegraphic signals, which soon were answered along the line, save by Lady Janet, who stubbornly adhered to her glass of claret, with some faint hope that the lagging decanter might arrive in her neighborhood time enough for another.

Poor Mrs. Kennyfeck's devices to catch her eye were all in vain; as well might some bore of the “House” hope for the Speaker's when he was fixedly exchanging glances with “Sir Robert.” She ogled and smiled, but to no purpose.

“My Leddy,—Leddy Janet,” said Sir Andrew.

“I hear you, sir; I heard you twice already. If you please, my Lord, a very little,—Mr. Linton, I beg for the water. I believe, Sir Andrew, you have forgotten Mr. Gosford's kind remembrances to the Dean.”

“Faith, and so I did, my Leddy. He asks after ye, Mr. Dean, wi' muckle kindness and affection, and says he never had a hearty laugh syne the day ye tried to teach Lady Caroline Jedyard to catch a sheep!”

The Dean looked stern, and Linton asked for the secret.

“It was by hauding the beast atween yer knees, and so when the Dean pit himself i' the proper position, wi' his legs out, and the shepherd drove the flock towards him, by sair ill-luck it was a ram cam first and he hoisted his reverence up i' the air, and then laid him flat on his back, amaist dead. Ech, sirs! but it was a sair fa', no' to speak o' the damage done to his black breeches!”

This was too much for Lady Janet's endurance, and, amid the loud laughter of some, and the more difficultly suppressed mirth of others, the ladies arose.

“Yer na going, leddies! I hope that naething I said, Leddy Kilgoff, Leddy Janet, ech. We mun e'en console ourselves wi' the claret.” This was said *sotto*, as the door closed and the party reseated themselves at the table.

“My Jo Janet *does* like to bide a wee,” muttered he, half aloud.

“Jo!” cried the Dean, “is derived from the Italian; it's a term of endearment in both languages. It's a corruption of *Gioia mia*.”

“What may that mean?”

“My joy! my life!”

“Eh, that's it, is it? Ah, sir, these derivatives gat mony a twist and turn in the way from one land to the tither!” And with this profound bit of moralizing, he sipped his glass in revery.

The conversation now became more general, fewer personalities arose; and as the Dean, after a few efforts to correct statements respecting the “pedigrees of race-horses,” “the odds at hazard,” “the soundings upon the coral reefs,” “the best harpoons for the sulphur-bottomed whales,” only made new failures, he sulked and sat silent, permitting talk to take its course uninterrupted. The hussar baronet paid marked attention to

Cashel, and invited him to the mess for the day following. Lord Charles overheard the invitation, and said, “I'll join the party;” while Mr. Meek, leaning over the table, in a low whisper begged Cashel to preserve the whole bull adventure a secret, as the press was really a most malevolent thing in Ireland!

During the while the Chief Justice slept profoundly, only waking as the bottle came before him, and then dropping off again. The Attorney-General, an overworked man of business, spoke little and guardedly, so that the conversation, principally left to the younger members of the party, ranged over the accustomed topics of hunting, shooting, and deer-stalking, varied by allusion, on Cashel's part, to sports of far higher, because more dangerous, excitement.

In the pleasant flurry of being attentively listened to,—a new sensation for Roland,—he arose and ascended to the drawing-room, where already a numerous party of refteshers had arrived. Here again Cashel discovered that he was a person of notoriety, and as, notwithstanding all Mr. Downie Meek's precaution, the “lasso” story had got abroad, the most wonderful versions of the incident were repeated on every side.

“How did you say he effected it, Mr. Linton?” said the old deaf Countess of Dumdrum, making an ear-trumpet of her hand.

“By doing what Mr. Meek won't do with the Catholics, my Lady,—taking the bull by the horns.”

“Don't you think he found conciliation of service besides?” suggested Mr. Meek, with an angelic simplicity.

“Isn't he handsome! how graceful! So like a Corsair,—one of Byron's heroes. I 'm dying to know him. Dear me, how those Kennyfeck girls eat him up. Olivia never takes her eyes off him. He looks so bored, poor fellow! he 's longing to be let alone.” Such were the muttered comments on the new object of Dublin curiosity, who himself was very far from suspecting that his personal distinction had less share in his popularity than his rent-roll and his parchments.

As we are more desirous of recording the impression he himself created, than of tracing how others appeared to him, we shall make a noiseless turn of the salons, and, spy-fashion, listen behind the chairs.

“So you don't think him even good-looking, Lady Kilgoff?” said Mr. Linton, as he stood half behind her seat.

“Certainly not more than good-looking, and not so much as nice-looking,—very awkward, and ill at ease he seems.”

“That will wear off when he has the good taste to give up talking to young ladies, and devote himself to the married ones.”

“Enchanting,—positively enchanting, my dear,” exclaimed Mrs. Leicester White to a young friend beside her. “That description of the forest, over which the lianas formed an actual roof, the golden fruit hanging a hundred feet above the head, was the most gorgeous picture I ever beheld.”

“I wish you could persuade him,” lisped a young lady with large blue eyes, and a profusion of yellow hair in ringlets, “to write that little story of the Zambo for Lady Blumter's Annual.”

“I say, Charlie,” whispered the baronet to the aide-decamp, “but he's wide-awake, that Master Cashel; he's a very shrewd fellow, you'll see.”

“Do you mean to couch his eyes, Tom?” said Lord Charles, with his usual slow, lazy intonation; “what does he say about the races,—will he come?”

“Oh, he can't promise, old Kennyfeck has a hold upon him just now about law business.”

“You will impress upon him, my dear Mr. Kennyfeck,” said Mr. Meek, who held the lappet of the other's coat, “that there are positively—so to say—but two parties in the country,—the Gentleman and the Jacobin. Whig and Tory, orange and green, have had their day; and the question is now between those who have something to lose, and those who have everything to gain.”

“I really could wish that you, who are so far better qualified than I am to explain—”

“So I will; I intend, my dear sir. Now, when can you dine with me? You must come this week; next I shall be obliged to be in London. Shall we say Wednesday? Wednesday be it Above all, take care that he doesn't even meet any of that dangerous faction,—those Morgans. They are the very people to try a game of ascendancy over a young man of great prospects and large fortune. O'Growl wants a few men of standing to give an air of substance and respectability to the movement. Lord Witherton will be most kind to your young friend, but you must press upon him the necessity of being presented at once. We want to make him a D.L., and if he enters Parliament, to give him the lieutenancy of the county.”

While all these various criticisms were circulating, and amid an atmosphere, as it were, impregnated by plots and schemes of every kind, Cashel stood a very amused spectator of a scene wherein he never knew he was the chief actor. It would indeed have seemed incredible to him that he could, by any change of fortune, become an object of interested speculation to lords, ladies, members of the Government, Church dignitaries, and others. He was unaware that the man of fortune, with a hand to offer, a considerable share of the influence property always gives, livings to bestow, and money to lose, may be a very legitimate mark for the enterprising schemes of mammas and ministers, suggesting hopes alike to black-coats and blacklegs.

Perhaps, among the pleasant bits of credulity which we enjoy through life, there is none sweeter than that implicit faith we repose in the cordial expressions and flattering opinions bestowed upon us, when starting in the race, by many who merely, in the jockey phrase, “standing to win” upon us, have their own, and not *our* interest before them in the encouragement they bestow.

The discovery of the cheat is soon made, and we are too prone to revenge our own over-confidence by a general distrust, from which, again, experience, later on, rallies us. So that a young man's course is usually from over-simplicity to over-shrewdness, and then again to that negligent half-faith which either, according to the calibre of the wearer, conceals deep knowledge of life, or hides a mistaken notion of it. Let us return to Cashel, who now stood at the table, around which a considerable number of the party were grouped, examining a number of drawings, which Mr. Pepystell, the fashionable architect, had that day sent for Roland's inspection; houses, villas, castles, cottages, abbeys, shooting-boxes, gate-lodges, Tudor and Saxon, Norman and Saracenic,—everything that the morbid imagination of architecture run mad could devise and amalgamate between the chaste elegance of the Greek and the tinkling absurdity of the Chinese.

“I do so love a cottage *ornée*,” said Mrs. White, taking up a very beautiful representation of one, where rose-colored curtains, and a group on a grass-plot, with gay dresses and parasols, entered into the composite architecture. “To my fancy, that would be a very paradise.”

“Oh, mamma! isn't that so like dear old Kilgoran!” said a tall, thin young lady, handing an abbey, as large as Westminster, to another in widow's black.

“Oh, Maria! I wonder at your showing me what must bring up such sad memories!” said the mamma, affectedly, while she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

“If she means her father's house,” said Lady Janet to Linton, “it's about as like a like as—Lord Kilgoff to the Farnese Hercules, or his wife to any other lady in the peerage.”

“You remember Kilgoran, my Lord,” said the lady in black to the Chief Justice; “does that remind you of it?”

“Very like,—very like, indeed, madam,” said the old judge, looking at a rock-work grotto in a fish-pond.

“What's this?” cried another, taking up a great Saxon fortress, with bastions and gate-towers and curtains, as gloomy and sombre as Indian-ink could make it.

“As a residence I think that is far too solemn-looking and sad.”

“What did you say it was, sir?” asked the judge.

“The elevation for the new jail at Naas, my Lord,” replied Linton, gravely.

“I 'm very glad to hear it. We have been sadly crippled for room there latterly.”

“Do you approve of the Panopticon plan, my Lord?” said Mrs. White, who never omitted a question when a hard word could be introduced.

“It is, madam,—you are perfectly correct,” said the obsequious old judge,—“very much the same kind of thing as the Pantechnicon.”

“Talking of Panopticon, where 's Kilgoff?” whispered Linton to one of the hussars.

“Don't you see him yonder, behind the harp? How that poor woman must be bored by such *espionnage!*”

“If you mean to build a house, sir,” said Lady Janet, addressing Cashel, with a tone of authority, “don't, I entreat of you, adopt any of these absurd outrages upon taste and convenience, but have a good square stone edifice.”

“Four, or even five stories high,” broke in Linton, gravely.

“Four quite enough,” resumed she, “with a roomy hall, and all the reception-rooms leading off it. Let your bedrooms—” “Be numerous enough, at all events,” said Linton again.

“Of course; and so arranged that you can devote one story to families exclusively.”

“Yes; the *garçons* should have their dens as remote as possible from the quieter regions.”

“Have a mass of small sitting-rooms beside the larger salons. In a country-house there's nothing like letting people form their own little coteries.”

“Wouldn't you have a theatre?” asked Mrs. White.

“There might be, if the circumstances admitted. But with a billiard-room and a ball-room—”

“And a snug crib for smoking,” whispered one of the military.

“I don't see any better style of house,” said Linton, gravely, “than those great hotels one finds on the Rhine, and in Germany generally. They have ample accommodation, and are so divided that you can have your own suite of rooms to yourself.”

“Mathews used to keep house after that fashion,” said Lord Kilgoff, approaching the table. “Every one ordered his own dinner, and eat it either in his own apartment or in the dining-room. You were invited for four days, never more.”

“That was a great error; except in that particular, I should recommend the plan to Mr. Roland Cashel's consideration.”

“I never heard of it before,” said Cashel; “pray enlighten me on the subject.”

“A very respectable country gentleman, sir,” said Lord Kilgoff, “who had the whim to see his company without paying what he deemed the heaviest penalty,—the fatigue of playing host. He therefore invited his friends to come and do what they pleased,—eat, drink, drive, ride, play,—exactly as they fancied; only never to notice him otherwise than as one of the guests.”

“I like his notion prodigiously,” cried Cashel; “I should be delighted to imitate him.”

“Nothing easier, sir,” said my Lord, “with Mr. Linton for your prime minister; the administration is perfectly practicable.”

“Might I venture on such a liberty?”

“Too happy to be president of your council,” said Linton, gayly.

A very entreating kind of look from Olivia Kennyfeck here met Cashel's eyes, and he remarked that she left the place beside the table and walked into the other room; he himself, although dying to follow her, had no alternative but to remain and continue the conversation.

“The first point, then,” resumed Linton, “is the house. In what state is your present mansion?”

“A ruin, I believe,” said Cashel.

“How picturesque!” exclaimed Mrs. Leicester White.

“I fancy not, madam,” rejoined Cashel. “I understand it is about the least prepossessing bit of stone and mortar the country can exhibit.”

“No matter, let us see it; we 'll improvise something, and get it ready for the Christmas holidays,” said Linton. “We have—let us see—we have about two months for our preparation, and, therefore, no time to lose. We must premise to the honorable company that our accommodation is of the simplest; 'roughing' shall be the order of the day. Ladies are not to look for Lyons silk ottomans in their dressing-rooms, nor shall we promise that our conservatory furnish a fresh bouquet for each fair guest at breakfast.”

“Two months are four centuries!” said Mrs. White; “we shall accept of no apologies for any shortcomings, after such an age of time to prepare.”

“You can have your fish from Limerick every day,” said an old bluff-looking gentleman in a brown wig.

“There 's a capital fellow, called Tom Cox, by the way, somewhere down in that country, who used to paint our scenes for the garrison theatricals. Could you make him out, he 'd be so useful,” said one of the military.

“By all means get up some hurdle-racing,” cried another.

Meanwhile, Roland Cashel approached Olivia Kennyfeck, who was affecting to seek for some piece of music on the pianoforte.

“Why do you look so sad?” said he, in a low tone, and seeming to assist her in the search.

“Do I?” said she, with the most graceful look of artless-ness. “I 'm sure I did n't know it.”

“There again, what a deep sigh that was; come, pray tell me, if I dare to know, what has grieved you?”

“Oh, nothing, nothing whatever. I 'm sure I never felt in better spirits. Dear me! Mr. Cashel, how terrified I am, there's that dreadful Lady Janet has seen us talking together.”

“Well, and what then?”

“Oh, she is so mischievous, and says such horrid, spite-ful things. It was she that said it—”

“Said what,—what did she say?” cried he, eagerly.

“Oh, what have I done?” exclaimed she, covering her face with her hands. “Not for the world would I have said the words. Oh, Mr. Cashel, you, who are so good and so generous, do not ask me more.”

“I really comprehend nothing of all this,” said Cashel, who now began to suspect that she had overheard some speech reflecting upon him, and had, without intending, revealed it; “at the same time, I must say, if I had the right, I should insist on knowing what you heard.”

“Perhaps he has the right,” muttered she, half aloud, as if speaking unconsciously; “I believe he has.”

“Yes, yes, be assured of it; what were the words?”

“Oh, I shall die of shame. I 'll never be able to speak to you again; but don't look angry, promise that you 'll forget them, swear you 'll never think of my having told them, and I'll try.”

“Yes, anything, everything; let me hear them.”

“Well,”—here she hung her head till the long ringlets fell straight from her fair forehead, and half concealed the blushing cheek, which each moment grew redder,—“I am so terrified, but you 'll forgive it,—I know you will,—well, she said, looking towards you, 'I am not acquainted with this young gentleman yet, but if I should have that honor soon I 'll take the liberty to tell him that the worthy father's zeal in his service is ill-requited by his stealing the affections of his youngest daughter.'” Scarcely were the words uttered, when, as if the strength that sustained her up to that moment suddenly failed, she reeled back and sank fainting on a sofa.

Happily for Cashel's character for propriety, a very general rush of ladies, old and young, to the spot, prevented him taking her in his arms and carrying her to the balcony for air; but a universal demand for sal volatile, aromatic vinegar, open windows, and all the usual restoratives concealed his agitation, which really was extreme.

“You are quite well now, dearest,” said her mamma, bathing her temples, and so artistically as to make her pale face seem even more beautiful in the slight dishevelment of her hair. “It was the heat.”

“Yes, mamma,” muttered she, quite low.

“Hem! I thought so,” whispered Lady Janet to a neighbor. “She was too warm.”

“I really wish that young ladies would reserve these scenes for fitting times and places. That open window has brought back my lumbago,” said Lord Kilgoff.

“The true treatment for syncope,” broke in the Dean, “is not by stimulants. The want of blood on the brain is produced by mechanical causes, and you have merely to hold the person up by the legs—”

“Oh, Mr. Dean! Oh, fie!” cried twenty voices together.

“The Dean is only exemplifying his etymology on 'top side t'other way,'” cried Linton.

“Lord Kilgoff's carriage stops the way,” said a servant. And now, the first announcement given, a very general air of leave-taking pervaded the company.

“Won't you have some more muffling?—nothing round *your* throat?—a little negus, my Lord, before venturing into the night air.”—“How early!”—“How late!”—“What a pleasant evening!”—“What a fine night!”—“May I offer you my arm?—mind that step—goodbye, good-bye—don't forget to-morrow.”—“Your shawl S is blue—that's Lady Janet's.”—“Which is your hat?”—

“That's not mine. Thanks—don't take so much trouble.”—“Not your carriage, it is the next but one—mind the draught.”—A hundred good-nights, and they are gone! So ends a dinner-party, and of all the company not a vestige is seen, save the blaze of the low-burned wax-lights, the faded flowers, the deranged furniture, and the jaded looks of those whose faces wreathed in smiles for six mortal hours seek at last the hard-bought and well-earned indulgence of a hearty yawn!

CHAPTER XIII. TUBBER-BEG.

He was, the world said, a jovial fellow,
Who ne'er was known at Fortune to repine;
Increasing years had rendered him more mellow,
And age improved him—as it did his wine.

The Shannon, after expanding into that noble sheet of water called Lough Derg, suddenly turns to the southward, and enters the valley of Killaloe, one of the most beautiful tracts of country which Ireland, so rich in river scenery, can boast. The transition from the wide lake, with its sombre background of gray mountain and rocky islands, bleak and bare, to the cultivated aspect of this favored spot, is like that experienced in passing from beneath the gloom of lowering thunder-clouds into light and joyous sunshine. Rich waving woods of every tint and hue of foliage, with here and there some spreading lawns of deepest green, clothe the mountains on either side, while in bright eddies the rapid river glides in between, circling and winding as in playful wantonness, till in the far distance it is seen passing beneath the ancient bridge of Killaloe, whose cathedral towers stand out against the sky.

On first emerging from the lake, the river takes an abrupt bend, round a rocky point, and then, sweeping back again in a bold curve, forms a little bay of deep and tranquil water, descending towards which the rich meadows are seen, dotted with groups of ancient forest trees, and backed by a dense skirting of timber. At one spot, where the steep declivity of the ground scarce affords footing for the tall ash-trees, stands a little cottage, at the extremity of which is an old square tower; this is Tubber-beg.

As you sail down the river you catch but one fleeting glance at the cottage, and when you look again it is gone! The projecting headlands, with the tall trees, have hidden it, and you almost fancy that you have not seen it. If you enter the little bay, however, and, leaving the strong current, run into the deep water under shore, you arrive at a spot which your memory will retain for many a day after.

In front of the cottage, and descending by a series of terraces to which art has but little contributed, are a number of flower-plots, whose delicious odors float over the still water, while in every gorgeous hue are seen the camellia, the oleander, and the cactus, with the tulip, the ranunculus, and the carnation,—all flourishing in a luxuriance which care and the favored aspect of this sheltered nook combine to effect. Behind and around, on either side, the dark-leaved holly, the laurustinus, and the arbutus are seen in all the profusion of leaf and blossom a mild, moist air secures, and forming a framework in which stands the cottage itself, its deep thatched eave, and porch of rustic-work trellised and festooned with creeping plants, almost blending its color with the surrounding foliage. Through the open windows a peep within displays the handsomely disposed rooms, abounding in all the evidences of cultivated taste and refinement. Books in several of the modern languages are scattered on the table, music, drawings of the surrounding scenery, in water-color or pencil,—all that can betoken minds carefully trained and exercised, and by their very diversity showing in what a world of self-stored resources their possessors must live; the easel, the embroidery-frame, the chess-board, the half-finished manuscript, the newly copied music, the very sprig of fern which marks the page in the little volume on botany,—slight things in themselves, but revealing so much of daily life!

If the cottage be an almost ideal representation of rustic elegance and simplicity, its situation is still more remarkable for beauty; for while Art has developed all the resources of the ground, Nature, in her own boundless profusion, has assembled here almost every ingredient of the picturesque, and as if to impart a sense of life and motion to the stilly calm, a tumbling sheet of water gushes down between the rocks, and in bounding leaps descends towards the Shannon, of which it is a tributary.

A narrow path, defended by a little railing of rustic-work, separates the end of the cottage from the deep gorge of the waterfall; but through the open window the eye can peer down into the boiling abyss of spray and foam beneath, and catch a glimpse of the bridge which, formed of a fallen ash-tree, spans the torrent.

Traversed in every direction by paths, some galleried along the face, others cut in the substance of the rock, you can pass hours in rambling among these wild and leafy solitudes, now lost in shade, now emerging again, to see the great river gliding along, the white sails dotting its calm surface.

Well did Mr. Kennyfeck observe to Roland Cashel that it was the most beautiful feature of his whole demesne, and that its possession by another not only cut him off from the Shannon in its handsomest part, but actually deprived the place of all pretension to extent and grandeur. The spreading woods of Tubbermore were, as it seemed, the background to the cottage scene, and possessed no character to show that they were the property of the greater proprietor.

The house itself was not likely to vindicate the claim the locality denied. It was built with a total disregard to aspect or architecture. It was a large four-storied edifice, to which, by way of taking off from the unpicturesque height, two wings had been planned: one of these only was finished; the other, half built, had been suffered to fall into ruin. At the back, a high brick wall enclosed a space intended for a garden, but never put into cultivation, and now a mere nursery of tall docks and thistles, whose gigantic size almost overtopped the wall. All the dirt and slovenliness of a cottier habitant—for the house was occupied by what is misnamed “a caretaker”—were seen on every hand. One of the great rooms held the family; its fellow, on the opposite side of the hall, contained a cow and two pigs; cabbage-stalks and half-rotting potato-tops steamed their pestilential vapors beneath the windows; while half-naked children added the discord, the only thing wanting to complete the sum of miserable, squalid discomfort, so sadly general among the peasantry.

If one needed an illustration of the evils of absenteeism, a better could not be found than in the ruinous, damp, discolored building, with its falling roof and broken windows. The wide and spreading lawn, thick grown with thistles; the trees broken or barked by cattle; the gates that hung by a single hinge, or were broken up piecemeal for firing,—all evidenced the sad state of neglectful indifference by which property is wrecked and a country ruined! Nor was the figure then seated on the broken doorstep an unfitting accompaniment to such a scene,—a man somewhat past the middle period of life, whose ragged, tattered dress bespoke great poverty, his worn hat drawn down over his eyes so as partly to conceal a countenance by no means prepossessing; beside him lay a long old-fashioned musket, the stock mended by some rude country hand. This was Tom Keane, the “caretaker,” who, in all the indolent enjoyment of office, sat smoking his “dudeen,” and calmly surveying the process by which a young heifer was cropping the yearling shoots of an ash-tree.

Twice was his name called by a woman's voice from within the house before he took any notice of it.

“Arrah, Tom, are ye asleep?” said she, coming to the door, and showing a figure whose wretchedness was even greater than his own; while a certain delicacy of feature, an expression of a mild and pleasing character, still lingered on a face where want and privation had set many a mark. “Tom, alanah!” said she, in a tone of coaxing softness, “sure it's time to go down to the post-office. Ye know how anxious the ould man is for a letter.”

“Ay, and he has rayson, too,” said Tom, without stirring.

“And Miss Mary herself was up here yesterday evening to bid you go early, and, if there was a letter, to bring it in all haste.”

“And what for need I make haste?” said the man, sulkily. “Is it any matther to me whether he gets one or no? Will *I* be richer or poorer? Poorer!” added he, with a savage laugh; “be gorra! that wud be hard, anyhow. That's a comfort old Oorrigan hasn't. If they turn him out of the place, then he'll know what it is to be poor!”

“Oh, Tom, acushla! don't say *that*, and he so good to us, and the young lady that was so kind when the childer had the measles, comin' twice—no, but three times a day, with everything she could think of.”

“Wasn't it to please herself? Who axed her?” said Tom, savagely.

“Oh, dear! oh, dear!” sighed the woman. “Them's the hard words,—'to please herself!'”

“Ay, just so! When ye know them people as well as me, you 'll say the same. That's what they like,—to make themselves great among the poor; giving a trifle here, and a penny there; making gruel for this one, and tay for that; marchin' in as if they owned the house, and turning up their noses at everything they see. 'Why don't you sweep before the door, Nancy?'—'Has the pig any right to be eating there out of the kish with the childer?'—'Ye ought to send that child to school'—and, 'What's your husband doing?'—That's the cry with them. 'What's your husband doing? Is he getting the wheat in, or is he at the potatoes?' Tear and ages!” cried he, with a wild energy, “what does any one of themselves do from morning till night, that they 're to come spyin' after a poor man, to ax 'Is he workin' like a naygur?' But we 'll teach them something yet,—a lesson they 're long wanting. Listen to this.”

He took, as he spoke, a soiled and ragged newspaper from his pocket, and after seeking some minutes for the place, he read, in a broken voice:—

“'The days to come'—ay, here it is—'The days to come.—Let the poor man remember that there is a future before him that, if he have but courage and boldness, will pay for the past. Turn about's fair play, my lords and gentlemen! You 've had the pack in your own hands long enough, and dealt yourselves all the trumps. Now, give us the cards for a while. You say our fingers are dirty; so they are, with work and toil, black and dirty! but not as black as your own hearts. Hurrah! for a new deal on a bran-new table: Ireland the stakes, and the players her own stout sons!' Them's fine sintiments,” said he, putting up the paper. “Fine sintiments! and the sooner we thry them the better. That's the real song,” said he, reciting with energy,—

“'Oh! the days to come, the days to come,
When Erin shall have her own, boys!
When we 'll pay the debts our fathers owed,
And reap what they have sown, boys!'”

He sprang to his feet as he concluded, shouldering his musket, strode out as if in a marching step, and repeating to himself, as he went, the last line of the song. About half an hour's brisk walking brought him to a low wicket which opened on the high road, a little distance from which stood the small village of Derraheeny, the post-town of the neighborhood. The little crowd which usually assembled at the passing of the coach had already dispersed, when Tom Keane presented himself at the window, and asked, in a tone of voice subdued almost to softness,—

“Have you anything for Mr. Corrigan this morning, ma'am?”

“Yes; there are two letters and a newspaper,” replied a sharp voice from within. “One-and-fourpence to pay.”

“She did n't give me any money, ma'am, but Miss Mary said—”

“You can take them,” interrupted the post-mistress, hastily handing them out, and slamming the little window to at the same instant.

“There's more of it!” muttered Tom; “and if it was for *me* the letters was, I might sell my cow before I 'd get trust for the price of them!” And with this reflection he plodded moodily homeward. Scarcely, however, had he entered the thick plantation than he seated himself beneath a tree, and proceeded to take a careful and strict scrutiny of the two letters; carefully spelling over each address, and poising them in his hands, as if the weight could assist his guesses as to the contents. “That's Mr. Kennyfeck's big seal. I know it well,” said he, gazing on the pretentious coat-of-arms which emblazoned the attorney's letter. “I can make nothing of the other at all. 'Cornelius Corrigan, Esq., Tubber-beg, Derraheeny,'—sorra more!” It was in vain that he held it open, lozenge fashion, to peep within; but one page only was written, and he could not see that. Kennyfeck's letter was enclosed in an envelope, so that here, too, he was balked, and at last was fain to slip the newspaper from its cover,—a last resource to learn something underhand! The newspaper did not contain anything peculiarly interesting, save in a single paragraph, which announced the intention of Roland Cashel, Esq., of Tubbermore Castle, to contest the county at the approaching general election. “We are informed,” said the writer, “on competent authority, that this gentleman intends to make the ancestral seat his chief residence in future, and that already preparations are making to render this princely mansion in every respect worthy of the vast fortune of its proprietor.”

“Faith, and the 'princely mansion' requires a thing or two to make it all perfect,” said Tom, with a sardonic laugh; while in a lower tone he muttered,—“maybe, for all the time he 'll stay there, it's not worth his while to spend the money on it.” Having re-read the paragraph, he carefully replaced the paper in its cover, and continued his way, not, however, towards his own home, but entering a little woodland path that led direct towards the Shannon. After passing a short distance, he came to a little low edge of beech and birch, through which a neat rustic gate led and opened upon a closely shaven lawn. The neatly gravelled walk, the flower-

beds, the delicious perfume that was diffused on every side, the occasional peeps at the eddying river, and the cottage itself seen at intervals between the evergreens that studded the lawn, were wide contrasts to the ruinous desolation of the “Great House;” and as if unwilling to feel their influence, Tom pulled his hat deeper over his brows, and never looked at either side as he advanced. The part of the cottage towards which he was approaching contained a long veranda, supported by pillars of rustic-work, within which, opening by three large windows, was the principal drawing-room. Here, now, at a small writing-table, sat a young girl, whose white dress admirably set off the graceful outline of her figure, seen within the half-darkened room; her features were pale, but beautifully regular, and the masses of her hair, black as night, which she wore twisted on the back of the head, like a cameo, gave a character of classic elegance and simplicity to the whole.

Without, and under the veranda, an old man, tall, and slightly bowed in the shoulders, walked slowly up and down. It needed not the careful nicety of his long queue., the spotless whiteness of his cambric shirt and vest, nor the perfection of his nicely fitting nankeen pantaloons, to bespeak him a gentleman of the past day. There was a certain *suave* gentleness in his bland look, an air of easy courtesy in his every motion, a kind of well-bred mannerism in the very carriage of his gold-headed cane, that told of a time when the graces of deportment were a study, and when our modern careless freedom had been deemed the very acme of rudeness. He was dictating, as was his wont each morning, some reminiscence of his early life, when he had served in the Body-Guard of Louis XVI., and where he had borne his part in the stormy scenes of that eventful era. The memory of that most benevolent monarch, the fascinations of that queen whom to serve was to idolize, had sufficed to soften the hardships of a life which, from year to year, pressed more heavily, and were at last, after many a straggle, impressing their lines upon a brow where age alone had never written grief.

On the morning in question, instead of rapidly pouring forth his recollections, which usually came in groups, pressing one upon the other, he hesitated often, sometimes forgetting “where he was,” in his narrative, and more than once ceasing to speak altogether; he walked in revery, and seeming deeply preoccupied.

His granddaughter had noticed this change; but cautiously abstaining from anything that might betray her consciousness, she sat, pen in hand, waiting, her lustrous eyes watching each gesture with an intensity of interest that amounted to actual suffering.

“I fear, Mary,” said he, with an effort to smile, “we must give it up for to-day. The present is too strong for the past, just as sorrow is always an overmatch for joy. Watching for the post has routed all my thoughts, and I can think of nothing but what tidings may reach me from Dublin.”

“You have no fears, sir,” said she, rising, and drawing her arm within his, “that your application could be rejected. You ask nothing unusual or unreasonable,—a brief renewal of a lease where you have expended a fortune.”

“True, true, dear child. Let us, however, not look on the case with our eyes alone, but see it as others may.. But here comes Tom.—Well, what news, Tom; are there letters?”

“Yes, sir, here's two; there's one-and-fourpence to be paid.”

“Let me see them,” cried the old man, impatiently, as he snatched them, and hastily re-entered the house.

“Is Cathleen better to-day?” said the young lady, addressing the peasant.

“Yes, miss, glory be to God, she's betther. Thanks to yourself and Him. Oh, then, it's of yer beautiful face she does be dramin' every night. Says she, 'It's Miss Mary, I think, is singing to me, when I hear the birds in my sleep.'”

“Poor child, give her this little book for me, and say I 'll come up and see her this evening, if I can. Mrs. Moore will send her the broth; I hope she 'll soon be able to eat something. Good-bye, Tom.”

A deep-drawn heavy sigh from within the cottage here made her abruptly conclude the interview and hasten in. The door of her grandfather's little dressing-room was, however, locked; and after a noiseless effort to turn the handle, she withdrew to the drawing-room to wait in deep anxiety for his coming.

The old man sat with his head supported on both hands, gazing steadfastly at two open letters which lay on the table before him; had they contained a sentence of death, his aspect could scarce have been more sad and sorrow-struck. One was from Mr. Kennyfeck, and ran thus:

Dear Mr. Corrigan,—I have had a brief conversation with Mr. Roland Cashel on the subject of your renewal, and I am grieved to say that he does not seem disposed to accede to your wishes. Entertaining, as he does, the intention to make Tubbermore his chief residence in Ireland, his desire is, I believe, to connect the farm in your holding with the demesne. This will at once explain that it is not a question of demanding a higher rent from you, but simply of carrying out a plan for the enlargement and improvement of the grounds pertaining to the “Hall.”

The matter, is, however, by no means decided upon; nor will it be, in all probability, before you have an opportunity of meeting Mr. Cashel personally. His present intention is to visit your neighborhood next week.

I am, dear sir, truly yours,

M. Kennyfeck. Cornelius Corrigan, Esq., Tubber-beg Cottage.

The second letter was as follows:—

“Simpkins and Green have the honor to forward for acceptance the enclosed bill for two hundred and seventeen pounds, at three months, Mr. Heneage Leicester, of New Orleans, on Mr. Corrigan.

“They are authorized also to state that Mr. Leicester's affairs have suffered considerably from the consequence of the commercial distress at N. O., and his personal property has been totally lost by the earthquake which took place on the 11th and 12th ultimo. He therefore trusts to Mr. C—— 's efforts to contribute to his aid by a greater exertion than usual, and will draw upon him for two sums of one hundred, at dates of six and nine months, which he hopes may suit his convenience, and be duly honored. Mr. Leicester continues to hope that he may be able to visit Europe in the spring, where his great anxiety to see his daughter will call him.”

“The ruin is now complete,” said the old man. “I have struggled for years with poverty and privation to ward off this hour; but, like destiny, it will not be averted! Despoiled of fortune; turned from the home where I have lived from my childhood; bereft of all! I could bear up still if she were left to me; but now, he threatens to take *her*, my child, my hope, my life! And the world will stand by him, and say, 'He is her father!' He, that broke the mother's heart,—my own darling girl!—and now comes to rob me—a poor helpless old man—of all my companionship and my pride. Alas, alas! the pride, perhaps, deserves the chastisement. Poor Mary, how will she ever learn to look on him with a daughter's affection?—What a life will hers be! and this deception,—how will it, how can it ever be explained? I have always said that he was dead.”

Such, in broken half-sentences, were the words he spoke, while thick-coming sobs almost choked his utterance.

“This cannot be helped,” said he, taking up the pen and writing his name across the bill. “So much I can meet by selling our little furniture here; we shall need it no more, for we have no longer a home. Where to, then?”

He shook his hands in mournful despair, and walked towards the window. Mary was standing outside, in the little flower-garden, assisting the old gardener to fasten some stray tendrils of a japonica between two trees.

“We must try and shelter this window, Ned,” said she, “from the morning sun. It comes in too strongly here in papa's library. By next summer, I hope to see a thick trellis of leaves across the whole casement.”

“By next summer,” repeated the old man, from within, with a trembling voice; “and who will be here to see it?”

“This little hedge, too, must be overgrown with that creeping plant we got from America, the white liana. I want the beech to be completely hid beneath the blossoms, and they come out in May.”

“In May!” said the poor old man, with an accent of inexpressible sadness, as though the very promise of spring had unfolded a deep vista of years of suffering. “But why care for the home, if she, who made its sunshine, is taken from me? What matters it where I linger on, or how, the last few hours of a life, bereft of its only enjoyment,—she, that in my old age renewed all the memories of my early and my happy days.”

He sat down and covered his face with his hands; and when he withdrew them, the whole character and expression of the countenance had changed: a dull, meaningless look had replaced the mild and cheerful beam of his soft blue eyes; the cheeks were flattened, and the mouth, so ready with its gentle smile, now remained partly open, and slightly drawn to one side. He made an effort to speak, but a thickened guttural utterance rendered the words scarcely intelligible. He approached the window and beckoned with his hand. The next instant, pale with terror, but still composed and seeming calm, Mary was beside him.

“You are not well, dear papa,” she said, with a great effort to appear at ease. “You must lie down—here will do—on this sofa; I 'll close the curtain, and send over for Tiernay,—he said he should be back from Limerick this morning.”

A gentle pressure of her hand to his lips, and a faint smile, seemed to assent.

She opened the window, and whispered a few words to the gardener; and then, closing it noiselessly, drew the curtain, and sat down on a low stool beside the sofa where he lay.

So still and motionless did he remain that she thought he slept,—indeed, the long-drawn breathing, and the repose of his attitude, betokened sleep.

Mary did not venture to move, but sat, one hand clasped in his, the other resting on his forehead, still and silent.

The darkened room, the unbroken silence, the figure of him in whom was centred her every thought and hope, lying sick before her, sank with a dreary weight upon her heart; and in the gloom of her sorrow dark foreboding of future evil arose, vague terrors of trials, new and hard to bear! That strange prescience, which never is wanting in great afflictions, and seems itself a Heaven-sent warning to prepare for the coming blow, revealed a time of sore trouble and calamity before her. “Let him be but spared to me,” she cried, in her heart-uttered prayer, “and let me be so fashioned in spirit and temper that I may minister to him through every hour,—cheering, consoling, and encouraging; giving of *my* youth its gift of hopefulness and trust, and borrowing of *his* age its serenity and resignation. But oh that I may not be left solitary and alone, unfriended and unsupported!” A gush of tears, the first she shed, here burst forth, and, in the transport of her grief, brought calm to her mind once more.

A low tap at the window, and a voice in whisper aroused her. “It is the doctor, miss,—Dr. Tiernay,” said the gardener.

A motion to admit him was all her reply, and with noiseless step the physician entered and approached the sofa. He felt the pulse, and listened to the respiration of the sick man; and then, withdrawing the curtain so as to let the light fall upon his features, steadily contemplated their expression. As he looked, his own countenance grew graver and sadder; and it was with an air of deep solemnity that he took Mary's hand and led her from the room.

With a weight like lead upon her heart Mary moved away. “When did it happen?” whispered he, when he had closed the door behind them.

“Happen!” gasped she, in agony; “what do you mean?”

“I meant when—this—occurred,” replied he, faltering; “was he in his usual health this morning?”

“Yes, perfectly,—a little less composed; anxious about his letters; uneasy at the delay,—but no more.”

“You do not know if he received any unpleasant tidings, or heard anything to distress him?”

“He may have done so,” answered she, sadly, “for he locked his door and read over his letters by himself. When I saw him next, he was standing at the window, and beckoning to me.”

A gentle tap at the door here interrupted the colloquy, and the old housekeeper whispered, “The master, miss, wants to spake with the doctor; he's better now.”

“Oh, let me see him,” cried Mary, springing towards the door. But Dr. Tiernay interposed gently, and said, “No, this might prove dangerous; remain here till I have seen and spoken with him.” Mary assented by a gesture, and sat down without speaking.

“Sit down, Tiernay,” said the sick man, as the doctor came to his bedside,—“sit down, and let me speak while I have strength. Everything is against us, Tiernay. We are not to get the renewal; this young Mr. Cashel wants the cottage,—we must turn out. I'll have to do so, even before the gale-day; but what matter about me! It 's that poor child I 'm thinking of—” Here he stopped, and was some minutes before he could resume. “There,—read that; that will tell you all.”

Tiernay took the crumpled letter, which the old man had all this while held firmly in his closed grasp, and read it.

“Well, that 's bad news, is n't it?” said Corrigan. “Not the bill,—I don't mean that; but *he 's* coming back; do you see the threat?—he's coming back again.”

“How can he?” said the doctor. “The man committed a forgery. How will he dare to return here and place his neck in a halter?”

“You forget whose evidence alone can convict him,—mine; the name he forged was mine, the sum he took was mine,—nearly all I had in the world; but he has nothing to fear from me, whatever I may have to dread from *him*.”

“How can he have any terror for *you!*”

“He can take *her* away,—not from me, for she 'll soon be separated by a stronger hand than his; but I can't bear to think that she 'll be in his power. Tiernay, this is what is cutting into my heart now as I lie here, and leaves me no rest to think of the brief minutes before me. Tell me, is there no way to avoid this? Think of something, my old friend,—take this weight off my dying heart, and my last breath will bless you.”

“Are there any relations, or friends?”

“None, not one; I 'm the last of the tree,—the one old rotten branch left. I was thinking of a nunnery, Tiernay, one of those convents in France or the Low Countries; but even there, if he found her out, he could legally demand her to be restored to him,—and he would find her, ay, that he would! There never was a thing yet that man could n't do when he set his heart on it; and the more the obstacles, the greater his wish. I heard him say it with his own lips, that he never had any fancy for my poor Lucy till he overheard her one day saying that 'she never hated any one till she knew him.' From that hour, he swore to himself she should be his wife! Heaven knows if the hate was not better bestowed than the love; and yet, she did love him to the last,—ay, even, after cruelty and desertion, ay, after his supposed death; when she heard that he married another, and was living in splendor at Cadiz, ay,—Tiernay! after all that, she told me on her death-bed, she loved him still!”

“I think the nunnery is the best resource,” said the doctor, recalling the sick man from a theme where his emotions were already too powerfully excited.

“I believe it is,” said the old man, with more of energy than before; “and I feel almost as if Providence would give me strength and health to take her there myself, and see her safe before I die. Feel that pulse now: isn't it stronger?”

“You are better, much better already,” said the doctor; “and now, keep quiet and composed. Don't speak—if it was possible, I 'd say, don't think—for a few hours. The worst is nigh over.”

“I thought so, Tiernay. I felt it was what old Joe Henchy used to call 'a runaway knock.'” And, with a faint smile, the old man pressed his hand, and said, “Good-bye.”

Scarcely, however, had the doctor reached the door, when he called him back.

“Tiernay,” said he, “it's of no use telling me to lie still, and keep quiet, and the rest of it. I continue, asleep or awake, to think over what's coming. There is but one way to give me peace,—give me some hope. I 'll tell you now how that is to be done; but, first of all, can you spare three days from home?”

“To be sure I can; a week, if it would serve you. Where am I to go?”

“To Dublin, Tiernay. You 'll have to go up there, and see this young man, Cashel, yourself, and speak to him for me. Tell him nothing of our present distress or poverty, but just let him see who it is that he is turning out of the lands where their fathers lived for hundreds of years. Tell him that the Corrigans is the oldest stock in the whole country; that the time was, from the old square tower on Garraguin, you could n't see a spot of ground that was n't our own! Tell him,”—and, as he spoke, his flashing eye and heightened color showed how the theme agitated and excited him,—“tell him that if he turns us from hearth and home, it is not as if it was like some poor cotter—” He paused, his lips trembled, and the big tears burst from his eyes and rolled heavily down his face. “Oh! God forgive me for saying the words!” cried he, in an accent of deep agony. “Why wouldn't the humblest peasant that ever crouched to his meal of potatoes, beside the little turf fire of his cabin, love his home as well as the best blood in the land? No, no, Mat, it's little kindness we 'd deserve on such a plea as that.”

“There, there, don't agitate yourself. I know what you mean, and what you'd like me to say.”

“You do not,” rejoined the old man, querulously, “for I have n't said it yet. Nor I can't think of it now. Ah, Mat,” here his voice softened once more into its habitual key, “that was a cruel thought of me a while ago; and faith, Mr. Cashel might well suspect, if he heard it, that I was n't one of the old good blood of the Corrigans, that could talk that way of the poor; but so it is. There is n't a bad trait in a man's heart that is not the twin-brother of his selfishness. And now I'll say no more; do the best you can for us, that's all. I was going to bid you tell him that we have an old claim on the whole estate that some of the lawyers say is good,—that the Crown have taken off the confiscation in the time of my great father, Phil Corrigan; but sure he would n't mind that,—besides, that's not the way to ask a favor.”

“You must n't go on talking this way; see how hot your hand is!”

“Well, maybe it will be cold enough soon! There is another thing, Mat. You must call on Murphy, with the bill of sale of the furniture and the books, and get money to meet these bills. There they are; I indorsed them this morning. Tell Green it's no use sending me the other bills; I 'll not have means to take them up, and it would be only disgracing my name for nothing to write it on them. I 'll be longing to see you back again, Mat, and hear your tidings; so God bless you, and send you safe home to us.”

“I 'll set off to-night,” said the doctor, rising, and shaking his hand. “Your attack is passed over, and there's no more danger, if you 'll keep quiet.”

“There's another thing, Mat,” said the sick man, smiling faintly, and with a strange meaning. “Call at 28 Drogheda Street, and ask the people to show you the room Con Corrigan fought the duel in with Colonel Battley. It was only twelve feet long and ten wide, a little place off the drawing-room, and the colonel would n't even consent that we should stand in the corners. Look and see if the bullet is in the wall still. The old marquis used to have it fresh painted red every year, on the anniversary of the day. Oh, dear, oh, dear, but they were the strange times, then! ay, and pleasant times too.” And with such reflections on the past, he fell off into a dreamy half-consciousness, during which Tiernay stole from the room and left him alone.

Faint and trembling with agitation, Mary Leicester was standing all this while at the door of the sick chamber. “Did I hear aright, Doctor?” said she; “was that his voice that sounded so cheerfully?”

“Yes, my dear Miss Mary, the peril is by; but be cautious. Let him not speak so much, even with you. This is a sweet quiet spot,—Heaven grant he may long enjoy it!”

Mary's lips muttered some words in audibly, and they parted. She sat down alone, in the little porch under the eave. The day was a delicious one in autumn, calm, mellow, and peaceful; a breeze, too faint to ripple the river, stirred the flowers and shook forth their odor. The cottage, the leafy shade, through which the tempered sunlight fell in fanciful shapes upon the gravel, the many colored blossoms of the rich garden, the clear and tranquil river, the hum of the distant waterfall,—they were all such sights and sounds as breathe of home and home's happiness; and so had she felt them to be till an unknown fear found entrance into her heart and spread its darkness there. What a terrible sensation comes with a first sorrow!

CHAPTER XIV. MR. LINTON REVEALS HIS DESIGNS.

With fame and fortune on the cast,
He never rose a winner,
And learned to know himself, at last,

“A miserable sinner.”

Bell.

It was about ten days or a fortnight after the great Kennyfeck dinner, when all the gossip about its pretension, dulness, and bad taste had died away, and the worthy guests so bored by the festivity began to wonder “when they would give another,” that a gentleman sat at breakfast in one of those large, dingy-looking, low-ceilinged apartments which are the choice abodes of the viceregal staff in the Castle of Dublin. The tawdry and time-discolored gildings, the worn and faded silk hangings, the portraits of bygone state councillors and commanders-in-chief, grievously riddled by rapier-points and pistol-shots, were not without an emblematic meaning of the past glories of that seat of Government, now so sadly fallen from its once high and palmy state.

Although still a young man, the present occupant of the chamber appeared middle-aged, so much had dissipation and excess done the work of time on his constitution. A jaded, wearied look, a sleepy, indolent expression of the eye, certain hard lines about the angles of the mouth, betokened one who played a high game with life, and rarely arose a winner. Although his whole appearance bespoke birth and blood rather than intellect or ability, there was enough in his high and squarely shaped head, his deep dark eye, and his firm, sharply cut mouth, to augur that incapacity could not be reckoned among the causes of any failures he incurred in his career. He was, in every respect, the *beau idéal* of that strange solecism in our social code, “the younger son.” His brother, the Duke of Derwent, had eighty thousand a year. *He* had exactly three hundred. His Grace owned three houses, which might well be called palaces, besides a grouse lodge in the Highlands, a yachting station at Cowes, and a villa at Hyères in France. My Lord was but too happy to be the possessor of the three cobwebbed chambers of a viceregal aide-decamp, and enjoy the pay of his troop without joining his regiment.

Yet these two men were reared exactly alike! As much habituated to every requirement and luxury of wealth as his elder brother, the younger suddenly discovered that, once beyond the shadow of his father's house, all his worldly resources were something more than what the cook, and something less than the valet, received. He had been taught one valuable lesson, however, which was, that as the State loves a rich aristocracy, it burdens itself with the maintenance of all those who might prove a drain on its resources, and that it is ever careful to provide for the Lord Georges and Lord Charleses of its noble houses. To this provision he believed he had a legal claim,—at all events, he knew it to be a right uncontested by those less highly born.

The system which excludes men from the career of commerce, in compensation opens the billiard-room, the whist-table, and the betting-ring; and many a high capacity has been exercised in such spheres as these, whose resources might have won honor and distinction in very different fields of enterprise. Whether Lord Charles Frobisher knew this, and felt that there was better in him, or whether his successes were below his hopes, certain is it, he was a depressed, dejected man, who lounged through life in a languid indolence, caring for nothing, not even himself.

There was some story of an unfortunate attachment, some love affair with a very beautiful but portionless cousin, who married a marquis, to which many ascribed the prevailing melancholy of his character; but they who remembered him as a schoolboy said he was always shy and reserved, and saw nothing strange in his bearing as a man. The breakfast-table, covered with all that could stimulate appetite, and yet withal untasted, was not a bad emblem of one who, with many a gift to win an upward way, yet lived on in all the tawdry insignificance of a court aide-de-camp. A very weak glass of claret and water, with a piece of dry toast, formed his meal; and even these stood on the corner of a writing-table, at which he sat, rising sometimes to look out of the window, or pace the room with slow, uncertain steps. Before him lay an unfinished letter, which, to judge from the slow progress it made, and the frequent interruptions to its course, seemed to occasion some difficulty in the composition; and yet the same epistle began “My dear Sydney,” and was addressed to his brother. Here it is:—

My dear Sydney,—I suppose, from not hearing from you some weeks back, that my last, which I addressed to the Clarendon, has never reached you, nor is it of any consequence. It would be too late now to ask you about Scott's horses. Cobham told us how you stood yourself, and that was enough to guide the poor devils here with their ponies and fifties. We all got a squeeze on the “mare.” I hear you won seven thousand besides the stakes. I hope the report may be true. Is Raucus in training for the Spring Meeting, or not? If so, let me have some trifle on him in your own book.

I perceive you voted on Brougham's amendment against our people; I conclude you were right, but it will make them very stubborn with me about the exchange. N——has already remarked upon what he calls the “intolerable independence of some noble lords.” I wish I knew the clew to your proceeding: are you at liberty to give it? I did not answer the question in your last letter.—Of course I am tired of Ireland; but as the alternatives are a “compound in Calcutta, or the Government House, Quebec,” I may as well remain where I am. I don't know that a staff-officer, like Madeira, improves by a sea-voyage.

You say nothing of Georgina, so that I hope her chest is better, and that Nice may not be necessary. I believe, if climate were needed, you would find Lisbon, or rather Cintra, better than any part of Italy, and possessed of one great advantage,—few of our rambling countrymen. N—— commended your haunch so highly, and took such pains to record his praises, that I suspect he looks for a repetition of the favor. If you are shooting bucks, perhaps you would

send him a quarter.

Two sentences, half finished and erased, here showed that the writer experienced a difficulty in continuing. Indeed, his flurried manner as he resumed the letter proved it. At last he went on:—

I hate asking favors, my dear Sydney, but there is one which, if not positively repugnant to you to grant, will much oblige me. There is a young millionnaire here, a Mr. Cashel, wishes to be a member of your Yacht Club; and as I have given a promise to make interest in his behalf with you, it would be conferring a great obligation on me were I to make the request successfully. So far as I can learn, there is no reason against his admission, and, as regards property, many reasons in his favor. If you can do this for me, then, you will render me a considerable service.

Of course I do not intend to fix any acquaintanceship upon you, nor in any other way, save the bean in the ballot-box, and a civil word in proposing, inflict you with what Rigby calls "Protective Duties." I should have been spaced in giving you this trouble but for Tom Linton, who, with his accustomed good nature at other men's cost, suggested the step to Cashel, and told him, besides, that my brother was vice-admiral of the yacht fleet.

If Emily wants a match for the chestnut pony, I know of one here perfect in every respect, and to be had very cheap. Let me know about this soon, and also the club matter, as I have promised to visit Cashel at his country-house; and in case of refusal on your part, this would be unpleasant Thanks for your invitation for Christmas, which I cannot accept of. Hope and Eversham are both on leave, so that I must remain here. N——continues to ask you here; but my advice is, as it has ever been, not to come. The climate detestable,— the houses dull and dirty; no shooting, nor any hunting,— at least with such horses as you are accustomed to ride.

I am glad you took my counsel about the mortgage. There is no property here worth seventeen years' purchase, in the present aspect of politics. Love to Jane and the girls, and believe me ever yours,

Charles Frobisher.

The task completed, he turned to the morning papers, which, with a mass of tradesmen's bills, notes, and cards of invitation, littered the table. He had not read long, when a deep-drawn yawn from the further end of the room aroused him, and Frobisher arose and walked towards a sofa, on which was stretched a man somewhat about the middle of life, but whose bright eye and fresh complexion showed little touch of time. His dress, slightly disordered, was a dinner costume, and rather inclined towards over-particularity; at least, the jewelled buttons of his vest and shirt evinced a taste for display that seemed not ill to consort with the easy effrontery of his look.

Taking his watch from his pocket, he held it to his ear, saying, "There is an accomplishment, Charley, I 've never been able to acquire,—to wind my watch at supper-time. What hour is it?"

"Two," said the other, laconically.

"By Jove! how I must have slept Have you been to bed?"

"Of course. But, I 'd swear, with less success than you have had on that old sofa. I scarcely closed my eyes for ten minutes together."

"That downy sleep only comes of a good conscience and a heart at ease with itself," said the other. "You young gentlemen, who lead bad lives, know very little about the balmy repose of the tranquil mind."

"Have you forgotten that you were to ride out with Lady Cecilia this morning?" said Frobisher, abruptly.

"Not a bit of it. I even dreamed we were cantering together along the sands, where I was amusing her ladyship with some choice *morceaux* of scandal from that set in society she professes to hold in such horror that she will not receive them at court, but for whose daily sayings and doings she has the keenest zest."

"Foster is gone with her," rejoined Lord Charles, "and I suspect she is just as well pleased. Before this he has told her everything about our late sitting, and the play, and the rest of it!"

"Of course he has; and she is dying to ask Mr. Softly, the young chaplain's advice, whether rooting us all out would not be a 'good work.'"

"Since when have you become so squeamish about card-playing, Mr. Linton?"

"I? Not in the least! I 'm only afraid that some of my friends may turn to be so when they hear of my successes. You know what happened to Wycherley when he got that knack of always turning up a king? Some one asked Buxton what was to be done about it. 'Is it certain?' said he. 'Perfectly certain; we have seen him do it a hundred times!' 'Then back him,' said old Ruxton; 'that's my advice to you.'" As he said this he drew a chair towards the table and proceeded to fill out a cup of chocolate. "Where do you get these anchovies, Charley? Burke has got some, but not half the size."

"They are ordered for the household. Lawson can tell you all about 'em," said the other, carelessly. "But, I say, what bets did you book on Laplander?"

"Took him against the field for seven hundred even."

"A bad bet, then,—I call it a very bad bet."

"So should I, if I did n't know Erebus is dead lame."

"I've seen a horse run to win with a contracted heel before now," said Lord Charles, with a most knowing look.

“So have I; but not on stony ground. No, no, you may depend upon it.”

“I don't want to depend upon it,” said the other, snappishly. “I shall not venture five pounds on the race. I remember once something of an implicit reliance on a piece of information of the kind.”

“Well! you know how that happened. I gave Hilyard's valet fifty pounds to get a peep at his master's betting-book, and the fellow told Hilyard, who immediately made up a book express, and let us all in for a smart sum. I am sure I was the heaviest loser in the affair.”

“So you ought, too. The contrivance was a very rascally one, and deserved its penalty.”

“The expression is not parliamentary, my Lord,” said Linton, with a slight flushing of the cheek, “and so I must call you to order.”

“Is Turcoman to run?” asked Lord Charles, negligently.

“No. I have persuaded Cashel to buy him, and he has taken him out of training.”

“Well, you really go very straightforward in your work, Linton. I must say you are as plucky a rogue as I 've ever heard of. Pray, now, how do you manage to keep up your influence over that youth? He always appears to me to be a rash-headed, wilful kind of fellow there would be no guiding.”

“Simply, by always keeping him in occupation. There are people like spavined horses, and one must always get them warm in their work, and they never show the blemish. Now, I have been eternally alongside of Cashel. One day buying horses,—another, pictures,—another time it was furniture, carriages, saddlery,—till we have filled that great old house of the ex-Chancellor's with an assemblage of objects, living and inanimate, it would take a month to chronicle.”

“Some kind friend may open his eye to all this one of these days, Master Linton; and then—”

“By that time,” said Linton, “his clairvoyance will be too late. Like many a man I 've known, he 'll be a capital judge of claret when his cellar has been emptied.”

“You were a large winner last night, Linton?”

“Twelve hundred and fifty. It might have been double the amount, but I 've taken a hint from Splasher's Physiology. He says nothing encourages a plethora like small bleedings. And you, Charley; what did *you* do?”

“Sixty pounds!” replied he, shortly. “I never venture out of my depth.”

“And you mean to infer that I do, my Lord,” said Linton, trying to smile, while evidently piqued by the remark. “Well, I plead guilty to the charge. I have a notion in my head that seven feet of water drowns a man just as effectually as seven hundred fathoms in the blue Atlantic. Now *you* know, as well as I, that neither of us could afford to lose sixty pounds thrice running; so let us not talk of venturing out of our depth, which, I take it, would be to paddle in very shallow water indeed.”

For an instant it seemed as if Lord Charles would have given an angry reply to this sally; but, as hastily checking the emotion, he walked to the window, and appeared to be lost in thought, while Linton continued his breakfast with all the zest of a hungry man.

“I'll give up play altogether,” said Frobisher. “That I've resolved upon. This will go abroad, rely upon it Some of the papers will get hold of it, and we shall see some startling paragraphs about 'Recent Discoveries in the Vice-regal Household,'—'Nefarious System of High Play at the Castle,' and so on. Now it 's all very well for you, who neither care who 's in or out, or hold any appointment here; but remember, there are others—myself for instance—who have no fancy for this kind of publicity.”

“In the first place,” interrupted Linton, “there is no danger; and in the second, if there were, it's right well remunerated. Your appointment here, with all its contingent advantages, of which, not to excite your blushes, we shall say nothing, is some three or four hundred a year. Now, a lucky evening and courage to back the luck—a quality, by the way, I never yet found in one Englishman in a hundred—is worth this twice or thrice told. Besides, remember, that this wild bull of the prairies has come of himself into our hunting-grounds. If *we* don't harpoon him, somebody else will. A beast of such fat on the haunches is not going to escape scot free; and lastly, by falling into good hands, he shall have the advantage of being cut up artistically, and not mauled and mangled by the rude fingers of the ignorant Faith, as for myself, I think I richly merit all the spoils I shall obtain!”

“As how, pray?” asked Lord Charles, languidly.

“In the first place, to speak of the present, I have ridden out with him, sat beside him on the box of his drag; he is seen with me in public, and has been heard to call me 'Linton' on the ride at Dycer's. My tradespeople have become his tradespeople. The tailor who reserved his master stroke of genius for me now shares his favors with him. In fact, Charley, we are one. Secondly, as regards the future, see from what perils I shall rescue him. He shall not marry Livy Kennyfeck; he shall not go into Parliament for the Liberal interest, nor for any interest, if I can help it; he shall not muddle away a fine fortune in fattening Durham bulls and Berkshire boars; neither shall he excel in rearing mangel-wurzel or beet-root. I 'll teach him to have a soul above subsoiling, and a spirit above green crops. He shall not fall into the hands of Downie Meek, and barter his birthright for a Whig baronetcy; neither shall he be the victim of right honorable artifices, and marry a Lady Juliana or Cecilia. In fine, I 'll secure him from public meetings and agricultural societies, twaddling dinners, horticultural breakfasts, the Irish Academy, and Mrs. White.”

“These are great deservings indeed,” said Lord Charles, affectedly.

“So they are,” said the other; “nor do I believe there is another man about town could pilot the channel but myself. It is only reasonable, then, if I save the craft, that I should claim the salvage. Now, the next point is, will you be one of the crew? I'll take you with pleasure, but there's no impressment All I ask is secrecy, whether you say yea or nay.”

“Let me hear what the service is to be like.”

“Well, we shall first of all cruise; confound metaphors,—let us talk plainly. Cashel has given me a *carte blanche* to fill his house with guests and good things. The company and the *cuisine* are both to be among my attributions, and I intend that we should do the thing right royally. Selection and exclusiveness are, of course, out of the question. There are so many cock-tails to run,—there can be no disqualification. Our savage friend,

in fact, insists on asking everybody he sees, and we are lucky if we escape the infantry and the junior bar. Here's the list,—a goodly catalogue truly, and such a *macédoine* of incongruities has been rarely assembled, even at old Kennyfeck's dinner-table."

"Why, I see few others than the people we met there t' other day."

"Not many; but please to remember that even a country house has limits, and that some of the guests, at least, must have separate rooms. To be serious, Charley, I have misused the King's press damnably; we have such a party as few have ever witnessed. There are the Kilgoffs, the Whites, the Hamiltons, along with the Clan Kennyfeck, the Ridleys, and Mathew Hannigan, Esquire, of Bally-Hanni-gan, the new Member of Parliament for Dunrone, and the last convert to the soothing doctrines of Downie Meek."

"Is Downie coming?" lisped the aide-de-camp.

"Ay, and his daughter, too. He wrote one of his velvety epistles, setting forth the prayer of his petition in favor of 'a little girl yet only in the nursery.'"

"Yes, yes; I know all that. Well, I 'm not sorry. I like Jemmy. She is a confounded deal better than her father, and is a capital weight to put on a young horse, and a very neat hand too. Who next? Not the Dean, I hope."

"No; we divided on the Dean, and carried his exclusion by a large majority. Mrs. Kennyfeck was, I believe, alone in the lobby."

"Glad of that! No one can expect an Irish visit in the country without rain, and he 's an awful fellow to be caged with, when out-o'-door work is impracticable."

"Then there are the Latrobes and the Heatherbys; in fact, the whole set, with a Polish fellow, of course a Count,—Deuroominski; a literary tourist, brought by Mrs. White, called Howie; and a small little dark man one used to see two seasons ago, that sings the melodies and tells Irish legends,—I forget the name."

"Promiscuous and varied, certainly; and what is the order of the course? Are there to be games, rural sports, fireworks, soaped pigs, and other like intellectualities?"

"Precisely; a kind of coming-of-age thing on a grand scale. I have engaged Somerton's *chef*; he has just left his place. Gunter sends over one of his people; and Dubos, of the Cadran Bleu, is to forward two hampers per week from Paris. Hicksley is also to provide all requisites for private theatricals. In fact, nearly everything has been attended to, save the horse department; I wish you 'd take that under your protectorate; we shall want any number of screws for saddle and harness, with drags, breaks, and machines of all kinds, to drive about in. Do, pray, be master of the horse."

"Thanks; but I hate and detest trouble of all kinds. So far as selling you two of my own,—a wall-eye and a bone-spavin included,—I consent."

"Agreed. Everything in your stable carries a sidesaddle; that I know, so name your figure."

"A hundred; they 'd bring close on fifty at Dycer's any day; so I am not exorbitant, as these are election times."

"There 's the ticket, then," said Linton, taking out a check-book and filling up a leaf for the sum, which he tore out and presented to Lord Charles.

"What! has he really so far installed you as to—" "As to give blank checks," said the other, holding up the book in evidence, where "Roland Cashel" was written on a vast number of pages. "I never knew the glorious sense of generosity before, Charley. I have heard a great deal about liberal sentiments, and all that kind o' thing; but now, for the first time, do I feel the real enjoyment of indulgence. To understand this liberty aright, however, a man must have a squeeze,—such a squeeze as I have experienced myself once or twice in life; and then, my boy, as the song says,"—here, with a bold rattling air, he sang to a popular melody,—

"When of luck you 've no card up,
And feel yourself 'hard up,'
And cannot imagine a method to win;
When 'friends' take to shy you,
And Jews to deny you,
How pleasant to dip in another man's tin!

"Not seeking or craving
Some pettyful saving,
You draw as you like upon Drummond or Gwynne,
And, while pleasure pursuing
You know there 's no ruing
The cost that comes out of another man's tin.

"Eh, Charley! that's the toast we 'Chevaliers Modernes' should drink before the health of the royal family."

"The royal family!" sneered Frobisher; "I never observed that loyalty was a very remarkable trait in your character."

"The greater injustice yours, then," said Linton. "I conceived a very early attachment to monarchy, on learning the importance of the king at écarte."

"I should have thought the knave had more of your sympathy," said the other.

"Inasmuch as he follows the queen, I suppose," said Linton, good-humoredly, laughing. "But come, don't look so grave, old fellow; had I been a political *intrigant*, and devoted these goodly talents of mine to small state rogueries in committees and adjourned debates, I'd have been somebody in these dull times of aspiring mediocrity; but as my ambitions have never soared beyond the possession of what may carry on the war of life, irrespective of its graver honors, you moralists—Heaven bless the mark!—rather regard me distrustfully. Now, let me tell you a secret, and it's one worth the knowing. There's nothing so fatal to a man's success in life as 'a little character;' a really great one may dispense with every kind of ability and acquirement. Get your name once up in our English public, and you may talk, preach, and write the most rank nonsense with a very long impunity; but a little character, like a small swimming bladder, only buoys you up long enough to reach deep water and be drowned. To journey the road of life with this is to 'carry weight' Take my advice,—I give it in all sincerity; you are as poor a man as myself; there are thousands of luxuries you can afford yourself, but

this is too costly an indulgence for a small fortune. Your 'little character' is a kind of cankering conscience, not strong enough to keep you out of wickedness, but sufficiently active to make you miserable afterwards. An everlasting suggester of small scruples, it leaves a man no time for anything but petty expedients and devices, and you hang suspended all your life between desire and denial, without the comfort of the one or the credit of the other.”

“Is the sermon over?” said Lord Charles, rather affectedly than really feeling tired of the “tirade,” “or are you only rehearsing the homily before you preach it to Roland Cashel?”

“Quite wrong there, my Lord,” said Linton, with the same imperturbable temper. “Cashel is rich enough to afford himself any caprice, even a good name, if he like it You and I take ours as we do railway tickets, any number that's given us!” And with this speech, delivered in an air of perfect quietude, but still emphatically slow, he settled his hat on before the glass, arranged his whiskers, and walked away.

Lord Charles, for a second, seemed disposed to make an angry reply, but, correcting the impulse, he walked to the window in silence. “I have half a mind to spoil your game, my worthy friend,” muttered he, as the other passed across the court-yard; “one word to Cashel would do it To be sure it is exploding the mine with one's own hand to the fusee; that's to be thought of.” And, so saying, he lay down on the sofa to ruminate.

CHAPTER XV. AT THE GAMING TABLE.

“Not half so skilled in means and ways,
The 'hungry Greek' of classic days
His cards with far less cunning plays
Than eke our modern sharper!”

When Linton had determined within himself to make Cashel “his own,” his first care was to withdraw him from the daily society of the Kennyfecks, by whose familiar intercourse a great share of influence was already enjoyed over their young guest. This was not so easy a task as he had at first imagined. Cashel had tasted of the pleasant fascination of easy intimacy with two young and pretty girls, eagerly bent on being agreeable to him. He was in all the full enjoyment of that rare union, the pleasure of being at home and yet an honored guest; and it was only when Linton suggested that late hours and irregular habits were but little in accordance with the decorous propriety of a family, that Cashel yielded, and consented to remove his residence to a great furnished house in “Stephen's Green,” where some bygone Chancellor once held his state.

Linton well knew that if “Necessity” be the mother of invention, “Propinquity” is the father of love; that there is nothing so suggestive of the tender passion as that lackadaisical state to which lounging at home contributes, and the chance meetings with a pretty girl. The little intercourse on the stairs going down to breakfast, the dalliance in the conservatory, the chit-chat before dinner, are far more formidable than all the formal meetings under the blaze of wax-lights, and amid the crush of white satin.

“If I leave him much longer among them,” said he to himself, “he 'll marry one of these girls; and then adieu to all influence over him! No more écarté,—no more indiscriminate purchases of everything I propose,—no more giving 'the odds against the field.' A wife and a wife's family are heavy recognizances against a bachelor friend's counsels.”

Cashel was really sorry to leave the house where his time had passed so pleasantly. The very alternation of his interest regarding the two sisters had kept his mind in a state of pleasant incertitude, now seeing something to prefer in this, now in that, while at the same time suggesting on their part greater efforts to please and amuse him. If Mr. Kennyfeck deemed Cashel's removal a very natural step, and one which his position in some sort demanded, not so his wife. She inveighed powerfully against the dangerous intimacy of Linton, and the ruinous consequences such an ascendancy would lead to. “You should tell Mr. Cashel who this man is,” said she, imperiously.

“But that is exactly what nobody knows,” meekly responded Mr. Kennyfeck.

“Pshaw! every one knows all about him. You can tell him how he ruined young Rushbrook, and in less than two years left him without a shilling.”

Mr. Kennyfeck shook his head, as though to say that the evidence was by no means conclusive on that count.

“Yes, you may affect not to believe it,” said she, angrily, “but did n't George Lawson see the check for eight thousand paid to Linton at La touche's bank, and that was one evening's work.”

“There was a great deal of high play, I 've heard, among them.”

“Oh, indeed! you've heard that much,” said she, scornfully; “probably, too, you've heard how Linton paid seventy thousand pounds for part of the Dangwood estate,—he that had not sixpence three months previous. I tell you, Mr. Kennyfeck, that you have labored to very little purpose to establish this young man's claim if you are to stand by and see his property portioned among sharpers. There! don't start and look so frightened; there 's nobody listening, and if there were, too, I don't care. I tell you, Mr. Kennyfeck, that if it weren't for your foolish insufficiency Cashel would propose for Olivia. Yes! the thing is plain as possible. He fell in love with her the very night he arrived; every one saw it. Jane Lyons told me how it was remarked the day the company dined here. Leonard told all over Dublin how she chose the diamonds, and that Cashel distinctly referred to her before buying them. Then they were seen together driving through the streets. What more would you have? And now you suffer all this to be undone for the selfish objects of Mr. Linton; but I tell you, Mr. Kennyfeck, if you 're a fool, I am not!”

“But really I don't see—”

“You don't see! I'm sure you do not. You'd see, however, if it were a case for an action in the courts,—a vulgar appeal to twelve greasy jurors,—you 'd see then. There is quite enough for a shabby verdict! But I regard the affair very differently, and I tell you frankly, if I see Cashel draw off in his attentions, I 'll send for my cousin O'Gorman. I believe you can assure your young client that he 'll find there's no joking with him.”

Now this was the “most unkindest cut of all;” for if report spoke truly, Mr. Kennyfeck had himself experienced from that gentleman a species of moral force impulsion which left the most unpleasant reminiscences behind.

“I beseech you to remember, Mrs. Kennyfeck, that this agency is one of the best in Ireland.”

“So much the more reason to have the principal your son-in-law.”

“I 'd have you to reflect how little success coercion is like to have with a person of Mr. Cashel's temper.”

“Peter is the best shot in Ballinasloe,” rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, sententiously.

Mr. Kennyfeck nodded a full assent, but seemed to hazard a doubt as to the efficiency of such skill.

“I repeat, sir, I'll send for him. Peter knows pretty well what ought to be done in such matters, and it's a comfort to think there is some spirit on one side of the family, at least.” Whether to afford a practical illustration, albeit negatively, or that he dreaded a continuance of the controversy, Mr. Kennyfeck feigned a business appointment, and retired, leaving his spouse to ponder over her threat, and resolve with herself as to the advantage of Peter's alliance.

While this conjugal discussion engaged papa and mamma, Cashel was endeavoring to explain to the fair daughters the reasons for his departure, affecting to see that the multiplicity of his engagements and duties required a step which he owned was far from agreeable to his feelings.

“I suspected how soon you would weary of us,” said Olivia, in a half whisper.

“We ought to have remembered, Livy,” said the elder sister, “how little would our claims upon Mr. Cashel appear when confronted with those of a higher station in the world.”

“I assure you, you wrong both yourselves and me. I never—”

“Oh, I 'm certain you never imagined this step. I can well believe that if it were not for advice—not very disinterested, perhaps—you would have still condescended to regard this as your home.”

“If I suspected that this removal would in the least affect the sentiments I entertain for my kind friends here, or in any way alter those I trust they feel for me, I 'd never have adopted, or, having adopted, never execute it.”

“We are really very much to blame, Mr. Cashel,” said Olivia bashfully, “in suffering our feelings to sway you on a matter like this. It was only too kind of you to come here at first; and perhaps even yet you will come occasionally to see us.”

“Yes, Mr. Cashel, Livy is right; we are very selfish in our wishes, and very inconsiderate besides. Your position in the world requires a certain mode of living, a certain class of acquaintances, which are not ours. It is far better, then, that we should resign ourselves to an interruption, than wait for an actual broach of intimacy.”

Cashel was totally at a loss to see how his mere change of residence could possibly imply a whole train of altered feelings and relations, and was about to express his astonishment on that score when Linton's phaeton drove up to the door, according to an appointment they had made the day before, to breakfast with the officers of a regiment quartered a short distance from town.

“There is your *friend*, Mr. Cashel,” said Miss Kennyfeck, with a marked emphasis on the word. Cashel muttered something about a rendezvous, and took up his hat, when a servant entered to request he would favor Mr. Kennyfeck with a brief interview before going out.

“Are we to see you at dinner to-day?” said Olivia, languidly.

“I hope so. Mrs. Kennyfeck has been kind enough to ask me, and I hope to have the pleasure.”

“Will Mr. Linton give leave?” said Miss Kennyfeck, laughing; and then, seeing a cloud on Cashel's brow, added, “I meant, if you had made no appointment with him.”

“I 'm self-willed enough to follow my own bent generally,” said he, abruptly, and left the room.

“You owe that gentleman a heavy grudge, Livy,” said Miss Kennyfeck, as she approached the window and looked out.

“Who do you mean, dear?”

“Mr. Linton. Were it not for him, I half think you might have succeeded.”

“I really cannot comprehend you,” said the younger, with well-assumed astonishment.

“Of course not, my dear. Still, it was a difficult game, even if left all to yourself. He was always likely to smash the tackle at the moment when almost caught. There, don't look so puzzled, dear; I was only following out a little reverie,—that's all.”

Meanwhile Cashel hastily descended the stairs, not over good-humoredly commenting on Mr. Kennyfeck's ill-chosen moment for a business conversation. “I can only stay a few minutes, or rather seconds,” cried he, as he opened the door of the study; and then checked himself as he perceived a short, stout elderly man, of venerable appearance, who rose respectfully from his chair as he came in.

“Doctor Tiernay, Mr. Cashel,” said Kennyfeck, presenting the stranger. “I have taken the liberty to delay you, sir, since it would be a great convenience if you could accord this gentleman a brief hearing at present; he has come above a hundred miles to crave it, and must leave Dublin by the afternoon mail.”

“Without it be Mr. Cashel's pleasure to detain me,” said the doctor, submissively.

“He is a tenant of your Tubbermore estate, sir,” resumed Kennyfeck, “a very near neighbor.”

“I regret that I am pressed for time at this moment, sir,” said Cashel, drawing on his gloves impatiently; “but I believe it is the less consequence, inasmuch as I really know nothing—absolutely nothing—and you, Mr.

Kennyfeck, know everything about that property, and are by far the best person to hear and decide upon this gentleman's proposition, whatever it be.”

“It is a case that must be decided by yourself, sir,” said the doctor. “It is neither a matter of law nor right, but a simple question of whether you will do an act of great kindness to the oldest tenant on your property,—a man who, now overtaken by years and sickness, may not perhaps be alive at my return to hear of your benevolence.”

“It is about this renewal, sir,” interposed Kennyfeck, who saw Cashel's increasing impatience to be away. “Mr. Corrigan's lease expires on the 25th.”

“He is now struck by paralysis,” interrupted the doctor; “and his only prayer is to be suffered to die beneath the roof where he has lived for fifty years.”

“A tenant at will,” interposed Kennyfeck.

“Gracious Heaven! how could he suppose I should dream of dispossessing him?” cried Cashel. “Of course, sir, the house is his own so long as he pleases to hold it. Tell him so. Mr. Kennyfeck will tell him from me that he need not give the matter another thought. I am sincerely grieved that it should have already caused him so much anxiety.”

“Ah, sir,” cried the doctor, while two very dubious drops twinkled in his eyes, “you are indeed worthy of the good fortune that has befallen you. My poor old friend will bless you, with a prouder heart in his belief in human nature than even his gratitude could suggest. Farewell, sir, and may you long live to be as happy as you know how to make others.”

With an impulse of irrepressible warmth the old man seized Cashel's hand in both his own, and pressed it cordially, when the door suddenly opened, and Linton, dressed in a riding costume, appeared.

“What, Roland, at business so early. Do you know you 're an hour behind time?”

“I do; but I couldn't help it In fact, this was unexpected—”

“It was an act of benevolence, sir, detained Mr. Cashel,” interrupted the doctor. “I believe no appointment can be broken with a safer apology.”

“Ho! ho!” said Linton, throwing up his eyebrows, as if he suspected a snare to his friend's simplicity. “Which of the missions to convert the blacks, or what family of continuous twins are you patronizing?”

“Good-bye, sir,” said the doctor, turning towards Cashel. “I'd ask your pardon for the liberty I have already taken with you, if I were not about to transgress again.” Here he looked Linton fully in the face. “Mr. Cashel has done a kind and worthy action this morning, sir; but if he does many more such, and keep your company, he is not only a good man, but the strongest principled one I ever met with.”

As the last word was uttered, the door closed after him, and he was gone.

“So then, I 'm the Mephistopheles to your Faust,” said Linton, laughing heartily; “but what piece of credulous benevolence has cost you this panegyric and me this censure?”

“Oh, a mere trifle,” said Cashel, preparing to leave,—“a simple grant of renewal to an old tenant on my estate.”

“Only that,” said Linton, affecting the coolest indifference, while by a keen glance at Kennyfeck he revealed a profound consciousness of his friend's simplicity.

“Nothing more, upon my honor; that little cottage of Tubber-beg.”

“Not that fishing lodge beside the river, in an angle of your own demesne?” asked Linton, eagerly.

“The same. Why, what of it?”

“Nothing, save that your magnanimity is but one-sided, since only so late as Thursday last, when we looked over the map together, you gave me that cottage until such time as you should include the farm within the demesne.”

“By Jupiter, and so I did!” exclaimed Cashel, while a flush of shame covered his face and forehead; “what a confounded memory I have! What is to be done?”

“Oh, never fret about it,” said Linton, taking his arm, and leading him away; “the thing is easily settled. What do I want with the cottage? The old gentleman is, doubtless, a far more rural personage than I should prove. Let us not forget Aubrey's breakfast, which, if we wait much longer, will be a luncheon. The ladies well, Mr. Kennyfeck?” This was the first time he had noticed that gentleman.

“Quite well, Mr. Linton,” said he, bowing politely.

“Pray present my respects. By the way, you don't want a side-saddle horse, do you?”

“I thank you, we are supplied.”

“Whata pity! I 've got such a gray, with that swinging low cantering action Miss Kennyfeck likes; she rides so well! I wish she 'd try him.”

A shake of the head and a bland smile intimated a mild refusal.

“Inexorable father! Come, Cashel, you shall make the *amende* for having given away my cottage; you must buy Reginald and make him a present to the lady.”

“Agreed,” said Cashel; “send him over to-day; he's mine, or rather Miss Kennyfeck's. Nay, sir, really I will not be opposed. Mr. Kennyfeck, I insist.”

The worthy attorney yielded, but not without reluctance, and saw them depart, with grave misgivings that the old doctor's sentiment was truly spoken, and that Linton's companionship was a most unhappy accident.

“I must get into Parliament,” said Linton, as he seated himself beside Cashel in the phaeton, “if it were only to quote you as one of that much-belied class, the Irish landlord. The man who grants renewals of his best land on terms contracted three hundred years ago is very much wanted just now. What a sensation it would create in the House when they cry, 'Name, name,' and I reply that I am under a positive personal injunction not to name, and then Sharman Crawford, or one of that set, rises and avers that he believed the honorable and learned gentleman's statement to be perfectly unfounded. Amid a deluge of 'Ohs!' I stand up and boldly

declare that further reserve is no longer possible, and that the gentleman whom I am so proud to call my friend is Roland Cashel, Esq., of Tubbennore. There 's immortality for you, for that evening at any rate. You 'll be toasted at Bellamy's at supper, and by the white-headed old gentlemen who sit in the window at the Carlton."

"You'll not hint that I had already made a present of the lands when I displayed so much munificence," said Cashel, smiling.

"Not a syllable; but I'll tell the secret to the Opposition, if you ever grow restive," said Linton, with a laugh, in which, had Roland studied Lavater, he might have read a valuable lesson.

"*A propos* of Parliament, Kennyfeck persists in boring me about it, and that Mr. Downie Meek seems to have it at heart that I am to represent something or somebody, well knowing, the while, that I cannot possibly be supposed to understand anything of the interests whereon I should be called to vote and legislate."

"That 's not so much consequence," said Linton; "you 'd find a very strong section of the House very like yourself, but the thing would bore you; you would neither like the fatigue nor the slavery of it; and, positively, there is no excitement, save for the half-dozen who really contest the race. Meek, and others of the same stamp, will tell you that property should be represented in the Legislature. I agree fully with the sentiment, so it should. So also should a man's rents be collected, but that's no reason he should be his own agent, when he can find another, far more capable, ready for office.—Touch that off-side horse, he 'll skulk his collar when he can.—Now, if you have county or borough influence going a begging, send in your nominee, any fellow who 'll suit your views, and express your opinions,—myself, for instance," said he, laughing, "for want of a better.—Those manes don't lie right; that near-sider's falls on the wrong side of the neck.—The great secret for any man situated as you are is to avoid all complications, political, social, and matrimonial. You have a glorious open country before you, if there be no cross-riding to spoil your run."

"Well, I am not above taking advice," said Cashel; "but really I must own that, from the little I've seen of the matter, it seems harder to go through life with a good fortune than without a shilling. I know that, as a poor man, very lately—"

"Come, come, you know very little of what poverty means; you 've been leading a gay life in a land where men do by one bold enterprise the work which costs years of slow toil in our tamer regions. Now, I should have liked that kind of thing myself. Ay, you may smile, that a man who devotes a large share of each day to the tie of his cravat, and the immaculate elegance of his boots, should venture to talk of prairie life and adventure. Take care! By Jove! I thought you were into that apple-stall."

"Never say it twice," cried Cashel, gayly. "I 'm beginning to feel confoundedly tired of this life here; and, if I don't find that it improves on acquaintance, I 'll take a run down west, just to refresh my spirits. Will you come with me?"

"With my whole heart I join the proposal; but you are not serious; I know you are merely jesting in all this."

"Perfectly serious. I am decidedly weary of seven o'clock dinners and morning calls. But here we are."

As he spoke, they drove into the barrack-yard, where groups of lounging officers, in every variety of undress, were seen in all the insipid enjoyment of that cigar-smoking existence which forms the first article in our military code of education.

The gallant —th Light Dragoons were a "fast regiment," and the inventors of that new locomotive on the road to ruin called a "mess breakfast,"—a meal where champagne flows with a profusion rarely seen at dinner, and by which men begin the day in a frame of mind that would not be very decorous even when concluding it. Cashel, being an honored guest, drank wine with every one, not to speak of participating in various little bibatory trios and quartets, so that when the entertainment drew to a close he was very far from that self-possession and command which, with all his high spirits, seldom deserted him.

A tremendous fall of rain, that showed no prospect of ceasing, had just set in, so that the party agreed to repair to the major's rooms, and make a pool at écarté. After some talking about play in general, and some quizzing about not being able to bet a sum such as Cashel would care to play for, the game began.

Notwithstanding the apologies, the play was high, so much so, that Cashel, never a very shrewd observer, could not help remarking that several of the players could not conceal the anxiety the game inspired.

Roland himself joined less from inclination than fellowship, and far better pleased to be at liberty to chat with some of the others than to be seated at the table, he arose each time he lost, well content to pay for freedom by his gold. His natural indifference, added to a perfect carelessness about money, induced him to accept any bet that was offered, and these were freely proposed, since, in play *parlance*, "the run was against him;" so that, ere the trumpet-call announced the time to dress for the mess, he had lost heavily.

"You have no idea how much you have lost?" said Linton, in a low voice, and with a gravity of manner almost reproachful.

"Not the slightest," said Cashel, laughing.

"I can tell you, then, for I have totted it up. This morning's work has cost you seven thousand some hundred pounds."

"Indeed!" said Cashel, a flush rather of shame than displeasure mantling on his features. "I'll give it up in future."

"No, no! not till you've had your revenge," whispered Linton. "We 'll stay for the mess, and have at them again. The night is terrific, and no possibility of leaving."

The mess followed, and although play was to succeed it, the party drank freely, and sat long over their wine; even Linton himself seemed to linger at the table, and leave it with regret.

As for Cashel, for the first time in his life he wished to play. No desire for money-getting, no mean passion for gain, suggested the wish, it was simply a piqued vanity at being beaten; a sense of indignity that his inferiority should seem to be implied, even in so trifling a matter, urged him on, and he was one of the first to vote for a return to écarté.

Except Linton, there was not probably one who could be called a good player in the party; but luck, which

has more than the mastery over skill, supplied the place of knowledge, and Cashel was the only heavy loser of the whole assembly. Stung by continued failure, too, he betted madly and foolishly, so that as the day was breaking, and the stir in the barrack-yard announced the approaching parade, his losses reached more than double what they had been in the morning.

“I say, lads!” said the major, as they all arose from the table, “one word before you go.” So saying, he turned the key in the door, and stood with his back against it. “Before any one leaves the room, each must promise on his honor not to mention a syllable of this night's business. We all know that we have been playing far higher stakes than ever we've been in the habit of. The report, if it get abroad, would ruin the regiment.”

“Oh, we all promise not a word shall be said about it,” cried out several voices together. “There's the second trumpet!” So saying, they hastened pell-mell to dress for the parade, while Cashel, taking Linton's arm, set out homewards.

“I say, Tom!” said Roland, after they had walked on for some time in silence, “I am somewhat ashamed of this exploit of mine, and would not for a great deal that Kennyfeck should know it. Is there no way of getting this money by loan?—for if I draw now—”

“Make your mind quite easy; I'll arrange that for you. Don't worry yourself about it. It's a bore, of course, to lose a round sum like that; but you can afford it, my boy, that's one comfort. If it had been me, by Jove, the half of it would have drained the well!” This said, he hastily changed the topic, and they walked along chatting of everything save the late party.

CHAPTER XVI. WHAT ROLAND OVERHEARD AT THE MONEY LENDER'S

The money that “at play” is spent
Must oft be raised at “cent per cent.”

The Mode.

“Good night, or rather good morrow,” said Linton, as he stood with Cashel on the steps of his newly taken residence.

Cashel made no reply; his thoughts were recurring to the scene of the late debauch, and in some pangs of self-reproach he was recalling the heavy sum he had lost. “You spoke of my being able to raise this money, Linton, without Kennyfeck's knowing; for I am really ashamed of the affair. Tell me how can it be done?”

“Nothing easier.”

“Nay, but when? for, if I must confess it, I can think of nothing else till it be arranged.”

“What a timid conscience yours must be,” said Linton, laughing, “that cannot sleep lest the ghosts of his I. O.'s should haunt him.”

“The fact is so, nevertheless. The very gloomy moments of my life have been associated with play transactions. This shall be the last.”

“What folly! You suffer mere passing impressions to wear deep into your nature,—you that should be a man of nerve and vigor. What can it possibly signify that you have thrown away a few hundreds, or a few thousands either?”

“Very little as regards the money, I own; but I'm not certain how long my indifference respecting play might last. I am not sure how long I could endure being beaten—for that is the sense losing suggests—without a desire to conquer in turn. Now up to this I have played to oblige others, without interest or excitement of any kind. What if I should change and become a gambler from choice?”

“Why, if you propound the question with that solemn air, you'll almost frighten me into believing it would be something very terrible; but if you ask me simply what would be the result of your growing fond of play, I 'll tell you fairly, it's a pleasure gained,—one of the few resources which only a rich man can afford with impunity, so much the more fascinating that it can be indulged in such perfect accordance with every humor of a man's mind. If you are so inclined, you play low, and coquet with fortune, or if lavishly given, you throw the reins loose and go free. Now it seems to me that nothing could better suit the careless, open-handed freedom of your habits than the vacillations of high play. It's the only way that even for a moment you can taste the sensation of being hard pressed, while in the high flood of luck you can feel that gushing sense of power that somehow seems to be the secret soul of gold!”

“Men must lose with a very different look upon their features before I can win with the ecstasy you speak of,” cried Cashel. “But where are we straying to,—what part of the town have we got into?”

“This is the cattle-market,” said Linton, “and I have brought you here because I saw you 'd not close your eyes till that silly affair was settled; and here we are now at Dan Hoare's counting-house, the man of all others to aid us. Follow me; I ought to know the stairs well, in daylight or dark.”

Cautiously following his guide, Cashel mounted a half-rotten, creaky stair, which passed up between two damp and mildewed walls, and entered a small chamber whose one window looked out in a dirty court. The only furniture consisted of two deal chairs and a table, on which various inscriptions made by penknives betokened the patience and zeal of former visitors.

Linton passed on to the end of the chamber, where was a narrow door, but suddenly halted as his eye caught a little slip of paper attached to a sliding panel, and which bore the word “Engaged.” “Ha!” cried he, “one here already! You see, early as it is, Dan is at work, discounting and protesting as usual. By the way, I have forgot one essential: he never gives a stamp, and so I must provide one. Wait for me here; there is a place in the neighborhood where they can be had, and I 'll be back presently.”

Cashel sat himself down in the cheerless little den, thinking of the many who might have waited there before, in so many frames of anxiety and torturing suspense. His own memory could recall a somewhat similar character in Geiz-heimer, and while he was thus remembering some features of the past he fell into a reverie, forgetting time and place together, the sound of voices from the adjoining room serving rather to lull than arouse his attention. At last a word caught his ear. He started suddenly, and, looking about him for a second, experienced almost a difficulty to remember where he was. Could it be possible, or was it mere fancy? but he believed he heard his name mentioned by some one within that room. Less caring to know how or by whom the name was spoken than if the fact were actually so, he leaned forward on his chair, and bent his ear to listen, when he heard, in a voice louder than had been used before, the following words:—

“It may be all as you say, sir; I won't pretend to throw a doubt upon your words; but, as a mere man of business, I may be permitted to say that this promise, however satisfactory to your friend's feelings, is not worth a sixpence in law. Corrigan asks for a renewal of his lease, and the other says, 'Keep your holding,—don't disturb yourself,'—and there he is, a tenant at will. Now, for the purposes you have in view towards me, that pledge goes for nothing. I cannot renew these bills upon such frail security. If the old man cannot find means to meet them, Leicester must, that's all.”

“Leicester is a villain!” cried another and a deeper voice, whose tones seemed not quite strange to Roland's ears. “He has ruined my poor old friend; he will soon leave him houseless, and he threatens to leave him almost friendless too.”

“He told me,” said the other, “he should certainly claim his daughter, and means to return next summer for that purpose.”

“I almost hope poor Con will never live to see that day,” said the former, with a heavy sigh.

“Well, to return to our own affair, sir, I tell you frankly, I don't consider Cashel's promise deserving of any consideration. He doubtless means to keep it; that's the very most anybody can say about it. But remember what a life he is leading: he has drawn about thirty thousand out of Latrobe's hands in three months,—no one knows for what. He has got among a set of men who play high, and cannot pay if they lose. Now, his estate is a good one; but it can't last forever. My notion is that the young fellow will end as he began, and become a buccaneer once more.”

“He has a long course to run ere that comes,” said the other.

“Not so long as you fancy. There are demands upon him from quarters you little suspect, or that, for the moment, he little suspects himself. It would surprise you to hear that he is in Leicester's hands too.”

“Roland Cashel—Mr. Cashel—in Leicester's hands! How do you mean?”

Just at this instant Linton's foot was heard ascending the stairs, and Cashel, whose eagerness to hear the remainder became a perfect torture of anxiety, was forced to lose the opportunity.

“What a hunt I have had!” said Linton, as he entered, flushed and weary-looking. “Our amount is rather above the ordinary mark, and I found it almost impossible to procure the stamps. Are you tired waiting?”

“No,—nothing to speak of,” said Cashel, confusedly.

“Well, I fancy our friend here has had much more than his share of an audience. I'll see, and unearth him.”

And so saying, Linton knocked with his cane at the door. A low murmuring of voices succeeded, the sound of feet followed, and soon after the door was opened, and a small, thin, pale-faced man in black appeared.

“Good morning, Mr. Hoare. Here have we been playing antechamber to your serene highness for full an hour. This is Mr. Roland Cashel, Mr. Hoare, who wishes to make your acquaintance.”

The little man turned his quick gray eyes towards Cashel with a most scrutinizing keenness; but, as suddenly withdrawing them, invited both to enter.

“Be seated, gentlemen. Pardon the humble accommodation of this place. Take a chair, Mr. Linton.”

“We want tin, Mr. Hoare,” said Linton, slapping his boot with his cane,—“that most universal and vulgar want My friend here desires to raise a sum without having recourse to his agent, and I believe no man can aid in a little secret-service transaction like yourself.”

“Is the sum a large one, sir?” said Hoare, addressing Cashel.

“I cannot tell you exactly,” said Cashel, in some confusion at the confession of his ignorance. “I fancy it must be close on ten or twelve thousand pounds.”

“More like twenty!” cried Linton, coolly. Then, turning to Hoare, he went on: “My friend here is, happily for him, very little skilled in affairs of this kind, and, as his security is about the best that can be offered, he need not buy his experience very dearly. Now just tell us, frankly, how, when, and on what terms he can have this money.”

“Money is scarce just now, sir,” said Hoare; “but as to securities, Mr. Cashel's bills are quite sufficient. There is no necessity for any legal expenses whatever. I need not say that the transaction shall be perfectly secret: in fact, I'll keep the bills in my own hands till due.”

“There, that's the man I told you he was,” cried Linton. “A Croesus in generosity as in gold. I would I were your son, or your son-in-law, Hoare.”

“Too much honor, Mr. Linton,” said the money-lender, whose slight flush did not betoken a concurrence in his own words. “Now to business,” continued he, addressing Cashel. “If you favor me with your name on four bills for five thousand each, and the accompanying charges for interest, discount, commission, and so on, I 'll engage that you have this money within the week.”

“Could it not be to-morrow? I should like greatly to have the whole off my mind; and as I mean not to play again—”

“Pooh, pooh,” said Linton, stopping an explanation he was by no means pleased Hoare should hear; “time enough for resolutions, and time enough for payment too. By the end of the week, Hoare, will do perfectly. You can bring the bills with you to my quarters, say on Saturday morning, and we 'll drive over to Mr. Cashel's.”

“Very well. I 'll be punctual. At eleven on Saturday expect me. May I bring that little thing of yours for two hundred pounds with it, Mr. Linton?”

“Of course you may not. Where do you expect me to find money for the debts of last year? My dear Hoare, I have no more memory for such things than I have for the sorrows of childhood.”

“Ah, very well, sir, we'll keep it over,” said Hoare, smiling.

“Let him bring it,” whispered Cashel, “and include it in one of my bills. There's nothing so worrying as an overhanging debt.”

“Do you think so?” replied Linton. “Bless me, I never felt that. A life without duns is like a sky without a cloud, very agreeable for a short time, but soon becoming wearisome from very monotony. You grow as sick of uninterrupted blue as ever you did of impending rain and storm. Let me have the landscape effect of light and shadow over existence. The brilliant bits are then ten times as glorious in color, and the dark shadows of one's mortgages only heighten the warmth of the picture. Ask Hoare, there, *he'll* tell you. I actually cherish my debts.”

“Very true, sir; you cannot bear to part with them either.”

“Well said, old Moses; the 'interest' they inspire is too strong for one's feelings. But hark! I hear some fresh arrivals without. Another boat-load of the d——d has crossed the Styx.”

“Thanks for the simile, sir,” said Hoare, smiling faintly,—“on Saturday.”

“On Saturday,” repeated Linton.

Cashel lingered as he left the room; a longing desire to speak one word, to ask one question of Hoare—who was this Leicester of whom he spoke?—was uppermost in his mind, and yet he did not dare to own he had heard the words. He could have wished, too, to communicate his thoughts to Linton, but a secret fear told him that perhaps the mystery might be one he would not wish revealed.

“Why so thoughtful, Roland?” said Linton, after traversing some streets in silence. “My friend Hoare has not terrified you?”

“No, I was not thinking of him,” said Cashel. “What kind of a character does he bear?”

“Pretty much that of all his class. Sharp enough, when sharpness is called for, and seemingly liberal if liberality pays better. To me he has been ever generous. Why, Heaven knows; I suppose the secret will out one of these days. I'm sure I don't ask for it.”

Linton's flippancy, for the first time, was distasteful to Cashel. If the school in which he was bred taught little remorse about the sin of incurring debt, it inculcated, however, a manly self-reliance to clear off the encumbrance by some personal effort, and he by no means sympathized with the cool indifference of Linton's philosophy. Linton, always shrewd enough to know when he had not “made a hit,” at once turned the conversation into another channel, by asking at what time Cashel proposed to receive his visitors at Tubbermore.

“Is the honor seriously intended me?” said Cashel, “or is it merely a piece of fashionable quizzing, this

promised visit, for I own I scarcely supposed so many fine people would like to encounter the hard usage of such an old ruin as I hear this must be.”

“You'll have them to a certainty. I doubt if there will be a single apology. I know at this instant the most urgent solicitations have been employed to procure invitations.”

“With all my heart, then,” cried Cashel; “only remember the order of the course depends on you. I know nothing of how they ought to be entertained or amused. Take the whole affair into your own hands, and I shall concur in everything.”

“Originality is always better than imitation, but still, if one cannot strike out a totally new line, what do you think of taking old Mathews of Johnstown for our model, and invite all our guests with free permission to dine, breakfast, and sup at what hour and in what parties they please? This combines the unbridled freedom of an inn with the hospitality of a country house. Groups form as fancy dictates. New combinations spring up each day,—no fatigue, no *ennui*, can ensue with such endless changes in companionship, and you yourself, instead of the fatiguing duties of a host, are at liberty, like any of your guests, to join this party or that.”

“I like the notion immensely. How would our friends take it, for that is the point?”

“It would be popular with every one, for it will suit your people, who know and like to mix with every set in society, and at the same time gratify your 'exclusives,' who can form their own little coteries with all the jealous selection they love. Besides, it avoids another and a great difficulty. Had you received in ordinary fashion, you must have asked some lady friend to have done the honors for you. This would have been a matter of the greatest embarrassment. The Kennyfecks have not rank enough; old Lady Janet would have frightened every one away; Mrs. White would have filled the house with her own 'blues,' and banished every one else; and as for Lady Kilgoff, who, besides being a very pretty woman and well-mannered, has an exceedingly fascinating way with strangers, 'my Lord' is so jealous, so absurdly, madly jealous, that she dare not ask after the success of a shooting-party without his suspecting an allegorical allusion to Cupid and his shafts.”

“Well, then, let us resolve to receive 'en Mathews;' and now, when shall we name the day?”

“Let us wait till the result of the division be known in Parliament. A change of ministers is hinted at, and if it were to occur, you'll have every one hastening away to his county for the new election; by Saturday we shall learn everything, and that will be time enough.”

“In any case, I had better set off and see what can be done to put the house in a fit state to receive them.”

“Leave all that to me. I 'll take Popham, the architect, down with me, and you need never trouble your head about the matter. It's quite clear people who accept an invitation like the present must put up with a hundred small penalties on convenience. The liberty of such a house always repays whatever is wanting on the score of ceremonial and order, and your fine guests, who would perhaps give themselves airs towards the Kennyfecks and their set if meeting them elsewhere, will here affect, at least, a tone of good-natured equality, just as in revolutionary times people shake hands with their hairdresser.”

“But how to amuse or even occupy them! that is a great puzzle to me.”

“Leave them perfectly to their own devices. In fun there should be always free-trade. Protection ruins it. But all this is Egyptian to you, so go to bed and sleep soundly, and leave the cares of state to me.

“On me the glory or disgrace,
The pride of triumph or the shame of fall.”

“Then I 'll think no more of the matter,” said Cashel; “and so good-by.”

“Now for a twenty-four hours' sleep,” said Linton, “and then once more to roll the stone of life, which, by the way, gives the lie to the old adage, for unquestionably it does 'gather moss' as we grow older.”

CHAPTER XVII. SCANNING THE POLITICAL HORIZON.

Confound their politics!

—National Anthem.

Linton was very far from indulging that dreamy inactivity of which he spoke. Plans and schemes of various kinds occupied his thoughts too intently to admit of slumber. Indeed, his theory was, that, if a man could not dream of some happy mode of advancing his fortune, sleep was a fearful inroad upon his worldly career.

He at once hastened home to read his letters and newspapers, and so important did their intelligence seem, that he only delayed to change his dress and eat a hurried breakfast, when he repaired to the Castle, where a few minutes previously the secretary, Mr. Downie Meek, had arrived from his lodge in the Park.

“Safe once more, Meek,” said he, entering the official chamber, where, immersed in printed returns, petitions, and remonstrances, sat the busy secretary.

“Ah, Linton! you are the *bien venu*. We are to have another heat for the race, though I own it scarcely looks promising.”

“Particularly as you are going to carry weight,” said Linton, laughing. “It's true, I suppose, that the Irish party have joined you?”

“There was no help for it,” said the secretary, with a despondent gesture of the eyebrows; “we had no alternative save accepting the greasy voices, or go out. Some deemed the former the better course, but others remembered the story of the Brahmin, who engaged to teach the ass to speak in ten years, or else

forfeit his own head.”

“And perfectly right,” interrupted Linton. “The Brahmin had only three chances in his favor. Now, your king may die too, and you have any number of asses to be got rid of.”

“Let us be serious, Tom. What are our prospects at a general election? Are the landed gentry growing afraid of the O'Gorman party, or are they still hanging back, resentful of Peel's desertion?”

“They are very conservative,—that is, they want to keep their properties and pay the least possible taxation. Be cautious, however, and you have them all your own. The Irish party being now with you, begin by some marked favor to the Protestant Church. Hear me out. This will alarm the Romanists, and cause a kind of split amongst them. Such as have, or expect to have place, will stand by you; the others will show fight. You have then an opportunity of proclaiming yourselves a strong Protestant Cabinet, and the ultras, who hate Peel, will at least affect to believe you. While the country is thus agitated, go to the elections. Your friends, amid so many unsettled opinions, cannot be expected to take pledges, or, better still, they cannot accept any, subject to various contingencies never to arise.”

“I am sorely afraid of this splitting up the forces,” said Meek, doubtfully.

“It's your true game, depend upon it,” said Linton. “These Irish allies are unwieldy—when numerous. I remember once calling on Tom Scott, the trainer, one day, and while we went through the stables I could not help remarking the fine family of boys he had. 'Yes, sir,' said Tom, modestly, 'they 're good-looking chaps, and smart ones. God Almighty keep 'em little, sir!'”

“Ah, very true,” sighed Meek; “God Almighty keep 'em little!”

“Then,” resumed Linton, “you have never played out that golden game of Irish legislation, which consists in enacting a law, and always ruling against it. Decide for the education system, but promote the men who oppose it. Condemn the public conduct of certain parties, and then let them figure as baronets, or lieutenants of counties, in the next 'Gazette,' and, to crown all, seek out every now and then some red-hot supporter of Government, and degrade him from the bench of magistrates for maladministration! This, which in England would seem rather chaotic legislation, will to Irish intelligence smack like even-handed justice.”

“We have a bad press,” said Meek, peevishly.

“No matter, it has the less influence. Believe me, it will be an evil day for you Downing Street gentlemen when Ireland possesses a really able and independent press,—when, avoiding topics of mere irritating tendency, men address themselves to the actual wants of the country, exemplifying, as they disclose them, the inaptitude and folly of English legislation. Don't wait for that day, Meek. In all likelihood it is distant enough, but in any case don't hasten its coming by your prayers.”

“You mustn't broach these doctrines out of doors, Tom,” said Meek, in a soft, caressing tone; “there is a horrid cant getting up just now against English rule, and in favor of native manufactures.”

“Which be they, Meek? I never heard of them. Maynooth is the only factory I know of in the land, and a brisk trade it has, home and colonial.”

“You know as well as any man the benefits we have conferred on this country.”

“Yes, it demands no great tax on memory to repeat them. You found a starving peasantry of a couple of millions, and, being unable or incompetent to aid them, you ruined the gentry to keep them company. You saw a mangy, miserable dog with famine in his flank and death in his eye, and, answering his appeal to your compassion, you cut an inch off his tail and told him to eat it.”

“You are too bad, Tom—a great deal too bad. What are you looking for?”

“Nothing at present,” was the cool reply.

“What in prospective, then?”

“I should like to be the Secretary for Ireland, Meek, whenever they shelve you among the other unredeemed pledges in that pawn-office, the Board of Trade.”

Meek affected a laugh, but not over successfully, while to turn the conversation, he said, “*A propos* to your friend Cashel, I have not been able to show him any attentions, so occupied have I been with one thing and another. Let us make a dinner for him.”

“No, no, he does n't care for such things. Come and Join his house-warming on the Shannon; that will be far better.”

“I mean it, but I should like also to see him here. He knows the Kilgoffs, doesn't he?”

“Slightly. By the way, what are you going to do with my Lord? He wants, like Sancho, to be governor of an island.”

“What an old bore! without brains, fortune, or influence.”

“He has a very pretty wife, Meek. Don't you think the Foreign Office would recognize *that* claim?”

“So they send him out of this, I am content. But to return to what we were talking about. Shall we say Friday? or will Saturday suit you? and we'll make up a small party.”

“I fear not. I mean to leave the town by the end of the week.”

“Not for any time?”

“A few days only, and then I shall be at your orders. Meanwhile, leave Cashel to himself; he has got some suspicions—Heaven knows whence or how—that his borough influence makes him a very important card just now; therefore don't notice him, starve him out, and you 'll have him come forth with a white flag one of these days. I know him well, and the chances are that, if he were to attribute any of your civilities to the score of your calculation respecting his political influence, he would at once become your most determined opponent.”

“But his borough—”

“Let him represent it himself, Meek, and it's the next best thing to disfranchisement.”

“He would not be likely to accept any advice from us?” asked Meek, half timidly.

“To a certainty he would not, although proffered in your own most insinuating manner. Come, Meek, no

nonsense; you must look out for a seat for your *protégé* Clare Jones, elsewhere; though I tell you frankly he is not worth the trouble."

"I declare you are all wrong, Linton—quite wrong; I was thinking whether from motives of delicacy you would not like to press your own claim, which *we* might, with so much propriety."

"Thanks," said Linton; while a sly twinkle of his eye showed that he did not care to disguise the spirit of mistrust with which he heard the speech. "Thanks; *you* are too generous, and I am too modest, so let us not think more of the matter."

"What is Cashel's real fortune?" said Meek, not sorry to turn the conversation into a less dangerous channel; "one hears so many absurd and extravagant reports, it is hard to know what to believe."

"Kennyfeck calls it fourteen thousand a year above all charges and cost of collection."

"And your own opinion?"

Linton shrugged his shoulders carelessly, and said, "There or thereabouts. I fancy that his ready money has been greatly overrated. But why do you ask? Your people wouldn't give him a peerage, would they?"

"Not now, of course," said Meek, hesitating.

"Nor at any time, I trust," said Linton, authoritatively. "The man does not know how to behave as a plain country gentleman; why increase his embarrassments by making him a Lord? Besides, you should take care in these new creations who are your peeresses, or one of these days you 'll have old Kennyfeck fancying that he is a noble himself."

"There is no danger to be apprehended in that quarter?" asked Meek, with some trepidation of manner.

"Yes, but there is, though, and very considerable, too. He has been living in the house with those girls,—clever and shrewd girls, too. He is more at his ease there than elsewhere. They listen patiently to his tiresome prairie stories, and are indulgent to all his little 'escapades'—as a 'ranchero;' in a word, he is a hero there, and never leaves the threshold without losing some of the charms of the illusion."

"And you saw all this?"

"Yes."

"And suffered it?"

"Yes. What would you have me do? Had there been only one girl in the case—I might have married her. But it is only in botany, or the bay of that name, that the English permit polygamy."

"I am very sorry to hear this," said Meek, gravely.

"I am very sorry to have it to tell, Meek," said the other.

"He might marry so well!" muttered Meek, half in soliloquy.

"To be sure he might; and in good hands—I mean in those of a man who sees his way in life—cut a very fair figure, too. But it won't do to appear in London with a second or third rate woman, whose only recommendation is the prettiness that has fascinated 'Castle balls' in Dublin."

"Let us talk over this again, Linton," said Meek, arranging his papers, and affecting to be busied.

"With all my heart; indeed, it was a subject I intended to speak to you about. I have a little theory thereanent myself."

"Have you, indeed?" said Meek, looking up with animation.

"Yes, but it needs your counsel—perhaps something more, I should say—but another time—good-bye, goodbye." And without waiting to say or hear more, Linton lounged out of the room, leaving the secretary, thoughtful and serious, behind him.

CHAPTER XVIII. UNDER THE GREEN-WOOD TREE.

Nor lives the heart so cold and dark
But in its depths some lingering spark
Of love is cherished there!

The Outlaw.

When Tom Linton parted with Mr. Meek he repaired to the club in Kildare Street to listen to the gossip on the rumored dissolution of Parliament, and pick up what he could of the prevailing tone among the country gentry.

His appearance was eagerly hailed by many, who regarded him as generally well informed on all the changes and turns of party warfare; but, as he professed the most complete ignorance of everything, and seemed to devour with greedy curiosity the most commonplace announcements, he was speedily deserted and suffered to pursue his work of inquiry perfectly unmolested. Not that indeed there was much to learn; the tone of banter and raillery with which, from want of all real political influence, men in Ireland accustom themselves to discuss grave questions, concealing their real sentiments, or investing them with a ludicrous exaggeration, oftentimes foiled even the shrewd perception of Tom Linton.

He did, however, learn so much as showed him, that all the ordinary landmarks of party being lost, men were beginning to find themselves at liberty to adopt any leadership which pleased them, without suffering the stain of desertion. They thought themselves betrayed by each of the great political chiefs in turn, and began to fancy that the best course for them in future would be to make specific terms for any support they should accord. Suggestions to this end thrown out in all the bantering gayety of Irish manner might mean

anything, or nothing, and so Linton well knew, as he listened to them.

He had taken his place at a whist-table, that he might, while seemingly preoccupied, hear what was said around him, and although no error of play, nor a single mistake in the game, marked the different direction of his attention, he contrived to learn much of the opinion prevalent in certain circles.

“That is the luckiest fellow in Europe,” said one of his late antagonists; “as usual he rises the only winner.”

“You can scarcely call it luck,” said another; “he is a first-rate player, and always so cool.”

Meanwhile, Linton, mounting his horse, rode slowly along the streets till he arrived at Bilton's Hotel, where a handsome britzska was standing, whose large up-standing horses and richly-mounted harnessing gave token of London rather than of Dublin taste.

“Is her Ladyship going out, Halpin?” said he to the footman.

“Her Ladyship ordered the carriage for four precisely, sir.”

Linton mused for a second or two, and then asked if Lord Kilgoff were at home, and not waiting for a reply, passed on.

No sooner, however, had he reached the landing-place, and was beyond the observation of the servant, than he halted and appeared to reflect At last, as if having made his resolve, he turned to descend the stairs, when the drawing-room door opened and Lord Kilgoff appeared.

“The very man I wanted. Linton, come here,” cried he, re-entering the room.

“I was just on my way to you, my Lord,” said Linton, with well-affected eagerness.

“Are they out, Linton, are they 'out'?” said he, in breathless impatience.

“No, my Lord. I've seen Meek; they're safe for the present. A coalition has been formed with O'Morgan and his party, which secures a working majority of forty-five or fifty.”

“This is certain, Linton; may I rely upon it?”

“You may, my Lord, with confidence.”

“Then I suppose the moment has come when my adhesion would be most well-timed. It's a grave question, Tom; everything depends on it. If I join them and they go out—”

“Why, your Lordship goes out too, without ever having the satisfaction of being 'in.'”

“Not if they gave me the mission to Florence, Tom. They never remove the smaller legations in any change of parties.”

“But you could not help resigning, my Lord; you should follow your friends,” said Linton, with an assumed air of high principle.

“Not a bit of it; I 'd hold on. I see no reason whatever for such a course. I have made a rough draft of a letter which Hindley should show to Peel. See here, this is the important passage. I presuppose that I had already given Hindley my resignation to hand in to Aberdeen, but that yielding to his arguments, who refuses to deliver it, I have reconsidered the matter. Now, listen: 'You say that my functions are not of a nature to admit any line of partisanship, and that a man of honorable views can serve his country under a Whig or Tory administration, irrespective of his own preference for one or the other. I feel this to be true. I know that, in my own official career, I have always forgotten the peculiar politics of my masters; but another question arises,—how shall I be judged by others? for while I confess to you that I entertain for Peel's capacity a respect I have never been able to feel for the Whig leaders, yet family prejudices, connections, a hundred minor circumstances, some purely accidental, threw me among the ranks of that party, and a sense of consistency kept me where very probably unbiassed judgment had never suffered me to remain.'”

“Amazingly good! very well done, indeed!” said Linton, in whose dubious smile younger eyes than Lord Kilgoff's might have read the most insolent expression of contempt; not, indeed, at the hypocrisy, but at the poor attempt to give it color. “There could be no thought of removing a man with such sentiments.”

“I think not, Linton. It would be a gross and flagrant case of official tyranny to do so,—a case for inquiry in the House,—a motion to produce the correspondence—”

“Better not, my Lord,” said Linton, dryly; “that is an admirable letter addressed to your friend, Lord Hindley; but in a blue book it won't read so well. Take my advice: hold on if you can, go if you must, but don't ask questions, at all events.”

“Perhaps you are right, Tom,” said Kilgoff, musing.

“Now for another point, my Lord; this visit to Mr. Cashel—”

“I 've declined it,” said Lord Kilgoff, reddening, and with a look of extreme irritation. “The note is there sealed on the table, and shall be sent within an hour.”

“I am not at liberty to ask your reasons, my Lord,” said Linton, gravely and respectfully, “but I am certainly free to state my own, why I think you ought most positively to go there.”

“You may, certainly,” said Lord Kilgoff, rising impatiently, and pacing the room; “I shall not interrupt you, but I shall also pledge myself not to let them influence me in the slightest degree. My mind is made up, sir.”

“Then I shall speak with more freedom,” said Linton, boldly; “because, having no pretension to change your sentiments, I am merely desirous to record my own.”

Lord Kilgoff made no reply, but continued his walk, while Linton resumed:—

“Now I see your impatience, my Lord, and will not trespass on it. Here, in three words, is my case. The borough of Drumkeeran returns a member to Parliament; Hebden, who represents it, is about to accept the Hundreds; Cashel owns the town.”

“And if he does, sir, what signifies it to me?” broke in Lord Kilgoff; “I have not the slightest influence over that gentleman's opinions. He was rude enough to give me a very flat contradiction in the only discussion we ever held together. I venture to assert, from what I have seen of him, that any direction of his course in Parliament would be totally impossible. He is self-willed, obstinate, and opinionated.”

“Granted, my Lord; he is the very calibre to run through his own, and ruin any other man's fortune.”

“Well, sir, and this is the person whose services you think it worth my while obtaining?”

“I never said so, my Lord.”

“What! did n't I hear you this moment—”

“No, you heard me say that the borough is his, but you never heard me say that he ought to be its member. For that honor I had another in my eye,—one over whom your Lordship's influence has never yet been doubted.”

“Whom do you mean?”

“Tom Linton, my Lord; a very unworthy, but a most devoted partisan of your Lordship's.”

“What! Tom—*you* in Parliament?”

“Even so, my Lord,” said Linton, for once in his life—perhaps, the only time—that a flash of angry meaning colored his calm features. “I am sorry that the notion should so palpably wake your Lordship's amazement.”

“No—no—no! I did n't mean that. I was only surprised. In fact, you took me unawares—we were talking of Cashel.”

“Precisely, my Lord; we were discussing the probable career of a person so eminently gifted with statesmanlike qualities; then, how could I possibly hope for patience when introducing to your notice abilities so humble as my own?”

“But is it possible—is this practicable, Linton?”

“With your assistance it is certain. The influence of your Lordship's rank would give such weight to your opinions, that if you were only to say to him, 'Send Linton into Parliament as your member,' the thing is done.”

“I have my doubts.”

“I have none whatever—I know the man well. He is dying to conform to anything that he supposes to be the discipline of his class. Tell him he ought, and he never resists.”

“I have resolved on not paying this visit,” said Kilgoff, after a brief pause; “reasons of sufficient weight determined me.”

“Oh, my Lord, pardon the freedom, but I must say that they had need be strong reasons to weigh against all the advantages I can show from the opposite course.”

“They are, sir, very strong reasons, nor do I deem it necessary to advert to them again; enough that I esteem them sufficient.”

“Of course, my Lord, I never dreamed of calling them in question; they must needs be cogent arguments which counterpoise the opposite scale—a high diplomatic career—a representative peerage—this there could be no doubt of.”

“How do you mean?” broke in Kilgoff, abruptly.

“Simply that this young man becomes your trump card, if you only please to take him up. As yet he has resisted the advances made by Downie Meek and his set, because of my watchfulness; but sooner or later some party will catch him, and when one thinks how few men with a large unencumbered fortune we possess here, with a great county interest, two boroughs, for he owns Knockgarvan as well, the prize is really worth having, particularly as it only needs the stretching out the hand to take.”

Lord Kilgoff mused and seemed to ponder over the words. He entertained small doubts of his “friend” Linton's capacity; but he had very considerable suspicions of his principles, and it is a strange fact that people willing to commit very gross breaches of fair dealing themselves are exceedingly scrupulous respecting the fair fame of their associates in iniquity, so admirably accommodating is a worldly conscience!

“Well, sir,” said he, at length, “the price—name the price. What are we to pay for the article?—that is the question.”

“I have said, my Lord, it is to be had for asking. Your Lordship has only to take the territory, as our naval men do the chance islands they meet with in the Southern Pacific. Land and plant your flag—*voilà tout!*”

“But you have heard me observe already,” said he, in a querulous tone, “that I dislike the prospect of this visit—that in fact it would be exceedingly disagreeable to me.”

“Then I have nothing more to say, my Lord,” said Linton, coolly, while he took up his hat and gloves. “I can only congratulate you on the excellence of your political prospects, which can dispense with a strong alliance to be had so easily.”

“Our measures of value are very different, Mr. Linton,” said Lord Kilgoff, proudly. “Still, to prove that this is no caprice on my part,”—here he stopped abruptly, while his heightened color showed the degree of embarrassment he labored under,—“to show you that I have—in order to explain my motives—” Here he took a cautious glance around the room, walked to the door, opened and shut it again, and then drawing his arm within Linton's, led him towards a window. For a second or two he seemed undecided, and at last, by a great effort, he whispered a few words in Linton's ear.

Had any third party been there to watch the effect of the whispered confidence, he might easily have read in the speaking brilliancy of Linton's eyes, and in his assured look, that it was of a nature to give him the greatest pleasure. But scarce had his Lordship done speaking, when these signs of pleasure gave way to a cold, almost stern air of morality, and he said, “But surely, my Lord, it were far better to leave her Ladyship to deal with such insolent pretension—”

“Hush, not so loud; speak lower. So I should, Linton, but women never will see anything in these airs of puppyism. They persist in thinking, or saying, at least, that they are mere modern fashionable manners, and this endurance on their part gives encouragement. And then, when there happens to be some disparity of years—Lady Kilgoff *is* my junior—the censorious world seizes on the shadow of a scandal; in fact, sir, I will not consent to afford matter for newspaper asterisks or figurative description.”

“Your Lordship never had a better opportunity of giving open defiance to both. These airs of Cashel are, as you remark, mere puppyism, assumed to get credit for a certain fashionable character for levity. To avoid him

would be to acknowledge that there was danger in his society. I don't go so far as to say that he would assert as much, but most assuredly the world would for him. I think I hear the ready comments on your absence: 'Were not the Kilgoffs expected here?' 'Oh, they were invited, but Lord Kilgoff was afraid to venture. Cashel had been paying attentions.' In a word, every species of impertinence that malevolence and envy can fancy would be fabricated. Your Lordship knows the world far better than I do; and knows, besides, the heavy price a man pays for being the possessor of a high capacity and a handsome wife: these are two insults that the less fortunate in life never do, or never can forgive."

"Well, what is it you counsel?"

"To meet these calumnies in the face; small slanders, like weak fires, are to be trampled out; to tamper with such, is to fan the flame which at last will scorch you. Besides, to take another view of the matter: her Ladyship is young, and has been much admired; how will she accept this seclusion? I don't speak of the present case; besides, I suppose that this country visit would bore her beyond measure. But how will she regard it in other instances? Is it not an implied fear on your Lordship's part? you, who have really nothing to dread in competition with any man. I only know, if I were in your place, how I should actually seize the very opportunity of openly flouting such calumnious rumor; never was there an occasion to do so on cheaper terms. This Roland Cashel is an underbred boy."

"There is a great deal in what you say, Linton. But as jealousy is a feeling of which I have never had any experience, I was only anxious on Lady Kilgoff's account, that the thoughtless gayety of a very young and handsome woman should not expose her to the sarcastic insinuations of an impertinent world. She *is* gay in manner; there *is* an air of lively imagination—"

"No more than what the French call '*amabilité*,' my Lord, which, like the famed armor of Milan is not the less defensive that it is so beautiful in all its details."

"Well, then, I 'll not send the note," said Lord Kilgoff, as he took up the letter, and tearing it, threw the fragments into the fire; "of course, Linton, this conversation is strictly confidential?"

"Your Lordship has never found me unworthy of such a trust."

"Never; nor, I must say, would it be for your advantage to become so."

Linton bit his lip, and for a second or two seemed burning to make a rejoinder; but overcoming the temptation, assumed his careless smile, and said,—

"I leave you, my Lord, greatly gratified that chance led me to pay this visit. I sincerely believe, that in the counsels I have offered, I have at least been able to be of service to you."

Lord Kilgoff presented his hand in acknowledgment of the speech, but it was accorded with an air which seemed to say, "Well, here is a receipt in full for your devotedness."

Linton took it in the same spirit, and left the room, as though deeply impressed with all the honor he enjoyed in such a noble friendship.

Hastening down the stairs, he sprang into the saddle of his horse, and cantering up the street, turned towards the road which leads to the Phoenix Park. It was about the hour when the equipages were wont to throng that promenade, but Linton did not seem desirous of joining that gay crowd, for he took a cross-path through the fields, and after a sharp ride of half-an-hour, reached a low paling which skirted the park on the eastward; here, at a small cottage kept by one of the rangers, a little door led in, passing through which he found himself in one of the long green alleys of that beautiful tract. A boy, who seemed to be ready waiting, now took his horse, and Linton entered the wood and disappeared. He did not proceed far, however, within the shady copse, for after going a short distance he perceived a carriage standing in the lane, by the door of which a footman waited, with a shawl upon his arm. The coachman, with his whip posed, sat talking with his fellow-servant, so that Linton saw that the carriage had no occupant.

He now hastened along, and speedily emerging at a little grassy opening of the wood, came in sight of a lady walking at some distance in front. The fashionable air and splendid dress, which might have suited the most brilliant promenade of a great city, seemed strange in such a lone, unvisited spot. Linton lost no time in overtaking her, only diminishing his speed as he came closer, when, with his hat removed, and in an attitude of the most humble deference, he said,—

"Pray let me stand excused if I am somewhat behind my time; the fault was not my own."

"Oh, say nothing about it," said a soft musical voice, and Lady Kilgoff turned an easy smile towards him. "'Qui s'excuse, s'accuse,' says the French proverb, and I never dreamt of the accusation. Is it not a lovely day here?"

Linton was too much piqued to answer at once, but recovering, he said, “Without seeking to apologize for an absence that was not felt, let me return to the subject. I assure your Ladyship that I had been detained by Lord Kilgoff, who was pleased to bestow a more than ordinary share of his confidence upon me, and even condescended to ask my counsel.”

“How flattering! Which you gave, I hope, with all the sincerity for which you are famous.”

Linton tried to smile, but not very successfully.

“What, then, was this wonderful mystery? Not the representative peerage, I trust; I 'm sure I hope that question is at rest forever.”

“You are quite safe there,—he never mentioned it.”

“Oh, then it was his diplomatic ambition,—ain't I right? Ah, I knew it; I knew it How very silly, or how very wicked you must be, Mr. Linton, to encourage these daydreams,—you who have not the excuse of hallucinations, who read the book of life as it is written, without fanciful interpretations!”

“I certainly must disclaim your paneygric. I had one hallucination, if so you term it,—it was that you wished, ardently wished, for the position which a foreign 'mission' bestows. A very natural wish, I freely own, in one so worthy in every way to grace and adorn it.”

“Well, so I did some time back, but I 've changed my mind. I don't think I should like it; I have been reconsidering the subject.”

“And your Ladyship inclines now rather to seclusion and rural pleasures; how fortunate that I should have been able to serve your interests there also.”

“What do you mean?” said she, with a stare, while a deep scarlet suffused her cheek.

“I alluded to a country visit which you fancied might be made so agreeably, but which his Lordship had the bad taste to regard less favorably.”

“Well, sir, you did not presume to give any opinion?”

“I really did. I had all the hardihood to brave Lord Kilgoff's most fixed resolves. You were aware that he declined Mr. Cashel's invitation?”

She nodded, and he went on,—

“Probably, too, knowing the reasons for that refusal?”

“No, sir; the matter was indifferent to me, so I never troubled my head about it. My Lord said we shouldn't go, and I said, 'Very well,' and there it ended.”

Now, although this was spoken with a most admirably feigned indifference, Linton was too shrewd an observer not to penetrate the deception.

“I am doubly unlucky this day,” said he, at last, “first to employ all my artifices to plan a ministerial success to which you are actually averse, and secondly, to carry a point to which you are indifferent.”

“Dare I ask, if the question be not an indiscreet one, what peculiar interest Mr. Linton can have, either in our acceptance or refusal of this invitation?”

“Have I not said that I believed you desired it?” replied he, with a most meaning look.

“Indeed you read inclinations most skilfully, only that you interpret them by anticipation.”

“This is too much,” said Linton, in a voice whose passionate earnestness showed that all dissimulation was at an end, “far too much! The genteel comedy that we play before the world, madam, might be laid aside for a few moments here. When I asked for this interview, and you consented to give it—”

“It was on the express stipulation that you should treat me as you do in society, sir,” broke she in—“that there should be no attempt to fall back upon an intimacy which can never be resumed.”

“When I promised, I intended to have kept my word, Laura,” said he, in deep dejection; “I believed I could have stifled the passion that consumes me, and talked to you in the words of sincere, devoted friendship, but I cannot. Old memories of once happiness, brought up too vividly by seeing you, as I used to see you, when in many a country walk we sauntered on, dreaming of the time when, mine, by every tie of right, as by affection —”

“How you requited that affection, Linton!” said she, in a tone whose deep reproach seemed actually to stun him. Then suddenly changing to an air of disdainful anger, she continued: “You are a bold man, Linton. I thought it would be too much for even *your* hardihood to recur to a theme so full of humiliation for yourself; but I know your theory, sir: you think there is a kind of heroism in exaggerated baseness, and that it is no less great to transcend men in crime than in virtue. You dare to speak of an affection that you betrayed and bartered for money.”

“I made you a peeress, madam. When you were Laura Gardiner, you couldn't have spoken to me as now you speak.”

“If I consented to the vile contract, it was that, when I discovered your baseness, any refuge was preferable to being the wife of one like you!”

“A most complimentary assurance, not only to myself, but his Lordship,” said Linton, with an insolent smile.

“Now, hear me,” said she, not noticing the taunt, but speaking with a voice of deep collected earnestness. “It is in vain to build upon time or perseverance—the allies you trust so deeply—to renew the ties broken forever. If I had no other higher and more sustaining motive, my knowledge of you would be enough to rescue me from this danger. I know you well, Linton. You have often told me what an enemy you could be. This, at least, I believe of all that you have ever sworn! I have a full faith, too, in your ingenuity and skill; and yet I would rather brave both—ay, both hate and craft—than trust to what you call your honor.”

“You do indeed know me well, Laura,” said he, in a voice broken and faltering, “or you never had dared to speak such words to me. There is not one breathing could have uttered them and not pay the penalty, save yourself. I feel in my inmost heart how deeply I have wronged you, but is not my whole life an atonement for the wrong? Am I not heartbroken and wretched, without a hope or a future? What greater punishment did any one ever incur than to live in the daily sight and contemplation of a bliss that his own folly or madness have forever denied him; and yet, to that same suffering do I cling, as the last tie that binds me to existence. To see you in the world, to watch you, to mark the effect your grace and beauty are making on all around you —how every fascination calls up its tribute of admiration—how with each day some new excellence develops itself, till you seem inexhaustible in all the traits of graceful womanhood, this has been the cherished happiness of my life! It was to this end I labored to induce the acceptance of that invitation that once more, beneath the same roof, I should see you for days long. Your own heart must confess how I have never before the world forgotten the distance that separates us. There is, then, no fear that I should resign every joy that yet remains to me for any momentary indulgence of speaking to you as my heart feels. No, no, Laura, you have nothing to dread either from my hate or my love.”

“To what end, then, was it that you asked me to meet you here to-day?” said she, in a voice in which a touch of compassionate sorrow was blended.

“Simply to entreat, that if I should succeed in persuading his Lordship to accept this visit, you would throw no obstacle in the way on your side.”

“And if I consent, shall I have no cause to rue my compliance?”

“So far as depends on me, none, on my honor!”

It had been better for Linton's cause that he had omitted the last words, at least: as Laura turned away her head, a curl of insolent meaning was on her lip, but she did not speak, and they now walked along, side by side, in silence.

“You will go, then?” said he, at last, in a low whisper.

“Yes,” said she, faintly.

Linton stole a glance at her unperceived, and suddenly the sparkle of his eyes and the elation of his whole expression showed the transport of pleasure he experienced.

“Now for one word of caution,” said Linton, as, drawing closer to her side, he assumed the tone of sincere friendship. “Lord Kilgoff has just revealed to me, in deep confidence, that he has been much offended by certain attentions shown to you by this Mr. Cashel, and which were of so marked a nature that he was almost determined never to admit his intimacy in future. Had his Lordship known you as well as I do, he might have spared himself this anxiety. I believe such savage excellence as his has few attractions for you; nor, save the admiration that all must yield you, has the youth taste or feeling to appreciate your excellence. However, 'my Lord' is jealous; let it be your care, by knowledge of the fact, not to incur anything to sustain the suspicion.”

“How very absurd all this is! Do you know that Mr. Cashel did not condescend to pay me the poor compliment of a special invitation to his house, but asked my Lord to come, and hoped I would accompany him; just as people invite their humbler acquaintances, hoping that only half the request may be accorded.”

“He is underbred even to barbarism,” said Linton.

“He seems a most good-natured creature, and full of generosity.”

“Overwealth has sometimes that air. When the glass is brimful, none but the steadiest hand can carry, without spilling, the wine.”

“He does not appear even to make the effort. They tell me he has squandered some thousands already, making presents to every one who will accept them.”

“He gave me this cane,” said Linton, superciliously, exhibiting a little riding cane, which he had taken himself out of Cashel's hand, and was of no value whatever. “Not any great evidence of exaggerated generosity,” said he. “As to his house, however, I trust its honors may be well done; he has given me *carte blanche*, and I must only try and not disgrace my prerogative.”

“How very late it is—nearly seven,” said Lady Kilgoff, looking at her watch.

“Shall I see your Ladyship to your carriage?” said Linton.

“I think not,” said she, blushing slightly; “as I left it unaccompanied, so I shall return to it Good-bye.”

She held out her hand as she spoke, but slightly averted her head, so that Linton could not mark the expression of her features. As it was, he pressed the gloved fingers to his lips, but, when doing so, contrived to unclasp her bracelet,—a singularly rich one, and a present from Lord Kilgoff on the day of her marriage. This he let fall noiselessly on the grass, and murmured, in a low voice, “Goodbye.”

Lady Kilgoff, hastily wrapping her shawl about her, left the spot. Linton watched her till he had seen her seated in the carriage, and continued to gaze after it, as it drove rapidly away, and so intently occupied by his thoughts, that he did not notice the approach of a horseman, who came up at a walking pace behind him.

“Eh, Tom!” cried out Lord Charles Frobisher, “this is flying at high game!”

“You are mistaken, Charley,” said he, in some confusion. “This 'meeting under the green-wood tree' was nothing less than a love affair.”

“Oh, hang your morality, Mr. Joseph; it's rather good fun to see the 'insolent beauty' of the season capitulating.”

“Wrong again,” said Linton, affecting a laugh. “Everton is in a scrape, and his wife wants me to get him out of the way—”

“Nonsense, man, I saw the carriage; there is no need of mystifying here. Besides, it's no affair of mine—I'm sure I wish it were! But come, what are the odds on Hitchley's colt—are seven to two taken?”

“Don't bet,” said Linton, knowingly; “there is something 'wrong' in that stable, and I have n't found out the secret.”

“What a deep fellow you are, Tom.”

“Nothing of the kind, Charley. If I were, you 'd never have discovered it. Your only deep fellow is he that the world deems shallow—your light-hearted, rattling knave, whose imputed thoughtlessness covers every breach of faith, and makes his veriest schemes seem purely accident. But, once get the repute of being a clever or a smart fellow, and success is tenfold more difficult. The world, then, only plays with you as one does with a sharper, betting small stakes, and keeping a steady eye on the cards. Your own sleepy eye, Charley, your languid, careless look, are a better provision than most men give their younger children.”

Lord Charles lifted his long eyelashes lazily, and, for a second, something like a sparkle lit up his cold, dark eye, but it was gone in a moment, and his habitually lethargic expression once more returned. “You heard that we were nearly 'out,' I suppose?” said he, after a pause.

“Yes. This is the second time that I bought Downie Meek's carriage-horses on the rumor of a change of administration.”

“And sold them back again at double the price, when he found that the ministry were safe!”

“To be sure; was n't it a 'good hedge' for him to be Secretary for Ireland at the cost of a hundred or so?”

“You 'll get the name of spreading the false intelligence, Tom, if you always profit so much by it.”

“With all my heart. I wish sincerely some good-natured fellow would lay to my charge a little roguery that I had no share in. I have experienced all manner and shades of sensations, but injured innocence, that would really be new to me.”

“Well,” sighed Lord Charles, with a yawn, “I suppose we have only a short time before us here. The end of the session will scarcely see us in office.”

“About that: by keeping all hands at the pumps we may float the ship into harbor, but no more.”

“And what 's to become of us?” said the *aide-de-camp*, with a deep depression in his accent.

“The usual lot of a crew paid off,” cried Linton, laughing; “look out for a new craft in commission, and go to sea again. As for you, Charley, you can either marry something in the printed calico line, with a hundred and fifty thousand, or, if you prefer it, exchange into a light cavalry corps at Suntanterabund.”

“And you?” said Lord Charles, with something almost of sternness.

“I? Oh, as for me, I have many alternatives. I can remain a Whig, and demand office from the Tories—a claim Peel has never resisted; I can turn Repealer, and be pensioned by something in the Colonies; I can be a waiter on Providence, and live on all parties by turns. In fact, Charley, there never was a better age for your 'adventurer' than this year of our Lord 18—. All the geography of party has been erased, and it is open to every man to lay down new territorial limits.”

“But for any case of the kind you should have a seat in Parliament”

“So I mean it, my boy. I intend to represent,—I'm sure I forget the name of my constituency,—in the next assemblage of the collective wisdom.”

“How do you manage the qualification?” said the *aide-de-camp*, slyly.

“The man who gives the borough must take care of that; it's no affair of mine,” said Linton, carelessly. “I only supply the politics.”

“And what are they to be?”

“*Cela dépend*. You might as well ask me what dress I 'll wear in the changeable climate of an Irish July.”

“Then you 'll take no pledges?”

“To be sure I will; every one asked of me. I only stipulate to accompany each with a crotchet of my own, so that, like the gentleman who emptied his snuff-box over the peas, I 'll leave the dish uneatable by any but myself.”

“Well, good-bye, Tom,” said Lord Charles, laughing. “If you only be as loyal in love as you promise to be in politics, our fair friend is scarcely fortunate.” And so saying, he cantered slowly away.

“Poor fellow!” said Linton, contemptuously, “your little bit of principle haunts you like a superstition.” And with this reflection, he stepped out briskly to where the boy was standing with his horse.

“Oh, Mr. Linton, darlin', only sixpence! and I here this two hours?” said the ragged urchin, with a cunning leer, half roguery, half shame.

“And where could you have earned sixpence, you scoundrel, in that time?” cried Linton, affecting anger.

“Faix, I 'd have earned half a crown if I 'd got up on the beast and rode down to Bilton's,” said the fellow, grinning.

“You 'd have had your skull cracked with this cane, the next time I met you, for your pains,” said the other, really enraged, while he chucked a shilling at him.

“Success to your honor,—all's right,” said the boy. And touching his cap, he scampered off into the wood, and disappeared.

“You shall have a sea voyage, my friend,” said Linton, looking after him; “a young gentleman with such powers of observation would have a fine opening in our colonies.” And away he rode towards town, his brain revolving many a complex scheme and lucky stratagem, but still with ready smile acknowledging each salutation of his friends, and conveying the impression of being one whose easy nature was unruffled by a care.

CHAPTER XIX. THE DOMESTIC DETECTIVE CONSULTED.

Of “sweet fifteen” no mortal e'er afraid is,
Your real “man traps” are old maiden ladies.

The Legacy.

It was late of that same afternoon ere Cashel awoke. Mr. Phillis had twice adventured into the room on tiptoe, and as stealthily retired, and was now, for the third time, about to retreat, when Roland called him back.

“Beg pardon, sir; but Mrs. Kennyfeck's footman has been here twice for the answer to this note.”

“Let me see it,” said Cashel, taking a highly-perfumed epistle, whose tinted paper, seal, and superscription were all in the perfection of epistolary coquetry.

Dear Mr. Cashel,—Mamma desires me to convey her reproaches for your shocking forgetfulness of yesterday, when, after promising to dine here, you never appeared. She will, however, not only forgive the past, but be grateful for the present, if you will come to us to-day at seven.

Believe me, very truly yours,

Olivia Kennyfeck.

Simple and commonplace as the words were, Cashel read them over more than once.

I know not if any of my male readers can corroborate me, but I have always thought there is some mysterious attraction in even the most every-day epistle of a young and pretty woman. The commonest social forms assume a different meaning, and we read the four letters which spell “dear” in an acceptation very remote from what they inspire when written by one's law agent; and then, the concluding “yours truly,” or “faithfully yours,” or better again, “ever yours,”—what suggestive little words they are! how insinuating in their portraiture of a tie which possibly might, but does not actually, bind the parties.

If my readers concur not in these sympathies; I have great satisfaction in saying that Roland Cashel did. He not only sat gazing at the few lines, but he looked so long at them as to half believe that the first word was a superlative; then, suddenly rousing himself he asked the hour. It was already past six. He had only time, then, for a verbal, “With pleasure,” and to dress for dinner.

It seemed like a reproach on his late mode of living, the pile of unopened letters, which in imposing mass Mr. Phillis had arrayed on his master's dressing-table. They contained specimens of everything epistolary which falls to the lot of those favored children of fortune who, having “much to give,” are great favorites with the world. There were dear little pressing invitations signed by the lady of the house, and indited in all the caligraphy of the governess. There were begging letters from clergymen with large families, men who gave so “many hostages to fortune,” that they actually ruined themselves in their own “recognizances.” Flatteries, which, if not written on tinted paper, might have made it blush to bear them, mixed up with tradesmen's assurances of fidelity and punctuality, and bashful apologies for the indelicacy of any allusion to money.

Oh, it is a very sweet world this of ours, and amiable withal! save that the angelic smile it bestows on one part of the creation has a sorry counterpart in the sardonic grin with which it regards the other. Our friend Cashel was in the former category, and he tossed over the letters carelessly, rarely breaking a seal, and, even then, satisfied with a mere glance at the contents, or the name of the writer, when he suddenly caught sight of a large square-shaped epistle, marked “Sea-letter.” It was in a hand he well knew, that of his old comrade Enrique; and burning with anxiety to hear of him, he threw himself into a chair, and broke the seal.

The very first words which met his eye shocked him.

“St. Kitt's, Jamaica.

“Ay, Roland, even so. St. Kitt's, Jamaica! heavily ironed in a cell at the top of a strong tower over the sea, with an armed sentry at my door, I write this! a prisoner fettered and chained,—I, that could not brook the very orders of

discipline! Well, well, it is only cowardice to repine. Truth is, amigo, I 've had no luck since you left us. It was doubtless yours that sustained me so long, and when you withdrew from the firm, I became bankrupt, and yet, this is pretty much what we used once, in merry mood, to predict for each other, 'the loop and the leap.'

"How shall I tell you so briefly as neither to weary you to read, nor myself to write it, my last sad misfortune? I say the last, because the bad luck took a run against me. First, I lost everything I possessed at play,—the very pistols you sent me, I staked and lost. Worse still, Roland,—and faith I don't think I could make the confession, if a few hours, or a few days more, were not to hide my shame in a felon's grave,—I played the jewels you sent here for Maritaña. She refused them with words of bitterness and anger. Partly from the irritated feeling of the moment, partly from the curse of a gambler's spirit,—the hope to weary out the malice of fortune,—I threw them on the monte-table. Of course I lost. It was soon after this Barcelonetta was laid in ruin by a shock of earthquake, the greatest ever experienced here. The 'Quadro' is a mere mass of chaotic rubbish. The 'Puerta Mayor,' with all its statues, is ingulfed, and an arm of the sea now washes up and over the beautiful gardens where the Governor gave his fête. The villa, too, rent from roof to basement, is a ruin; vast yawning gulfs intersect the parterres everywhere; the fountains are dried up; the trees blasted by lightning; and a red-brown surface of ashes strewn over the beauteous turf where we used to stroll by moonlight. The old tree that sheltered our monte-table stands uninjured, as if in mockery over our disasters! Maritaña's hammock was slung beneath the branches, and there she lay, careless of—nay, I could almost say, if the words did not seem too strange for truth, actually pleased by—the dreadful event. I went to take leave of her; it was the last night we were to spend on shore. I little knew it was to be the last time we should ever meet. Pedro passed the night among the ruins of the villa, endeavoring to recover papers and valuables amid that disastrous mass. Geizheimer was always with him, and as Noronja and the rest soon fell off to sleep, wearied by a day of great fatigue, I sat alone beside her hammock till day was breaking. Oh, would that night could have lasted for years, so sweetly tranquil were the starlit hours, so calm and yet so full of hopeful promise. What brilliant pictures of ambition did she, that young, untaught girl, present to my eyes,—how teach me to long for a cause whose rewards were higher, and greater, and nobler than the prizes of this wayward life. I would have spoken of my affection, my deep-felt, long-cherished love, but, with a half-scornful laugh, she stopped me, saying, 'Is this leafy shade so like a fair lady's boudoir that you can persuade yourself to trifle thus, or is your own position so dazzling that you deem the offer to share it a flattery?'"

"I 'm afraid, sir," said Mr. Phillis, here obtruding his head into the room, "that you 'll be very late. It is already more than half-past seven o'clock."

"So it is!" exclaimed Cashel, starting up, while he muttered something not exceedingly complimentary to his host's engagement. "Is the carriage ready?" And without staying to hear the reply, hurried downstairs, the open letter still in his hand.

Scarcely seated in the carriage, Cashel resumed the reading of the letter. Eager to trace the circumstances which led to his friend's captivity, he hastily ran his eyes over the lines till he came to the following:—

"There could be no doubt of it. The 'Esmeralda,' our noble frigate, was not in the service of the Republic, but by some infamous treaty between Pedro and Narochez, the minister, was permitted to carry the flag of Columbia. We were slavers, buccaneers, pirates,—not sailors of a state. When, therefore, the British war-brig 'Scorpion' sent a gun across our bows, with an order to lie to, and we replied by showing our main-deck ports open, and our long eighteens all ready, the challenge could not be mistaken. We were near enough to hear the cheering, and it seemed, too, they heard ours; we wanted but you, Roland, among us to have made our excitement madness!"

The carriage drew up at Kennyfeck's door as Cashel had read thus far, and in a state of mind bordering on fever he entered the hall and passed up the stairs. The clock struck eight as he presented himself in the drawing-room, where the family were assembled, the number increased by two strangers, who were introduced to Roland as Mrs. Kennyfeck's sister, Miss O'Hara, an elderly maiden lady, with a light brown wig; and a raw-boned, much-freckled young man, Peter O'Gorman, her nephew.

Nothing could be more cordial than the reception of the Kennyfecks; they affected not to think that it was so late, vowed that the clock was too fast, were certain that Mr. Cashel's watch was right; in fact, his presence was a receipt in full for all the anxieties of delay, and so they made him feel it.

There was a little quizzing of Roland, as they seated themselves at table, over his forgetfulness of the day before, but so good-humoredly as not to occasion, even to himself, the slightest embarrassment.

"At breakfast at the barrack!" repeated Miss Kennyfeck after him. "What a formidable affair, if it always lasts twenty-four hours."

“What do you mean? How do you know that?” asked Roland, half in shame, half in surprise, at this knowledge of his movements.

“Not to speak of the brilliant conversation, heightened by all the excitement of wit, champagne, and hazard,—dreadful competitors with such tiresome society as ours,” said Olivia.

“Never mind them, Mr. Cashel,” broke in Miss O'Hara, in a mellifluous Doric; “'tis jealous they are, because you like the officers better than themselves.”

A most energetic dissent was entered by Cashel to this supposition, who nevertheless felt grateful for the advocacy of the old lady.

“When I was in the Cape Coast Fencibles,” broke in Peter, with an accent that would have induced one to believe Africa was on the Shannon, “we used to sit up all night,—it was so hot in the day; but we always called it breakfast, for you see—”

“And when are we to visit your pictures, Mr. Cashel?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, whose efforts to suppress Peter were not merely vocal, as that injured individual's shins might attest.

“That depends entirely on you, madam,” said Roland, bowing. “I have only to say, the earlier the more agreeable to me.”

“He has such a beautiful collection,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, turning to her sister.

“Indeed, then, I delight in pictures,” said “Aunt Fanny,” as her nieces called her. “I went the other day to Mount Bennett, to see a portrait painted by Rousseau.”

“By Rubens, I suppose you mean, aunt,” interposed Miss Kennyfeck, tartly.

“So it may be, my dear, I never know the names right; but it was a dark old man, with a hairy cap and a long gray beard, as like Father Morris Heffernan as ever it could stare.”

“Is your new Carlo Dolce so very like Olivia?” interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck, who was sadly hampered by her country relatives and their reminiscences.

“So very like, madam, that I beg you to accept it as a portrait,” replied Roland.

“Upon my word, then, young gentleman, you 're not so fond of a pretty face as you might be,” broke in Aunt Fanny, “or you would n't be so ready to give it away.” A very hearty laugh at the old lady's eccentricity relieved Cashel from all necessity of explanation.

“The old masters are so good,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck; “I delight in their fine, vigorous touch.”

“Why don't they put more clothes on their figures,” said Aunt Fanny, “even a warm climate is no excuse for the way the creatures went about.”

“If you saw them in Hickweretickanookee,” said Peter, “King John never wore anything but a cocked-hat and a pair of short black gaiters the missionary gave him for learning the Lord's Prayer.”

“I hear that Lady Janet said Cary would be an excellent study for Helen M'Gregor,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck. “It was scarcely civil, however.”

“It was more,—downright rude,” said Cashel, reddening; “but Miss Kennyfeck can afford to pay the penalty beauty always yields to its opposite.”

“There, my dear, that's a compliment,” said Aunt Fanny, “and don't be displeased. I say, darling, did n't he say a while ago you were like somebody at Carlow?”

“A Carlo Dolce, aunt,” broke in both sisters, laughing; and so the dinner proceeded amid commonplaces, relieved occasionally from their flatness by the absurdities of Aunt Fanny, who seemed as good-naturedly proof against ridicule, as she was likely to evoke it.

Peter was the first to rise from table, as he was anxious to go to “the play,” and the ladies soon retired to the drawing-room, Mrs. Kennyfeck slyly whispering, as she passed behind Roland's chair, an entreaty that he would not long delay in following them. Cashel's anxiety to close his *tête-à-tête* arose from another cause,—his burning anxiety to finish Enrique's letter; while Kennyfeck himself seemed beating about, uncertain how to open subjects he desired to have discussed. After a long pause, he said,—

“I was speaking to Pepystell yesterday, and he is of opinion that there is no use in preserving any part of the old structure at Tubbermore,—the great difficulty of adapting a new character of architecture to the old would not repay the cost.”

Cashel nodded a careless assent, and, after a pause, Kennyfeck resumed:—

“It might be of some convenience at present, however, to let the building stand as it is. A residence of one kind or other you will want, particularly as the elections are approaching.”

Another nod in silence was all the reply.

“Pepystells estimate is large,—don't you think so?”

He nodded again.

“Nearly seventy thousand pounds! And that does not include the gate tower, which seems a point for after consideration.”

“I remember,” muttered Cashel, in a voice that implied anything rather than a mind attentive to the subject before it.

“Now, it would be as well,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, drawing a long breath, and, as it were, preparing himself for a great effort, “to put a little order into our affairs. Your first year or two will be costly ones,—building expenses, equipage, horses, furniture, election charges. Much of your capital is vested in foreign securities, which it would be injurious to sell at this moment. Don't you think”—here he changed his voice to an almost insinuating softness—“don't you think that by devoting a certain portion of your income,—say a third, or one-half, perhaps,—for the present, to meet these charges—” He paused, for he saw from Cashel's occupied look that he was not attending to his words.

“Well—continue,” said Roland, affecting to wait for his conclusion.

“I was about to ask, sir,” said Kennyfeck, boldly, “what sum would you deem sufficient for your yearly

expenditure?”

“What is the amount of my income?” asked Cashel, bluntly.

“In good years, something above sixteen thousand pounds; in bad ones, somewhat less than twelve.”

“Well, then,—you have the scale of my expenditure at once.”

“Not your whole income?” exclaimed Kennyfeck, astonished.

“Even so. I see no earthly reason for hoarding. I do not find that squandering money is any very high enjoyment; I am certain scraping and saving it would afford me still less pleasure.”

“But there are always casualties demanding extraordinary expense,—a contested election, for instance.”

“I 'll not try it,—I don't intend to enter Parliament.”

“When you marry—”

“Perhaps I shall not do that either.”

“Well, sums lost at play,—the turf has pressed on many a strong pocket.”

“Play has no fascination for me; I can give it up: I may almost say I have done so.”

“Not without paying a heavy penalty, however,” said Kennyfeck, whose animation showed that he had at last approached the territory he was so long in search of.

“How do you mean?” said Cashel, blushing deeply, as he began to fear that by some accident his secret visit to the money-lender had reached Kennyfeck's ears.

“Your drafts on Latrobe, sir, whose account I have received to-day, are very heavy.”

“Oh, is that all?” said Cashel, carelessly.

“All! all!” repeated Kennyfeck; then, suddenly correcting himself, he added, “I am almost certain, sir, that your generous habits have over-mastered your prudence. Are you aware of having drawn fifty thousand pounds?”

“No, I really was not,” replied Cashel, smiling more at the attorney's look of consternation than anything else. “I fancied about half as much. Pray tell me some of the items. No, no! not from book; that looks too formal,—just from memory.”

“Well, there are horses without number,—one bought with all his engagements for the Oaks, which amount to a forfeiture of four thousand pounds.”

“I remember that,—a piece of Linton's blundering; but he lost more heavily himself, poor fellow, our steed Lanz-knecht having turned out a dead failure.”

“Then there is something about a villa at Cowes, which I am certain you never saw.”

“No; but I have a drawing of it somewhere—a pretty thing under a cliff, with a beautiful bay of deep water, and good anchorage. Linton knows all about it.”

“Twelve thousand pounds is a large sum to give without ever seeing the purchase.”

“So it is; but go on.”

“I cannot remember one-half; but there is plate and jewels; sums advanced for building; subscriptions to everything and everybody; a heavy amount transmitted to the Havannah.”

“Very true; and that reminds me of a letter which I received at the very moment I was leaving home. Have I your leave to finish the reading? It is from an old and valued comrade.”

“Of course,—don't think of me for an instant,” said Kennyfeck, scarcely able to repress an open acknowledgment of his amazement at the coolness which could turn from so interesting a topic to the, doubtless commonplace, narrative of some Mexican sailor.

Cashel was, meanwhile, searching every pocket for the letter, which he well remembered, after reading in the carriage, to have crushed in his hand as he ascended the stairs. “I have dropped this letter,” said he, in a voice of great agitation. “May I ask if your servants have found it?”

The bell was rung, and the butler at once interrogated. He had seen nothing, neither had the footman. They both remembered, however that Mr. Phillis had accompanied his master to the foot of the stairs to receive some directions, and then left him to return with the carriage.

“So, then, Phillis must have found it,” said Cashel, rising hastily; and, without a word of apology or excuse, he bade his host a hurried good evening, and left the room.

“Won't you have the carriage? Will you not stay for a cup of tea?” cried Mr. Kennyfeck, hastening after him. But the hall-door had already banged heavily behind him, and he was gone. When Cashel reached his house, it was to endure increased anxiety; for Mr. Phillis had gone out, and, like a true gentleman's gentleman, none of the other servants knew anything of his haunts, or when he would return. Leaving Cashel, then, to the tortures of a suspense which his fervid nature made almost intolerable, we shall return for a brief space to the house he had just quitted, and to the drawing-room, where, in momentary expectation of his appearance, the ladies sat, maintaining that species of “staccato” conversation which can afford interruption with least inconvenience. It is our duty to add, that we bring the reader back here less with any direct object as to what is actually going forward, than to make him better acquainted with the new arrival.

Had Miss O'Hara been the mere quiet, easy-going, simple-minded elderly maiden she seemed to Cashel's eyes, the step on our part had not been needed; she might, like some other characters of our tale, have been suffered to glide by as ghosts or stage-supernumeraries do, unquestioned and undetained; but she possessed qualities of a kind to demand somewhat more consideration. Aunt Fanny, to give her the title by which she was best known, was, in reality, a person of the keenest insight into others,—reading people at sight, and endowed with a species of intuitive perception of all the possible motives which lead to any action. Residing totally in a small town in the west of Ireland, she rarely visited the capital, and was now, in fact, brought up “special” by her sister, Mrs. Kennyfeck, who desired to have her advice and counsel on the prospect of securing Cashel for one or other of her daughters. It was so far a wise step, that in such a conjuncture no higher opinion could have been obtained.

“It was like getting a private hint from the Chancellor about a cause in equity.” This was Mr. Kennyfeck's own illustration.

Aunt Fanny was then there in the guise of a domestic detective, to watch proceedings and report on them,—a function which simplifies the due conduct of a case, be it in love or law, beyond anything.

“How agreeable your papa must be this evening, my dear!” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as with a glance at the clock on the mantelpiece she recognized that it was near ten.

“I 'm sure he is deep in one of his interminable law arguments, which always makes Mr. Cashel so sleepy and so stupid, that he never recovers for the rest of the evening.”

“He ought to find the drawing-room all the pleasanter for the contrast,” remarked Miss O'Hara, dryly. “I like to see young men—mind me well, young men, it does n't do with old ones—thoroughly bored before they come among the ladies. The sudden change to the tea, and the wax-lights, and the bright eyes, are trying stimulants. Let them, however, be what they call 'pleasant' below-stair, and they are sure to come up flushed and excited, well satisfied with the host's claret, and only anxious to order the carriage. What o'clock is it now?”

“A quarter-past ten, aunt.”

“Too late; full three-quarters too late,” ejaculated she, with the tone of an oracle. “There is nothing your father could have to say should have detained him till now. Play that little Mexican thing again, my dear; and, Livy, love, leave the door a little open; don't you find the heat of this room intolerable?”

The young ladies obeyed, and meanwhile Aunt Fanny, drawing her chair closer to her sister's, said, in a low tone,—

“Well, explain the matter more clearly. Did he give her the diamonds?”

“No; that is the strangest of all,” responded Mrs. Kennyfeck. “He just told Leonard to send them home, and we never heard more about them.”

Aunt Fanny shook her head.

“You know, he asked Olivia, as they were going downstairs, what she thought of them; and she replied, 'They 're beautiful.'”

“How did she say it, though; was it like a mere casual remark, or did she make it with feeling?”

“With feeling,” echoed Mrs. Kennyfeck, pursing up her lips.

“Well?”

“Well! he just said, 'I'll take them,' and there was an end of it.”

Aunt Fanny seemed to reflect, and, after some time, said,—

“Now, as to the horse, when did he make her a present of that?”

“It was to Caroline he gave the horse; sure I told you already.”

“Very true, so you did; a bad feature of the case, too! She ought to have declined it somehow.”

“So she would,” broke in Mrs. Kennyfeck; “but, you perceive, it was very doubtful, at the time, which of the girls he preferred.”

“And you tell me this Mr. Linton has such influence over him.”

“The most absolute. It is only a few weeks since they became acquainted, and now they are inseparable.”

“What is he like,—Linton himself?”

Mrs. Kennyfeck gave a most significant signal, by closing up her lips, and slowly nodding her head,—a gesture that seemed well understood.

“Does Kennyfeck know nothing of his affairs; has he no private history of the man, which might be useful to us?”

“Don't think of that, my dear,” rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, knowingly; “but here they come at last.” This was

said with reference to the sound of footsteps on the stairs, which gradually approached, and at last Mr. Kennyfeck made his appearance in the drawing-room.

“Where is Mr. Cashel,—is he gone?” asked Mrs. Kennyfeck, in an accent of unusual anxiety.

“He went away above an hour ago. He wanted to see a letter, or to write one, or to look for one he had lost,—I forget which.”

“I'm certain you do!” observed Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an expression of unequivocal contempt. “I am perfectly certain we need not look to you for either information or assistance.”

Poor Mr. Kennyfeck was dumfoundered. The very words were riddles to him, and he turned to each person about him in silent entreaty for explanation; but none came.

“What had you been conversing about?” asked Aunt Fanny, in that encouraging tone lawyers sometimes use to draw out a reluctant or bashful witness.

“Of his money affairs, Miss O'Hara; and I am grieved to say that the subject had so little interest for him, that he started up and left me on suddenly remembering something about a letter.”

“Which something you have totally forgotten,” remarked Mrs. Kennyfeck, tartly.

“And yet it would be a most important fact for us,” observed Aunt Fanny, with judicial solemnity; “a letter, whether to read or to write, of such pressing necessity, implies much.”

“Come, Livy, dear,” said Miss Kennyfeck, rising from the pianoforte, and addressing her sister, who sat reading on the sofa, “*my* canzonette and *your* beautiful attitude are so much sweetness thrown away. He's gone without even a thought of either! There, there, don't look so innocently vacant,—you understand me perfectly.”

A very gentle smile was all the younger sister's reply as she left the room.

“Depend upon it, my dear,” said Miss O'Hara to Mrs. Kennyfeck, “that young man had made some unhappy connection; that's the secret of this letter, and when they get into a scrape of the kind it puts marriage out of their heads altogether. It was the same with Captain Morris,”—here she whispered still lower, the only audible words being, “without my ever suspecting,—one evening—a low creature—never set eyes upon—ah, man, man!” And with this exclamation aloud, Aunt Fanny took her candle and retired.

About a minute after, however, she re-entered the drawing-room, and advancing close to her sister, said, with all the solemnity of deep thought,—

“Peter is no good in this case, my dear; send him home at once. That man will 'blaze' for the asking.” And with a nod of immense significance she finally withdrew.

CHAPTER XX. HOW ENRIQUE'S LETTER WAS LOST AND FOUND.

“Arcades ambo!”

Blackguards both!

In the window of a very pretty cottage-room overlooking the Liffey, and that romantic drive so well known to Dub-liners as the “low road” to Lucan, sat Tom Linton. He was enjoying a cigar and a glass of weak negus, as a man may enjoy such luxuries seated in the easiest of chairs, looking out upon one of the sweetest of woodland landscapes, and feeling the while that the whole was “his own.” If conscientious scruples had been any part of that gentleman's life philosophy, he might have suffered some misgivings, seeing that the cottage itself, its furniture, the plate, the very horses in the stable and the grooms about it, had been won at the hazard-table, and from one whose beggary ended in suicide. But Linton did not dwell on such things, and if they did for an instant cross his mind, he dismissed them at once with a contemptuous pity for the man who could not build up a fortune by the arts with which he had lost one. He had not begun the world himself with much principle, and all his experiences went to prove that even less would suffice, and that for the purposes of the station he occupied, and the society he frequented, it was only necessary that he should not transgress in his dealings with men of a certain rank and condition; so that while every transaction with people of class and fashion should be strictly on “the square,” he was at perfect liberty to practise any number of sharp things with all beneath them. It was the old axiom of knight-errantry adapted to our own century, which made every weapon fair used against the plebeian!

From a pleasant revery over some late successes and some future ones in anticipation, he was aroused by a gentle tap at the door.

“Come in,” said he; “I think I guess who it is,—Phillis, eh?”

“Yes, sir, you're quite correct,” said that individual, advancing from the misty twilight of the room, which was only partly lighted by a single alabaster lamp. “I thought I'd find you at home, sir, and I knew this letter might interest you. He dropped it when going up the stairs at Kennyfeck's, and could scarcely have read it through.”

“Sit down, George—sit down, man—what will you take? I see you 've had a fast drive; if that was your car I heard on the road, your pace was tremendous. What shall it be—claret—sherry—brandy-and-water?”

“If you please, sir, sherry. I have lost all palate for Bordeaux since I came to Mr. Cashel. We get abominable wine from Cullan.”

“So I remarked myself; but this must be looked to. Come, try that; it's some of Gordon's, and he would not send a bad bottle to me.”

“I 'm very certain of that, sir. It is excellent.”

“Now then for the epistle.” So saying, he lighted a taper and prepared to read.. “Jamaica,—oh, a shipmate's letter!”

“A curious one, too, sir, as you 'll say when you read it.”

Linton, without reply, began to read, nor did he break silence till he finished, when, laying down the paper, he said, “And this very fellow who writes this he actually spoke of inviting to Ireland,—to stay some time at his house,—to be introduced, in fact, to his acquaintances as a personal friend.”

“It's very sad, sir,” sighed Phillis. “I have long been of opinion that I must leave him. The appointments, it is true, are good; perquisites, too, very handsome; but the future, Mr. Linton,—what a future it will be!”

“It need not be a very near one, at all events,” said Linton, smiling; “you've read this?”

“Just threw an eye over it, sir!”

“Well, you see that your excellent master has been little better than a pirate or a slaver.”

“Very shocking, indeed, sir!”

“Of course this must not go abroad, George.”

“It would ruin me utterly, sir.”

“To be sure it would. No nobleman, nor any gentleman of rank or fashion, could think of engaging your services after such an appointment. Happily, George, you may not require such, if you only mind your hits. Your master can afford to make your fortune, and never know himself the poorer. Come, how go on matters latterly at No. 50?”

“Pretty much as usual, sir; two dinner-parties last week.”

“I know all about them, though I affected to be engaged and did n't dine there. What I want is to hear of these Kennyfecks,—do they come much after him?”

“Only once, sir, when they came to see the house and stopped to luncheon.”

“Well, was he particular in his attentions to either of the daughters?”

“Very attentive, indeed, sir, to the younger. She dropped her handkerchief in the gallery, and ran back for it, and so did he, sir.”

“You followed, of course?”

“I did, sir, and she was blushing very much as I came in, and I heard her say something about 'forgiving him,' and then they left the room.”

“And what of Kennyfeck,—has he had any conversations with him on business?”

“None, sir; I have strictly followed your orders, and never admitted him.”

“Lord Charles Frobisher was a large winner t'other night?” said Linton, after a pause.

“Yes, sir, so I heard them say at supper, and Mr. Cashel first gave a check and then changed his mind, and I saw him hand over a heavy sum in notes.”

“Indeed!” muttered Linton to himself; “and my worthy friend Charley did not confess this to me. Have you taken care that the people don't send in their bills and accounts, as I mentioned?”

“Yes, sir; with few exceptions, nothing of the kind comes.”

“What brought that Mr. Clare Jones so frequently of late?”

“He came twice in Mr. Downie Meek's carriage, sir, but sat all the while outside, while Mr. Meek was with my master; the third day, however, he was sent for to come in, and spent nearly an hour in the study.”

“Well, what took place?”

“I could only hear part of the conversation, sir, as I feared I might be sent for. The subject was a seat in Parliament, which Mr. Cashel owns, and that Mr. Meek is desirous of procuring for Jones.”

“Ha! ha! my little Judas! is that your game? Go on, George, this interests me.”

“I have little more to tell, sir, for Mr. Meek always speaks so low, and my master scarcely said anything.”

“And Jones?”

“He merely remarked on the identity of his political principles with those of the present Government.”

“Of course; the fellow began as a Radical, and then turned Tory, and now is a Whig. Blue and yellow when mixed always make green. But how did it end?”

“As well as I could perceive, sir, without any promise. My master was to deliberate and send his answer.”

“Let neither have access to him till you hear from me again,—mark that.”

“You shall be obeyed, sir.”

“Did Lord Kilgoff call?”

“Twice, sir; but my master was out. I followed your directions, however, and said that her Ladyship was with him, and he seemed much provoked at not finding him at home.”

“Well, how did he take it,—did he make any remark?”

“A half smile, sir; nothing more.”

“But said nothing?”

“Not a word, sir.”

Linton arose and walked the room in deep meditation; at last he said,—

“You had better let him have those letters we held back the last two days, to-day. He'll not think deeply over his losses on the Derby while dwelling on this missing letter.”

“I don't suspect his losses, sir, will cause much uneasiness on any score; money occupies very little of his thoughts.”

“True; but here the sum is a very heavy one. I made the book myself, and stood to win thirty thousand pounds; but, no matter,—it can't be helped now,—better luck another time. Now, another point. It strikes me

of late that he seems bored somewhat by the kind of life he is leading, and that these carouses at the messes are becoming just as distasteful to him as the heavy dinner-parties with the Dean and the rest of them. Is that your opinion?”

“Perfectly, sir. He even said as much to me t'other evening, when he came back from a late supper. He is always wishing for the yacht to come over,—speaks every now and then of taking a run over to London and Paris; in fact, sir, he *is* bored here. There is no disguising it.”

“I feared as much, George; I suspected, many a day ago, he would not be long satisfied with the provincial boards. But this must not be; once away from Dublin, he is lost to us forever. I know, and so do you know, the hands he would fall into in town. Better let him get back to his old prairie haunts, for a while, than that.”

“Not so very unlikely, sir. He sits poring over maps and charts for hours together, and scans the new coast survey like a man bent on exploring the scenes for himself. It is hard to say what is best to do with him.”

“I'll tell you what he must not be permitted to do with himself: he must not leave Ireland; he must not marry; he must not enter Parliament; and, for the moment, to employ his thoughts and banish *ennui*, we 'll get up the house-warming at Tubbermore. I mean to set off thither to-morrow.”

“Without Mr. Cashel, sir?”

“Of course; be it your care that matters are well looked to in my absence, and as Kennyfeck's house is safer than the barracks, he may dine there as often as he pleases. Keep a watch on Jones,—not that I think he 'll be very dangerous; see after Lord Charles, whether he may try to profit by my absence; and, above all, write me a bulletin each day.”

Mr. Phillis promised a strict obedience to orders, and rose to retire, pleading the necessity of his being at home when his master returned.

“What of this letter, sir? Shall I contrive to place it in his pocket, and discover it as he is undressing? He never suspects anything or anybody.”

“No, George,—I 'll keep it; it may turn out useful to us one of these days; there's no knowing when or how. I 'm curious, too, to see how he will act with reference to it,—whether he will venture on any confidence towards me. I suspect not; he never alludes to his bygones. The only terror his mind is capable of would seem the fear of fashionable contempt. If he ever lose this, he's lost to us forever.” This was said rather in soliloquy than addressed to Phillis, who did not appear to catch the meaning of the remark. “You'll leave this note on his table, and take care he sees it. It is to remind him of an appointment here to-morrow with Hoare, the money-lender, at eleven o'clock punctually.”

Phillis took the note, and after a very respectful leave-taking, withdrew.

“Yes,” said Linton, musing, as he leaned against the window, “all goes fairly so far. Mr. Phillis may live to see himself once more a merchant tailor in Cheapside, and Tom Linton, under the buckler of his M.P., defy duns and bums, and be again a denizen of the only city worth living in.”

He then reseated himself in an easy-chair, and prepared to con over the letter, to which he had only given a passing attention. The narrative of Enrique, full of exciting details and hair-breadth 'scapes, was, however, far less an object of interest to Linton than the consideration how far a character like this might be made use of for the purpose of threat and intimidation over Cashel.

His reflections ran somewhat thus: “The day may come—is, perhaps, even now nigh—when Cashel shall reject my influence and ascendency. There never has been anything which could even counterfeit friendship between us,—close intimacy has been all. To maintain that hold over him so necessary to my fortunes, I must be in a position to menace. Roland himself has opened the way to this by his own reserve. The very concealment he has practised implies fear;—otherwise, why, in all the openness of our familiar intercourse, never have mentioned Enrique's name; still more, never once alluded to this Maritaña? It is clear enough with what shame he looks back on the past. Let mine be the task to increase that feeling, and build up the fear of the world's ridicule, till he shall be the slave of every whisper that syllables his name! The higher his path in society, the greater the depth to which disclosures may consign him; and what disclosures so certainly ruinous as to connect him with the lawless marauders of the Spanish main,—the slaver and the pirate? His dear friend, a felon, taken in open fight by a British cruiser! Maritaña, too, may serve us; her name as mistress—or, if need be, as wife—will effectually oppose any matrimonial speculations here. So far this letter has been a rare piece of fortune!”

For some moments he walked the room with excited and animated looks, the alternating shades of pleasure and its opposite flitting rapidly across his strong features. At last he broke out in words: “Ay, Cashel, I am as suddenly enriched as yourself,—but with a different heritage. Yours was Gold; mine, Revenge! And there are many to whom I could pay the old debt home. There's Forster, with his story of Ascot, and his black-ball at Graham's!—a double debt, with years of heavy interest upon it; there's Howard, too, that closed his book at Tattersall's, after tearing out the leaf that had my name! Frobisher himself daring his petty insolence at every turn!—all these cry for acquittance, and shall have it There are few men of my own standing, that with moneyed means at my command, I could not ruin! and, ungallant as the boast may be, some fair ladies, too! How I have longed for the day, how I have schemed and plotted for it! and now it comes almost unlooked for.

“Another month or two of this wasteful extravagance, and Cashel will be deeply, seriously embarrassed. Kennyfeck will suggest retrenchment and economy; that shall be met with an insidious doubt of the good man's honesty. And how easy to impeach it! The schemes of his wife and daughter will aid the accusation. Roland shall, meanwhile, learn the discomfort of being 'hard up.' The importunity—nay, the insolence—of duns shall assail him at every post and every hour. From this there is but one bold, short step,—and take it he must,—make me his agent. That done, all the rest is easy. Embarrassment and injurious reports will soon drive him from the country, and from an estate he shall never revisit as his own! So far,—the first act of the drama! The second discovers Tom Linton the owner of Tubbermore, and the host of Lord and Lady Kilgoff, who have condescendingly agreed to pass the Easter recess with him. Mr. Linton has made a very splendid maiden speech, which, however, puzzles the ministers and the 'Times;' and, if he were not a man perfectly indifferent to place, would expose him to the imputation of courting it.

“And Laura all this while!” said he, in a voice whose accents trembled with intense feeling, “can she forgive the past? Will old memories revive old affections, or will they rot into hatred? Well,” cried he, sternly, “whichever way they turn, I 'm prepared.”

There was a tone of triumphant meaning in his last words that seemed to thrill through his frame, and as he threw himself back upon his seat, and gazed out upon the starry sky, his features wore the look of proud and insolent defiance. “So is it,” said he, after a pause; “one must be alone—friendless, and alone—in life, to dare the world so fearlessly.” He filled a goblet of sherry, and as he drank it off, cried, “Courage! Tom Linton against 'the field!'”

CHAPTER XXI. THE CONSPIRATORS DISTURBED

Eternal friendship let us swear,
In fraud at least—“nous serons frères.”

Robert Macaire.

Cashel passed a night of feverish anxiety. Enrique's uncertain fate was never out of his thoughts; and if for a moment he dropped off to sleep, he immediately awoke with a sudden start,—some fancied cry for help, some heart-uttered appeal to him for assistance breaking in upon his weary slumber.

How ardently did he wish for some one friend to whom he might confide his difficulty, and from whom receive advice and counsel. Linton's shrewdness and knowledge of life pointed him out as the fittest; but how to reveal to his fashionable friend the secrets of that buccaneering life he had himself so lately quitted? How expose himself to the dreaded depreciation a “fine gentleman” might visit on a career passed amid slavers and pirates? A month or two previous, he could not have understood such scruples; but already the frivolities and excesses of daily habit had thrown an air of savage rudeness over the memory of his Western existence, and he had not the courage to brave the comments it might suggest To this false shame had Linton brought him, acting on a naturally sensitive nature, by those insidious and imperceptible counsels which represent the world—meaning, thereby, that portion of it who are in the purple and fine linen category—as the last appeal in all cases, not alone of a man's breeding and pretensions, but of his honor and independence.

It was not without many a severe struggle, and many a heartfelt repining, Cashel felt himself surrender the free action of his natural independence to the petty and formal restrictions of a code like this. But there was an innate dread of notoriety, a sensitive shrinking from remark, that made him actually timid about transgressing whatever he was told to be an ordinance of fashion. To dress in a particular way; to frequent certain places; to be known to certain people; to go out at certain hours; and so on,—were become to his mind as the actual requirements of his station, and often did he regret the hour when he had parted with his untrammelled freedom to live a life of routine and monotony.

Shrinking, then, from any confidence in Linton, he next thought of Kennyfeck; and, although not placing a high value on his skill and correctness in such a difficulty, he resolved, at all hazards, to consult him on the course to be followed. He had been often told how gladly Government favors the possessor of fortune and influence. “Now,” thought he, “is the time to test the problem. All of mine is at their service, if they but liberate my poor comrade.”

So saying to himself, he had just reached the hall, when the sound of wheels approached the door. A carriage drew up, and Linton, followed by Mr. Hoare, the money-lender, descended.

“Oh, I had entirely forgotten this affair,” cried Cashel, as he met them; “can we not fix another day?”

“Impossible, sir; I leave town to-night.”

“Another hour to-day, then?” said Cashel, impatiently.

“This will be very difficult, sir. I have some very pressing engagements, all of which were formed subject to your convenience in this business.”

“But while you are discussing the postponement, you could finish the whole affair,” cried Linton, drawing his arm within Cashel's, and leading him along towards the library. “By Jove! it does give a man a sublime idea of wealth, to be sure,” said he, laughing, “to see the cool indifference with which you can propose to defer an interview that brings you some fifteen thousand pounds. As for me, I 'd make the Viceroy himself play 'ante-chamber,' if little Hoare paid me a visit.”

“Well, be it so; only let us despatch,” said Cashel, “for I am anxious to catch Kennyfeck before he goes down to court.”

“I 'll not detain you many minutes, sir,” said Hoare, drawing forth a very capacious black leather pocket-book, and opening it on the table. “There are the bills, drawn as agreed upon,—at three and six months,—here is a statement of the charges for interest, commission, and—”

“I am quite satisfied it is all right,” said Cashel, pushing the paper carelessly from him. “I have borrowed money once or twice in my life, and always thought anything liberal which did not exceed cent per cent.”

“We are content with much less, sir, as you will perceive,” said Hoare, smiling. “Six per cent interest, one-half commission—”

“Yes, yes; it is all perfectly correct,” broke in Cashel. “I sign my name here—and here?”

“And here, also, sir. There is also a policy of insurance on your life.”

“What does that mean?”

“Oh, a usual kind of security in these cases,” said Linton; “because if you were to die before the bills came

due—”

“I see it all; whatever you please,” said Cashel, taking up his hat and gloves. “Now, will you pardon me for taking a very abrupt leave?”

“You are forgetting a very material point, sir,” said Hoare; “this is an order on Frend and Beggan for the money.”

“Very true. The fact is, gentlemen, my head is none of the clearest to-day. Good-bye—good-bye.”

“Ten to one all that haste is to keep some appointment with one of Kennyfeck's daughters,” said Hoare, as he shook the sand over the freshly-signed bills, when the heavy bang of the hall-door announced Cashel's departure.

“I fancy not,” said Linton, musing; “I believe I can guess the secret.”

“What am I to do with these, Mr. Linton?” said the other, not heeding the last observation, as he took two pieces of paper from the pocket of his book.

“What are they?” said Linton, stretching at full length on a sofa.

“Two bills, with the endorsement of Thomas Linton.”

“Then are two ten-shilling stamps spoiled and good for nothing,” replied Linton, “which, without that respectable signature, might have helped to ruin somebody worth ruining.”

“'One will be due on Saturday, the twelfth. The other—”

“Don't trouble yourself about the dates, Hoare. I 'll renew as often as you please—I 'll do anything but pay.”

“Come, sir, I'll make a generous proposition: I have made a good morning's work. You shall have them both for a hundred.”

“Thanks for the liberality,” said Linton, laughing. “You bought them for fifty.”

“I know that very well; but remember, you were a very depreciated stock at that time. Now, you are at a premium. I hear you have been a considerable winner from our friend here.”

“Then you are misinformed. I have won less than the others,—far less than I might have done. The fact is, Hoare, I have been playing a back game,—what jockeys call, holding my stride.”

“Well, take care you don't wait too long,” said Hoare, sententiously.

“How do you mean?” said Linton, sitting up, and showing more animation than he had exhibited before.

“You have your secret—I have mine,” replied Hoare, dryly, as he replaced the bills in his pocket-book and clasped it.

“What if we exchange prisoners, Hoare?”

“It would be like most of your compacts, Mr. Linton, all the odds in your own favor.”

“I doubt whether any man makes such compacts with *you*,” replied Linton; “but why higgle this way? 'Remember,' as Peacham says, 'that we could hang one another;' and there is an ugly adage about what happens when people such as you and I 'fall out.'”

“So there is; and, strange enough, I was just thinking of it. Come, what is *your* secret?”

“Read that,” said Linton, placing Enrique's letter in his hand, while he sat down, directly in front, to watch the effect it might produce.

Hoare read slowly and attentively; some passages he re-read three or four times; and then, laying down the letter, he seemed to reflect on its contents.

“You scarcely thought what kind of company our friend used to keep formerly?” asked Linton, sneeringly.

“I knew all about that tolerably well. I was rather puzzling myself a little about this Pedro Rica; that same trick of capturing the slavers, and then selling the slaves, is worthy of one I could mention, not to speak of the double treachery of informing against his comrades, and sending the English frigate after them.”

“A deep hand he must be,” remarked Linton, coolly.

“A very deep one; but what is Cashel likely to do here?”

“Nothing; he has no clew whatever to the business; the letter itself he had not time to read through, when he dropped it, and—”

“I understand—perfectly. This accounts for his agitation. Well, I must say, *my* secret is the better of the two, and, as usual, you have made a good bargain.”

“Not better than *your* morning's work here, Hoare; confess that”

“Ah, there will not be many more such harvests to reap,” said he, sighing.

“How so? his fortune is scarcely breached as yet”

“He spends money fast,” said Hoare, gravely; “even now, see what sums he has squandered; think of the presents he has lavished,—diamonds, horses—”

“As to the Kennyfeck affair, it was better than getting into a matrimonial scrape, which I fancy I have rescued him from.”

“Oh, no, nothing of the kind. Pirate as he is, he would n't venture on that.”

“Why so?—what do you mean?”

“Simply, that he is married already; at least, that species of betrothal which goes for marriage in his free and easy country.”

“Married!” exclaimed Linton, in utter amazement; “and he never even hinted in the most distant manner to this.”

“And yet the obligation is sufficiently binding, according to Columbian law, to give his widow the benefit of all property he might die possessed of in that Republic.”

“And he knows this himself?”

“So well, that he has already proposed a very large sum as forfeit to break the contract.”

“And this has been refused?”

“Yes. The girl's father has thought it better to follow your own plan, and make 'a waiting race,' well knowing, that if Cashel does not return to claim her as his wife,—or that, which is not improbable, she may marry more advantageously,—he will always be ready to pay the forfeit.”

“May I learn his name?”

“No!”

“Nor his daughter's—the Christian name, I mean.”

“To what end? It would be a mere idle curiosity, for I should exact a pledge of your never divulging it.”

“Of course,” said Linton, carelessly. “It was, as you say, a mere idle wish. Was this a love affair, then, for it has a most commercial air?”

“I really don't know that; I fancy that they were both very young, and very ignorant of what they were pledging, and just as indifferent to the consequences.”

“She was handsome, this—”

“Maritaña is beautiful, they say,” said Hoare, who inadvertently let slip the name he had refused to divulge.

Linton's quick ear caught it at once, but as rapidly affected not to notice it, as he said,—

“But I really do not see as yet how this affects what we were just speaking of?”

“It will do so, however—and ere long. These people, who were immensely rich some time back, are now, by one of the convulsions so frequent in those countries, reduced to absolute poverty. They will, doubtless, follow Cashel here, and seek a fulfilment of his contract. I need not tell you, Mr. Linton, what must ensue on such a demand; it would be hard to say whether acceptance or refusal would be worse. In a word, the father-in-law is a man of such a character, there is only one thing would be more ruinous than his enmity, and that is, any alliance with him. Let him but arrive in this country, and every gentleman of station and class will fall back from Cashel's intimacy; and even those—I 'll not mention names,” said he, smiling—“who could gloss over some of their prejudices with gold-leaf, will soon discover that a shrewder eye than Cashel's will be on them, and that all attempts to profit by his easiness of temper and reckless nature will be met by one who has never yet been foiled in a game of artifice and deceit.”

“Then I perceive we have a very short tether,” said Linton, gravely; “when may this worthy gentleman be-looked for?”

“At any moment. I believe early in spring, however, will be the time.”

“Well, that gives us a few months; during which I must contrive to get in for this borough of Derraheeny—But hark! is that a carriage at the door?—yes, by Jove! the Kennyfecks. I remember, he had asked them to-day to come and see his pictures. I say, Hoare, step out by the back way; we must not be caught together here. I 'll make my escape afterwards.”

Already the thundering knock of the footman resounded through lie house, and Hoare, not losing a moment, left the library, and hastened through the garden at the rear of the house; while Linton, seizing some writing materials, hurried upstairs, and established himself in a small boudoir off one of the drawing-rooms, carefully letting down the Venetians as he entered, and leaving the chamber but half lighted; this done, he drew a screen in front of him, and waited patiently.

CHAPTER XXII. VISIT TO THE “CASHEL PICTURE GALLERY.”

Ignored the schools of France and Spain,
And of the Netherlands not surer,
He knew not Cuyp from Claude Lorraine,
Nor Dow from Albert Durer.

Bell: Images.

Scarcely had the Kennyfecks' carriage driven from the door when the stately equipage of the MacFarlines drew up, which was soon after followed by the very small pony phaeton of Mrs. Leicester White, that lady herself driving, and having for her companion a large high-shouldered, spectacled gentleman, whose glances, at once inquiring and critical, pronounced him as one of her numerous *protégés* in art, science, or letters.

This visit to the “Cashel Gallery,” as she somewhat grandiloquently designated the collection, had been a thing of her own planning; first, because Mrs. White was an adept in that skilful diplomacy which so happily makes plans for pleasure at other people's houses—and oh, what numbers there are!—delightful, charming people as the world calls them! whose gift goes no further than this, that they keep a registry of their friends' accommodation, and know to a nicety the season to dine here, to sup there, to picnic at one place, and to “spend the day”—horrible expression of a more horrible fact—at another. But Mrs. White had also another object in view on the present occasion, which was, to introduce her companion, Mr. Elias Howie, to her Dublin acquaintance.

Mr. Elias Howie was one of a peculiar class, which this age, so fertile in inventions, has engendered, a publishers' man-of-all-work, ready for everything, from statistics to satire, and equally prepared to expound prophecy, or write squibs for “Punch.”

Not that lodgings were not inhabited in Grub Street before our day, but that it remained for the glory of this century to see that numerous horde of tourist authors held in leash by fashionable booksellers, and every now and then let slip over some country, to which plague, pestilence, or famine, had given a newer and more

terrible interest In this novel walk of literature Mr. Howie was one of the chief proficients; he was the creator of that new school of travel which, writing expressly for London readers, refers everything to the standard of “town;” and whether it be a trait of Icelandic life, or some remnant of old-world existence in the far East, all must be brought for trial to the bar of “Seven Dials,” or stand to plead in the dock of Pall Mall or Piccadilly. Whatever errors or misconceptions he might fall into respecting his subjects, he made none regarding his readers. He knew them by heart,—their leanings, their weakness, and their prejudices; and how pleasantly could he flatter their town-bred self-sufficiency,—how slyly insinuate their vast superiority over all other citizens, insidiously assuring them that the Thames at Richmond was infinitely finer than the Rhine or the Danube, and that a trip to Margate was richer in repayal than a visit to the Bosphorus! Ireland was, just at the time we speak of, a splendid field for his peculiar talents. The misery-mongers had had their day. The world was somewhat weary of Landlordism, Pauperism, and Protestantism, and all the other “isms” of that unhappy country.

There was nothing that had not been said over the overgrown Church establishment, the devouring Middleman, Cottier misery, and Celtic barbarism; people grew weary of hearing about a nation so endowed with capabilities, and which yet did nothing, and rather than puzzle their heads any further, they voted Ireland a “bore.” It was just then that “this inspired Cockney” determined to try a new phase of the subject, and this was not to counsel nor console, not to lament over nor bewail our varied mass of errors and misfortunes, but to laugh at us. To hunt out as many incongruities—many real enough, some fictitious—as he could find; to unveil all that he could discover of social anomaly; and, without any reference to, or any knowledge of, the people, to bring them up for judgment before his less volatile and more happily circumstanced countrymen, certain of the verdict he sought for—a hearty laugh. His mission was to make “Punch” out of Ireland, and none more capable than he for the office.

A word of Mr. Howie in the flesh, and we have done. He was large and heavily built, but neither muscular nor athletic; his frame and all his gestures indicated weakness and uncertainty. His head was capacious, but not remarkable for what phrenologists call moral development; while the sinister expression of his eyes—half submissive, half satirical—suggested doubts of his sincerity. There was nothing honest about him but his mouth; this was large, full, thick-lipped, and sensual,—the mouth of one who loved to dine well, and yet felt that his agreeability was an ample receipt in full for the best entertainment that ever graced Black wall or the “Frères.”

It is a heavy infliction that we story-tellers are compelled to lay upon our readers and ourselves, thus to interrupt our narrative by a lengthened description of a character not essentially belonging to our story; we had rather, far rather, been enabled to imitate Mrs. White, as she advanced into the circle in the drawing-room, saying, “Mr. Cashel, allow me to present to your favorable notice my distinguished friend, Mr. Howie. Lady Janet MacFarline, Mr. Howie,—” sotto,—“the author of 'Snooks in the Holy Land,' the wittiest thing of the day; Sir Andrew will be delighted with him—has been all over the scenes of the Peninsular war. Mrs. Kennyfeck, Mr. Howie.”

Mr. Howie made his round of salutations, and although by his awkwardness tacitly acknowledging that they were palpably more habituated to the world's ways than himself, yet inwardly consoled by remarking certain little traits of manner and accent sufficiently provincial to be treasured up, and become very droll in print or a copper etching.

“It's a vara new pleasure ye are able to confer upon your friends, Mr. Cashel,” said Sir Andrew, “to show them so fine a collection o' pictures in Ireland, whar, methinks, the arts ha' no enjoyed too mickle encouragement.”

“I confess,” said Cashel, modestly, “I am but ill qualified to extend the kind of patronage that would be serviceable, had I even the means; I have not the slightest pretension to knowledge or judgment. The few I have purchased have been as articles of furniture, pleasant to look at, without any pretension to high excellence.”

“Just as Admiral Dalrymple paid ten pounds for a dunghill when he turned farmer,” whispered Mr. Howie in Mrs. White's ear, “and then said, 'he had only bought it because some one said it was a good thing; but that, now, he 'd give any man “twenty” to tell him what to do with it,'”

Mrs. White burst into a loud fit of laughter, exclaiming:

“Oh, how clever, how good! Pray, Mr. Howie, tell Lady Janet—tell Mr. Cashel that.”

“Oh, madam!” cried the terrified tourist, who had not discovered before the very shallow discrimination of his gifted acquaintance.

“If it is so vara good,” said Sir Andrew, “we maun insist on hearin' it.”

“No, no! nothing of the kind,” interposed Howie; “besides, the observation was only intended for Mrs. White's ear.”

“Very true,” said that lady, affecting a look of consciousness.

“The odious woman,” whispered Miss Kennyfeck to her sister; “see how delighted she looks to be compromised.”

“If we had Linton,” said Cashel, politely offering his arm to Lady Janet, as he led her into the so-called gallery, “he could explain everything for us. We have, however, a kind of catalogue here. This large landscape is said to be by Both.”

“If she be a coo,” said Sir Andrew, “I maun say it's the first time I ever seen ane wi' the head ower the tail.”

“Nonsense,” said Lady Janet; “don't ye perceive that the animal is fore-shortened, and is represented looking backwards?”

“I ken nothing aboot that; she may be shortened in the fore-parts, an' ye say, and that may be some peculiar breed, but what brings her head ower her rump?”

Sir Andrew was left to finish his criticism alone, the company moving on to a portrait assigned to Vandyck, as Diedrich von Aevenghem, Burgomaster of Antwerp.

“A fine head!” exclaimed Mrs. White, authoritatively; “don't you think so, Mr. Howie?”

“A very choice specimen of the great master, for which, doubtless, you gave a large sum.”

“Four hundred, if I remember aright,” said Cashel.

“I think he maught hae a clean face for that money,” broke in Sir Andrew.

“What do you mean, sir?” said Miss Kennyfeck, insidiously, and delighted at the misery Lady Janet endured from his remarks.

“Don't ye mind the smut he has on ane cheek?”

“It's the shadow of his nose, Sir Andrew,” broke in Lady Janet, with a sharpness of rebuke there was no misunderstanding.

“Eh, my leddy, so it may, but ye need na bite mine off, for a' that!” And so saying, the discomfited veteran fell back in high dudgeon.

The party now broke into the twos and threes invariable on such occasions, and While Mrs. Kennyfeck and her elder daughter paid their most devoted attentions to Lady Janet, Mrs. White and the author paired off, leaving Olivia Kennyfeck to the guidance of Cashel.

“So you 'll positively not tell me what it is that preys on your mind this morning?” said she, in the most insinuating of soft accents.

Cashel shook his head mournfully, and said,—

“Why should I tell you of what it is impossible you could give me any counsel in, while your sympathy would only cause uneasiness to yourself?”

“But you forget our compact,” said she, archly; “there was to be perfect confidence on both sides, was there not?”

“Certainly. Now, when shall we begin?”

“Have you not begun already?”

“I fancy not. Do you remember two evenings ago, when I came suddenly into the drawing-room and found you pencil in hand, and you, instead of at once showing me what you had been sketching, shut the portfolio, and carried it off, despite all my entreaties—nay, all my just demands?”

“Oh, but,” said she, smiling, “confidence is one thing—confession is another.”

“Too subtle distinctions for me,” cried Cashel. “I foolishly supposed that there was to be an unreserved—”

“Speak lower, for mercy sake!—don't you perceive Lady Janet trying to hear everything you say?” This was said in a soft whisper, while she added aloud, “I think you said it was a Correggio, Mr. Cashel,” as they stood before a very lightly-clad Magdalen, who seemed endeavoring to make up for the deficiency of her costume by draping across her bosom the voluptuous masses of her golden hair.

“I think a Correggio,” said Cashel, confused at the sudden artifice; “but who has the catalogue?—oh, Sir Andrew; tell us about number fifty-eight.”

“Fefty-eight, fefty-eight?” mumbled Sir Andrew a number of times to himself, and then, having found the number, he approached the picture and surveyed it attentively.

“Well, sir, what is it called?” said Olivia.

“It's vara singular,” said Sir Andrew, still gazing at the canvas, “but doubtless Correggio knew weel what he was aboot. This,” said he, “is a picture of Sain John the Baaptist in a raiment of caamel's hair.”

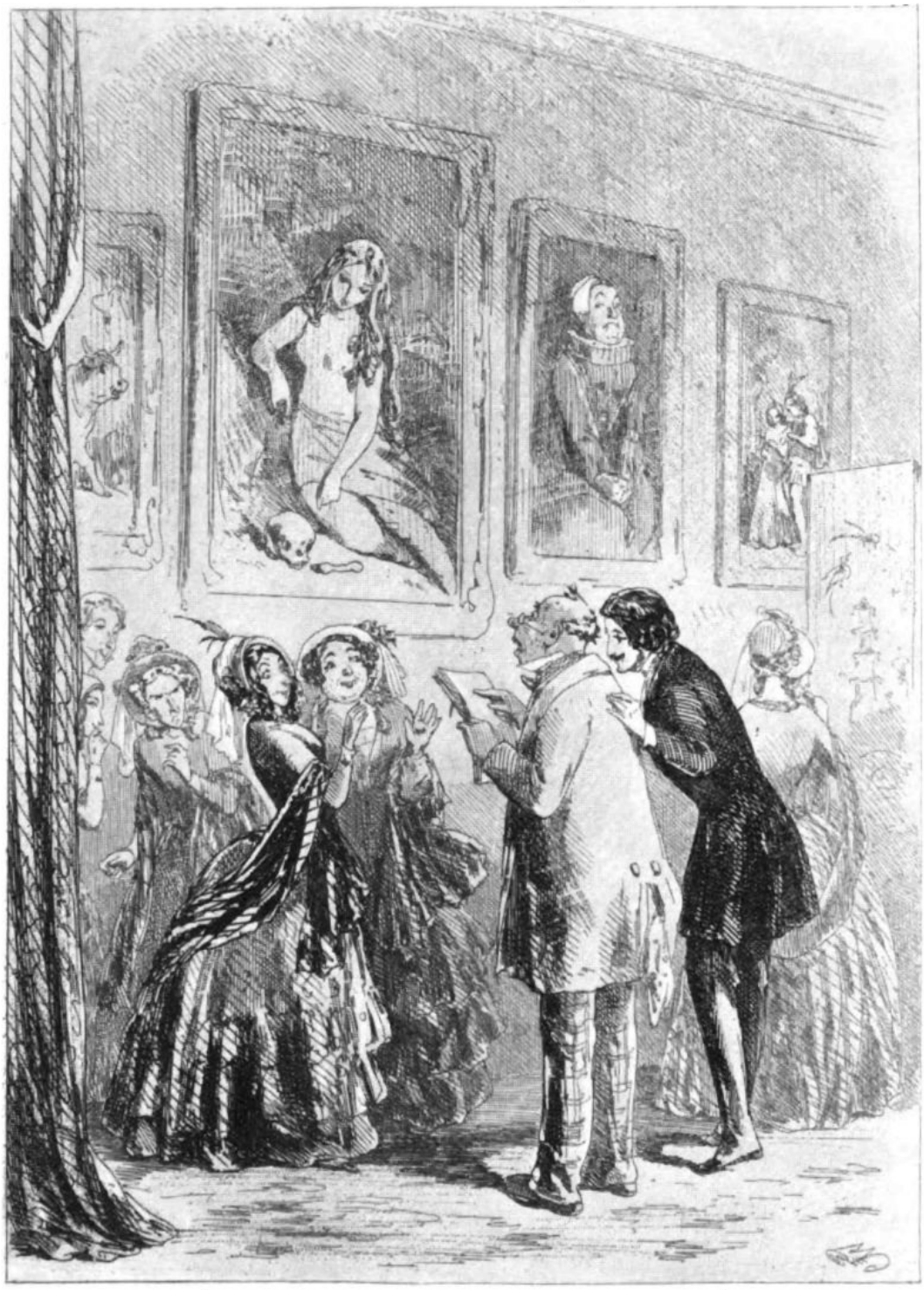
No sense of propriety was proof against this announcement; a laugh, loud and general, burst forth, during which Lady Janet, snatching the book indignantly from his hands, cried,—

“You were looking at sixty-eight, Sir Andrew, not fifty-eight; and you have made yourself perfectly ridiculous.”

“By my saul, I believe so,” muttered the old gentleman, in deep anger. “I 've been looking at 'saxty-eight' ower long already!”

Fortunately, this sarcasm was not heard by her against whom it was directed, and they who did hear it were fain to suppress their laughter as well as they were able. The party was now increased by the arrival of the Dean and his “ancient,” Mr. Softly, to the manifest delight of Mrs. Kennyfeck, who at once exclaimed,—

“Ah, we shall now hear something really instructive.”



The erudite churchman, after a very abrupt notice of the company, started at speed without losing a moment.

His attention being caught by some curious tableaux of the interior of the great Pyramid, he immediately commenced an explanation of the various figures, the costumes and weapons, which he said were all masonic, showing that Pharaoh wore an apron exactly like the Duke of Sussex, and that every emblem of the “arch” was to be found among the great of Ancient Egypt.

While thus employed, Mr. Howie, seated in a corner, was busily sketching the whole party for an illustration to his new book on Ireland, and once more Cashel and his companion found themselves, of course by the merest accident, standing opposite the same picture in a little boudoir off the large gallery. The subject was a scene from Faust, where Marguerite, leaning on her lover's arm, is walking in a garden by moonlight, and seeking by a mode of divination common in Germany to ascertain his truth, which is by plucking one by one the petals of a flower, saying alternately, “He loves me, he loves me not;” and then, by the result of the last-plucked leaf, deciding which fate is accomplished. Cashel first explained the meaning of the trial, and then taking a rose from one of the flower vases, he said,—

“Let me see if you can understand my teaching; you have only to say, 'Er liebt mich,' and, 'Er liebt mich nicht.'”

“But how can I?” said she, with a look of beaming innocence, “if there be none who—”

“No matter,” said Cashel; “besides, is it not possible you could be loved, and yet never know it? Now for the ordeal.”

“Er liebt mich nicht,” said Olivia, with a low, silvery voice, as she plucked the first petal off, and threw it on the floor.

“You begin inauspiciously, and, I must say, unfairly, too,” said Cashel. “The first augury is in favor of love.”

“Er liebt mich,” said she, tremulously, and the leaf broke in her fingers. “Ha!” sighed she, “what does that imply? Is it, that he only loves by half his heart?”

“That cannot be,” said Cashel; “it is rather that you treated his affection harshly.”

“Should it not bear a little?—ought it to give way at once?”

“Nor will it,” said he, more earnestly, “if you deal but fairly. Come, I will teach you a still more simple, and yet unerring test.”

A heavy sigh from behind the Chinese screen made both the speakers start; and while Olivia, pale with terror, sank into a chair, Cashel hastened to see what had caused the alarm.

“Linton, upon my life!” exclaimed he, in a low whisper, as, on tiptoe, he returned to the place beside her.

“Oh, Mr. Cashel; oh dear, Mr. Cashel—”

“Dearest Olivia—”

“Heigho!” broke in Linton; and Roland and his companion slipped noiselessly from the room, and, unperceived, mixed with the general company, who sat in rapt attention while the Dean explained that painting was nothing more nor less than an optical delusion,—a theory which seemed to delight Mrs. Kennyfeck in the same proportion that it puzzled her. Fortunately, the announcement that luncheon was on the table cut short the dissertation, and the party descended, all more or less content to make material enjoyments succeed to intellectual ones.

“Well,” whispered Miss Kennyfeck to her sister, as they descended the stairs, “did he?”

An almost inaudible “No” was the reply.

“Your eyes are very red for nothing, my dear,” rejoined the elder.

“I dinna ken, sir,” said Sir Andrew to Softly, as he made use of his arm for support,—“I dinna ken how ye understand your theory aboot optical delusions, but I maun say, it seems to me a vara strange way for men o' your cloth to pass the mornin' starin' at naked weemen,—creatures, too, that if they ever leeved at all, must ha' led the maist abondoned lives. I take it that Diana herself was ne better than a cuttie; do ye mark hoo she does no scruple to show a bra pair of legs—”

“With respect to the Heathen Mythology,” broke in Softly, in a voice he hoped might subdue the discussion.

“Don't tell me aboot the hay thins, sir; flesh and bluid is a' the same, whatever Kirk it follows.”

Before they were seated at table, Linton had joined them, explaining, in the most natural way in the world, that, having sat down to write in the boudoir, he had fallen fast asleep, and was only awakened by Mr. Phillis having accidentally discovered him. A look of quick intelligence passed between Cashel and Olivia at this narrative; the young lady soon appeared to have recovered from her former embarrassment, and the luncheon proceeded pleasantly to all parties. Mr. Howie enjoyed himself to the utmost, not only by the reflection that a hearty luncheon at two would save an hotel dinner at six, but that the Dean and Sir Andrew were two originals, worth five pound apiece even for “Punch.” As to Cashel, a glance at the author's note-book would show how he impressed that gifted personage: “R. C.: a snob—rich—and gullible; his pictures, all the household gods at Christie's, the Vandyck, late a sign of the Marquis of Granby, at Windsor. Mem.: not over safe to quiz him.” “But we 'll see later on.” “Visit him at his country-seat, 'if poss.'”

“Who is our spectacled friend?” said Linton, as they drove away from the door.

“Some distinguished author, whose name I have forgotten.”

“Shrewd looking fellow,—think I have seen him at Ascot. What brings him over here?”

“To write a book, I fancy.”

“What a bore. This is the age of detectives, with a vengeance. Well, don't let him in again, that's all. By Jove! it's easier, now-a-days, to escape the Queen's Bench than the 'Illustrated News.'”

“A note from Mr. Kennyfeck, sir,” said Mr. Phillis, “and the man waits for an answer.”

Linton, taking up a book, affected to read, but in reality placed himself so as to watch Cashel's features as he perused the letter, whose size and shape pronounced to be something unusual. Hurriedly mumbling over a rather tedious exordium on the various views the writer had taken of a subject, Cashel's eyes suddenly flashed as he drew forth a small printed paragraph, cut from the column of a newspaper, and which went thus:—

> *“It will be, doubtless, in our readers' recollection how a short time back an armed slaver, sailing under the flag of Columbia, was taken, after a most severe and sanguinary engagement, by H.M. brig 'Hornet.' The commander, a young Spaniard of singularly handsome exterior, and with all the bearing and appearance of a rank very different from his mode of life, was carried off and confined in St. Kitts' till such time as he could be brought to trial. Representations from the Government of the Republic were, however, made, and a claim preferred for indemnity, not only for the loss of the vessel and property, but for the loss of life and other injury incurred on the capture. While this singular demand was under investigation, the young Spaniard alluded to contrived to break his bonds and escape: the only mode of doing which was by a leap into the sea from the parapet of the fortress, a height, we are informed, of nigh one hundred feet. They who are acquainted with the locality assert that if he even survived the desperate leap, he must inevitably have fallen a victim to the sharks who frequent the bay to catch the bodies of all who die in the prison, and who, it would appear, are thus unceremoniously disposed of. This supposition would seem, however, in some respect, contradicted by the circumstance that a Venezuelan cruiser, which hung about the shore for the two preceding days,*

sailed on the very night of his escape, and, in all probability, with him on board.”

“I could swear he is safe!” cried Cashel, in an ecstasy of enthusiasm; “he's a glorious fellow.”

“Who is that?” said Linton, looking up; “any one I know?”

“No, indeed!” said Cashel. Then suddenly checking himself in a speech whose opening accents were far from flattering, he added, “One you never even heard of.”

He once more addressed himself to the letter, which, however, merely contained some not very brilliant commentaries of Mr. Kennyfeck over the preceding extract, and which, after enumerating a great many modes of investigating the event, concluded with the only thing like common sense in the whole, by recommending a strict silence and secrecy about it all.

Cashel was closing the epistle, when he caught on the turn-down the following lines;—

“Mr. Linton has written to me about something like a legal transfer of the cottage and lands of Tubberbeg, which he mentions your having presented to him. What reply am I to return to this? I stated that you had already assured Mr. Corrigan, the present tenant, of an undisturbed possession of the tenure, but Mr. L. interrupted my explanation by saying that he only desired an assignment of the property, such as would give a parliamentary qualification, and that all pledges made to Mr. C. he would regard as equally binding on himself.”

Cashel's first impulse, when he had read thus far, was to show Linton the paragraph, and frankly ask him what he wished to be done; indeed, he had already advanced towards him with that object, when he checked himself. “It might seem ungracious to ask any explanation. There had been already a moment of awkwardness about that same cottage, and Linton had behaved so well; and, of course, only asking him for the possession as a means of qualifying, Corrigan need never hear of it Besides, he could make Linton a present of much greater real value as soon as the circumstances of the estate became better known.” Such and such-like reasonings passed hastily through his brain; and as all his resolves were quickly formed, and as quickly acted on, he sat down and wrote:

Dear Mr. Kennyfeck,—Many thanks for the information of your note, which has served to allay all my anxiety for a valued friend. As to Linton, you will have the goodness to satisfy him in every particular, and make all and every legal title he desires to the cottage and grounds of Tubberbeg. Although he is now at my side while I write, I have not alluded to the subject, feeling the awkwardness of touching on a theme so delicate. Say, however, for me, that Corrigan is not to be disturbed, nor any pledge I have made towards him—no matter how liberally construed by him—to be, in any respect, infringed.—Yours, in great haste,

“Why you are quite a man of business to-day, Cashel, with your correspondence and letter-writing; and I 'm sorry for it, for I wanted to have a bit of serious talk with you,—that is, if it do not bore you.”

“Not in the least. I was, I own it, nervous and uneasy this morning; now, however, my mind is at ease, and I am quite ready for anything.”

“Well, then, without preamble, are you still of the same mind about Parliament, because the time is hastening on when you ought to come to some decision on the matter?”

“I have never bestowed a thought on the matter since,” said Cashel. “The truth is, when I hear people talk politics in society, I am only astonished at their seeming bigotry and one-sidedness; and when I read newspapers of opposite opinions, I am equally confounded at the excellent arguments they display for diametrically contradictory lines of action, so that my political education makes but little progress.”

“What you say is perfectly just,” said Linton, appearing to reflect profoundly. “A man of real independence —not the mere independence of fortune, but the far higher independence of personal character—has much to endure in our tangled and complex system of legislation. As for yourself, for instance, who can afford to despise patronage, who have neither sons to advance in the Navy, nor nephews in the Foreign Office, who neither want the Bath nor a baronetcy, who would be as sick of the flatteries as you would be disgusted with the servility of party—why you should submit to the dust and heat, the turmoil and fatigue of a session, I can't think. And how you would be bored,—bored by the ceaseless reiterations night after night, the same arguments growing gradually weaker as the echo grew fainter; bored by the bits of 'Horace' got off by heart to wind up with; bored by the bad jests of witty members; bored by Peel's candor, and Palmerston's petulance; by Cobden's unblushing effrontery, and Hume's tiresome placidity. You 'd never know a happy day nor a joyous hour till you accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and cut them all. No; the better course for you would be, choose a nominee for your borough; select a man in whom you have confidence. Think of some one over whom your influence would be complete, who would have no other aim than in following out your suggestions; some one, in fact, who unites sufficient ability with personal friendship. What d' ye think of Kennyfeck?”

“Poor Kennyfeck,” said Cashel, laughing, “he'd never think of such a thing.”

“I don't know,” said Linton, musing; “it might not suit him, but his wife would like it prodigiously.”

“Shall I propose it, then?” said Cashel.

“Better not, perhaps,” said Linton, appearing to reflect; “his income, which is a right good one, is professional. This, of course, he 'd forfeit by accepting a seat in the House. Besides, really, the poor man would make no way. No, we must think of some one else. Do you like White?”

“Leicester White? I detest the man, and the wife too.”

“Well, there's Frobisher, a fellow of good name and family. I 'd not go bail for his preferring your interests to his own, but as times go, you might chance upon worse. Will you have Frobisher?”

“I have no objection,” said Cashel, carelessly; “would he like it himself?”

“Would he like anything that might help him to a step in the regiment, or place him in a position to sell himself, you, and the borough constituency, to the highest bidder?” said Linton, irritated at Cashel's half assent.

“Well, if these be his principles,” cried Cashel, laughing, “I think we 'd better put him aside.”

“You 're right; he 'd never do,” said Linton, recovering all his self-possession; “what you want is a man sufficiently unconnected with ties of family or party, to see in you his patron and his object, and who, with cleverness enough to enunciate the views you desire to see prevail, has also the strong bond of personal regard to make him always even more the friend than the follower.”

“I only know of one man who realizes all this combination,” said Cashel, smiling, “and *he* would n't answer.”

“Who is he,—and why?” asked Linton, in vain endeavoring to look easy and unconcerned.

“Tom Linton is the man, and his invincible laziness the 'why.' Isn't that true?”

“By George, Cashel, if you 're content with the first part of the assertion, I 'll pledge myself to remedy the latter. I own, frankly, it is a career for which I have no predilection; if I had, I should have been 'in' many years ago. I have all my life held very cheap your great political leaders, both as regards capacity and character, and I have ever fancied that I should have had some success in the lists; but I have always loved ease, and that best of ease, independence. If you think, however, that I can worthily represent you in Parliament, and that you could safely trust to my discretion the knotty question of political war, say the word, my boy, and I 'll fling my 'far niente' habits to the wind, and you shall have all the merit of developing the promising member for—what's the name of it?”

“Derraheeny.”

“Exactly—the honorable and learned—for Derraheeny. I rather like the title.”

“Well, Linton, if you are really serious—”

“Most assuredly, serious; and more, to prove it, I shall ask you to clench our bargain at once. It is not enough that you make me your nominee, but you must also render me eligible to become so.”

“I don't clearly comprehend—”

“I 'll enlighten you. Our venerable constitution, perfectly irrespective of the Tom Lintons of this world—a race which, by the way, never dies out, probably because they have avoided intermarriage—has decided that a man must possess something besides his wits to be qualified as 'Member of Parliament;' a strange law, because the aforesaid wits are all that the Honorable House has any reason to lay claim to. This same something which guarantees that a man has a legislative capacity, amounts to some hundreds a year. Don't be impatient, and come out with any piece of rash generosity; I don't want you to make a present of an estate—only to lend me one! To be qualified, either as a candidate for the House or a gentleman rider, one only needs a friend,—a well-to-do friend, who 'll say, 'He's all right.'”

“I 'm quite ready to vouch for you, Tom, but you 'll have to take the affair into your own management.”

“Oh, it's easy enough. That same cottage and the farm which we spoke of the other day, Kennyfeck can make out a kind of conveyance, or whatever the instrument is called, by which it acknowledges me for its owner, vice Roland Cashel, Esquire. This, properly sealed, signed, and so on, will defy the most searching Committee that ever pried into any gentleman's private circumstances.”

“Then explain it all to Kennyfeck, and say that I wish it done at once.”

“Nay, Cashel, pardon me. My ugliest enemy will not call me punctilious, but I must stand upon a bit of ceremony here. This must be ordered by yourself. You are doing a gracious thing,—a devilish kind thing,—it must not be done by halves. Were I to communicate this to Kennyfeck, he 'll unquestionably obey the direction, but most certainly he 'd say to the first man he met, 'See how Linton has managed to trick Cashel out of a very considerable slice of landed property.' He 'd not take much trouble to state the nature of our compact; he 'd rather blink the whole arrangement, altogether, and make the thing seem a direct gift. Now, I have too much pride on your account, and my own too, to stand this.”

“Well, well, it shall be as you like; only I trow I disagree with you about old Kennyfeck: he 's a fine straight-hearted fellow—he's—”

“He 's an attorney, Cashel. These fellows can no more comprehend a transfer of property without a trial at bar, or a suit in Equity, than an Irish second can understand a falling out without one of the parties being brought home on a door. Besides, he has rather a grudge against me. I never told you,—indeed, I never meant to tell you,—but I can have no secrets from you. You know the youngest girl, Olivia?”

“Yes, go on,” said Cashel, red and pale by turns.

“Well, I flirted a good deal last winter with her. Upon my life, I did not intend it to have gone so far; I suppose it must have gone far, though, because she became desperately in love. She is very pretty, certainly, and a really good little girl,—*mais, que voulez-vous?* If I tie a fly on my hook I can't afford to see a flounder or a perch walk off with it; it's the speckled monster of the stream I fish for. They ought to have known that themselves,—I 've no doubt they did, too; but they were determined, as they say here, to die 'innocent,' and so one fine morning I was just going to join the hounds at Finglas, when old Kennyfeck, very trimly dressed, and looking unutterable importance, entered my lodgings. There's a formula for these kind of explanations—I 've gone through seven of these myself, and I 'll swear that every papa has opened the conference with a solemn appeal to Heaven 'that he never was aware of the attentions shown his daughter, nor the state of his dear child's affections, till last evening.' They always assure you, besides, that if they could give a million and a half as dowry, you are the very man—the actual one individual—they would have selected; so that on an average most young ladies have met with at least half-a-dozen parties whom the fathers have pronounced to be, separately, the one most valued. Kennyfeck behaved, I must say, admirably. His wife would have a Galway cousin sent for, and a duel; some other kind friend suggested to have me waylaid and thrashed. He calmly heard me for about ten minutes, and then taking up his hat and gloves, said, 'Take your rule,' and so it ended. I dined there the next Sunday,—yes, that's part of my system: I never permit people to nourish small grudges, and go about abusing me to my acquaintances. If they *will* do that, I overwhelm them by their duplicity, as I

am seen constantly in their intimacy, and remarkable for always speaking well of them, so that the world will certainly give it against them. The gist of all this tiresome story is, that Kennyfeck and the ladies would, if occasion served, pay off the old debt to me; therefore, beware if you hear me canvassed in that quarter!" Linton, like many other cunning people, very often lapsed into little confessions of the tactics by which he played his game in the world, and although Cashel was not by any means a dangerous confidant to such disclosures, he now marked with feelings not all akin to satisfaction this acknowledgment of his friend's skill.

"You 'd never have shown your face there again, I 'll wager a hundred!" said Linton, reading in the black look of Roland's countenance an expression he did not fancy.

"You are right. I should have deemed it unfair to impose on the young lady a part so full of awkwardness as every meeting must necessitate."

"That comes of your innocence about women, my dear friend; they have face for anything. It is not hypocrisy, it is not that they do not feel, and feel deeply, but their sense of command, their instinct of what is becoming, is a thousand times finer than ours; and I am certain that when we take all manner of care to, what is called, spare their feelings, we are in reality only sparing them a cherished opportunity of exercising a control over those feelings which we foolishly suppose to be as ungovernable as our own."

Either not agreeing with the sentiment, or unable to cope with its subtlety, Cashel sat some time without speaking. From Olivia Kennyfeck his thoughts reverted to one in every respect unlike her,—the daring, impetuous Maritaña.

He wondered within himself whether *her* bold, impassioned nature could be comprehended within Linton's category, and a secret sense of rejoicing thrilled through him as he replied to himself in the negative.

"I 'd wager a trifle, Roland, from that easy smile you wear, that your memory has called up one example, at least, unfavorable to my theory. Eh! I have guessed aright Come then, out with it, man,—who is this peerless paragon of pure ingenuous truth?—who is she whose nature is the transparent crystal where fair thoughts are enshrined? No denizen of our misty northland, I'll be sworn, but some fair Mexican, with as little disguise as drapery. Confess, I say—there is a confession, I 'll be sworn—and so make a clean breast of it."

It struck Cashel, while Linton was speaking, how effectually Maritaña herself, by one proud look, one haughty gesture, would have silenced such flippant raillery; and he could not help feeling it a kind of treason to their old friendship that he should listen to it in patient endurance.

"Listen to me, amigo mio," said he, in a tone of earnest passion that seemed almost estranged from his nature latterly,—"listen to me while I tell you that in those faraway countries, whose people you regard with such contemptuous pity, there are women—ay, young girls—whose daring spirit would shame the courage of many of those fine gentlemen we spend our lives with; and I, for one, have so much of the Indian in me, as to think that courage is the first of virtues."

"I cannot help fancying," said Linton, with an almost imperceptible raillery, "that there are other qualities would please me as well in a wife or a mistress."

"I have no doubt of it—and suit you better, too," said Cashel, savagely; then hastily correcting himself for his rude speech, he added, "I believe, in good earnest, that you would as little sympathize with that land and its people as I do with this. Ay, if you want a confession, there's one for you. I'm longing to be back once more among the vast prairies of the West, galloping free after the dark-backed bisons, and strolling along in the silent forests. The enervation of this life wearies and depresses me; worse than all, I feel that, with a little more of it, I shall lose all energy and zest for that activity of body, which, to men like myself, supplies the place of thought,—a little more of it, and I shall sink into that languid routine where dissipation supplies the only excitement."

"This is a mere passing caprice; a man who has wealth—"

"There it is," cried Cashel, interrupting him impetuously; "that is the eternal burden of your song. As if wealth, in forestalling the necessity for labor, did not, at the same time, deprive life of all the zeal of enterprise. When I have stepped into my boat to board a Chilian frigate, I have had a prouder throbbing at my heart than ever the sight of that banker's check-book has given me. There's many a Gambusino in the Rocky Mountains a happier—ay, and a finer fellow, too, than the gayest of those gallants that ever squandered the gold *he* quarried! But why go on?—we are speaking in unknown tongues to each other."

The tone of irritation into which, as it seems unconsciously, Cashel had fallen, was not lost on the keen perception of Linton, and he was not sorry to feign a pretext for closing an interview whose continuance might be unpleasant.

"I was thinking of a hurried trip down to Tubbermore," said he, rising; "we shall have these guests of yours in open rebellion, if we don't affect at least something like preparation for their reception. I'll take Perystell along with me, and we'll see what can be done to get the old house in trim."

"Thanks," said Cashel, as he walked up and down, his thoughts seeming engaged on some other theme.

"I 'll write to you a report of the actual condition of the fortress," said Linton, assuming all his habitual easy freedom of manner, "and then, if you think of anything to suggest, you'll let me hear."

"Yes, I 'll write," said Cashel, still musing on his own thoughts.

"I see pretty plainly," cried Linton, laughing, "there's no earthly use in asking you questions just now, your brain being otherwise occupied, and so, good-bye."

"Good-bye—good-bye," said Cashel, endeavoring, but not with a very good grace to shake off his pre-occupation while he shook hands with him; and Linton descended the stairs, humming an opera air, with all the seeming light-heartedness of a very careless nature.

Cashel, meanwhile, sat down, and, with his head resting on his hand, pondered over their late interview. There were two circumstances which both puzzled and distressed him. How came it that Linton should have written this note to Kennyfeck on a subject which only seemed to have actually suggested itself in the course of this their very last conversation? Had he already planned the whole campaign respecting the seat in Parliament and the qualification, and was his apparently chance allusion to those topics a thing studied and

devised beforehand? This, if true, would argue very ill for his friend's candor and fair dealing; and yet, how explain it otherwise? Was there any other seat open to him for which to need a qualification? If so, he had never spoken of it. It was the first time in his life that Cashel had conceived a suspicion of one whom he had regarded in the light of friend, and only they who have undergone a similar trial can understand the poignant suffering of the feeling; and yet, palpable as the cause of such a doubt was, he had never entertained it had not Linton spoken disparagingly of the Kennyfecks! This is a curious trait of human nature, but one worth consideration; and while leaving it to the elucidation the penetration of each reader may suggest, we only reiterate the fact, that while Cashel could, without an effort, have forgiven the duplicity practised on himself, the levity Linton employed respecting Olivia engendered doubts of his honor too grave to be easily combated.

As for Linton scarcely had he quitted Cashel, than he hastened to call on Kennyfeck; he had written the note already alluded to, to leave at the house should the solicitor be from home; but having left it by accident on the writing-table, his servant, discovering it to be sealed and addressed, had, without further question, left it at Kennyfeck's house. As Linton went along, he searched his pockets for the epistle, but consoled himself by remembering how he had left it at home.

A few moments later found him at Kennyfeck's door. The attorney was at home, and, without any announcement, Linton entered the study where he sat.

“I was this instant writing to you, sir,” said Kennyfeck, rising, and placing a seat for him; “Mr Cashel, on being informed of the wish expressed in your note—”

“Of what note?” said Linton, in a voice of, for him, very unusual agitation.

“This note—here, sir,—dated—no, by-the-by, it is not dated, but brought by your servant two hours ago.”

Linton took the paper, glanced his eye over it, and then, in mingled chagrin and forgetfulness, tore it, and threw the fragments into the fire.

“There is some mistake about this,” said he, slowly, and giving himself time to consider what turn he should lend it.

“This is Mr. Cashel's reply, sir,” said Kennyfeck, after pausing some moments, but in vain for the explanation.

Linton eagerly caught the letter and read it through, and whatever scruples or fear he might have conceived for any other man's, it seemed as if he had little dread of Cashel's penetration, for his assured and easy smile at once showed that he had regained his wonted tranquillity.

“You will then take the necessary steps, without delay, Kennyfeck,” said he. “The elections cannot be very distant, and it is better to be prepared.” As he spoke, he threw the letter back upon the table, but in a moment afterwards, while taking off his gloves, managed to seize it and convey it to his pocket. “You know far better than I do, Kennyfeck,” resumed he, “how sharp the lawyers can be in picking out any flaw respecting title and so forth; for this reason, be careful that this document shall be as regular and binding as need be.”

“It shall be submitted for counsel's opinion this evening, sir—”

“Not to Jones, then; I don't fancy that gentleman, although I know he has some of your confidence; send it to Hammond.”

“As you please, sir.”

“Another point. You'll not insert any clause respecting the tenant in possession; it would only be hampering us with another defence against some legal subtlety or other.”

“Mr. Cashel does not desire this, sir?”

“Of course not—you understand what the whole thing means. Well, I must say good-bye; you 'll have all ready by the time I return to town. My respects to the drawing-room. Adieu.

“That was bad blunder about the note,” muttered Linton, as he walked along towards home, “and might have lost the game, if the antagonist had any skill whatever.”

CHAPTER XXIII. LINTON VISITS HIS ESTATE.

Let's see the field, and mark it well,
For, here, will be the battle.

Ottocar.

“Does this path lead to the house, friend?” said a gentleman whose dress bespoke recent travel, to the haggard, discontented figure of a man who, seated on a stone beside a low and broken wicket, was lazily filling his pipe, and occasionally throwing stealthy glances at the stranger. A. short nod of the head was the reply. “You belong to the place, I suppose?”

“Maybe I do; and what then?”

“Simply that, as I am desirous of going thither, I should be glad of your showing me the way.”

“Troth, an' there's little to see when you get there,” rejoined the other, sarcastically. “What are you by trade, if it's not displeasin' to ye?”

“That's the very question I was about to ask you,” said Linton, for it was himself; “you appear to have a very easy mode of life, whatever it be, since you are so indifferent about earning half-a-crown.”

Tom Keane arose from his seat, and made an awkward attempt at saluting, as he said,—

“'Tis the dusk o'the evening prevented me seeing yer honer, or I wouldn't be so bowld. This is the way to the Hall sure enough.”

“This place has been greatly neglected of late,” said Linton, as they walked along side by side, and endeavoring, by a tone of familiarity, to set his companion at ease.

“Troth, it is neglected, and always was as long as I remember. I was reared in it, and I never knew it other; thistles and docks as big as your leg, everywhere, and the grass choked up with moss.”

“How came it to be so completely left to ruin?”

“Anan!” muttered he, as if not well comprehending the question, but, in reality, a mere device employed to give him more time to scan the stranger, and guess at his probable object.

“I was asking,” said Linton, “how it happened that a fine old place like this was suffered to go to wreck and ruin?”

“Faix, it's ould enough, anyhow,” said the other, with a coarse laugh.

“And large too.”

“Yer honer was here afore?” said Tom, stealthily glancing at him under his brows. “I 'm thinking I remember yer honer's faytures. You would n't be the gentleman that came down with Mr. Duffy?”

“No; this is my first visit to these parts; now, where does this little road lead? It seems to be better cared for than the rest, and the gate, too, is neatly kept.”

“That goes down to the cottage, sir—Tubber-beg, as they call it. Yer honer isn't Mr. Cashel himself?” said Tom, reverentially taking off his tattered hat, and attempting an air of courtesy, which sat marvellously ill upon him.

“I have not that good luck, my friend.”

“'T is good luck ye may call it,” sighed Tom; “a good luck that does n't fall to many; but, maybe, ye don't want it; maybe yer honer—”

“And who lives in the cottage of Tubber-beg?” said Linton, interrupting.

“One Corrigan, sir; an old man and his granddaughter.”

“Good kind of people, are they?”

“Ayeh! there's worse, and there 's betther! They 're as proud as Lucifer, and poor as naygurs.”

“And this is the Hall itself?” exclaimed Linton, as he stopped directly in front of the old dilapidated building, whose deformities were only exaggerated by the patchy effect of a faint moonlight.

“Ay, there it is,” grinned Tom, “and no beauty either; and ugly as it looks without, it's worse within! There 'a cracks in the walls ye could put your hand through, and the windows is rotten, where they stand.”

“It is not very tempting, certainly, as a residence,” said Linton, smiling.

“Ah, but if ye heerd the rats, the way they do be racin' and huntin' each other at night, and the wind bellowsin' down the chimbleys, such screechin' and yellin' as it keeps, and then the slates rattlin', till ye'd think the ould roof was comin' off altogether,—be my soul, there's many a man would n't take the property and sleep a night in that house.”

“One would do a great deal, notwithstanding, for a fine estate like this,” said Linton, dryly.

There was something, either in the words or the accent, that touched Tom Keane's sympathy for the speaker; some strange suspicion perhaps, that he was one whose fortune, like his own, was not beyond the casualties and chances of life, and it was with a species of coarse friendship that he said, “Ah, if we had it between us, we 'd do well.”

“Right well; no need to ask for better,” said Linton, with a heartiness of assent that made the other perfectly at ease. “I'm curious to have a look at the inside of the place; I suppose there is no hindrance?”

“None in life! I live below, and, faix, there's no living anywhere else, for most of the stairs is burned, and, as I towld ye, the rats has upstairs all to themselves. Nancy, give us a light,” cried he, passing into the dark and spacious hall, “I'm going to show a gentleman the curiosities. I ax you honer's pardon, the place is n't so clean as it might be.”

Linton gave one peep into the long and gloomy chamber, where the whole family were huddled together in all the wretchedness and disorder of a cabin, and at once drew back.

“The cows is on the other side,” said the man, “and, beyond, there's four rooms was never plastered; and there, where you see the straw, that's the billiard-room, and inside of it again, there's a place for play-actin', and, more by token, there's a quare thing there.”

“What's that?” asked Linton, whose curiosity was excited by the remark.

“Come, and I 'll show yer honer.”

So saying, he led on through a narrow corridor, and, passing through two or three dilapidated, ruined chambers, they entered a large and spacious apartment, whose sloping floor at once showed Linton that they were standing on the stage of a theatre.

Tom Keane held up the flickering light, that the other might see the torn and tattered remnants of the decorations, and the fragments of scenes, as they flapped to and fro. “It's a dhroll place, anyhow,” said he, “and there's scarce a bit of it hasn't a trap-door, or some other contrivance of the like; but here's one stranger than all; this is what I towld yer honer about.” He walked, as he spoke, to the back wall of the building, where, on the surface of the plaster, a rude scene, representing a wood, was painted, at one side of which a massive pile of rock, overgrown with creepers, stood. “Now, ye 'd never guess what was there,” said Tom, holding the candle in different situations to exhibit the scene; “and, indeed, I found it by chance myself; see this,”—and he pressed a small but scarcely perceptible knob of brass in the wall, and at once, what appeared to be the surface of the rock, slid back, discovering a dark space behind. “Come on, now, after me,” continued he. Linton followed, and they ascended a narrow stair constructed in the substance of the wall, and barely sufficient to admit one person.

Arriving at the top, after a few seconds' delay, Tom opened a small door, and they stood in a large and well-proportioned room, where some worm-eaten bed-furniture yet remained. The door had been once, as a small,

fragment of glass showed, the frame of a large mirror, and must have been quite beyond the reach of ordinary powers of detection.

“That was a cunning way to steal down among the play acthers,” said Keane, grinning, while Linton, with the greatest attention, remarked the position of the door and its secret fastening.

“I suppose no one but yourself knows of this stair?” said Linton.

“Sorra one, sir, except, maybe, some of the smugglers that used to come here long ago from the mouth of the Shannon. This was one of their hiding-places.”

“Well, if this old mansion comes ever to be inhabited, one might have rare fun by means of that passage; so be sure, you keep the secret well. Let that be a padlock on your lips.” And, so saying, he took a sovereign from his purse and gave it to him. “Your name is—”

“Tom, yer honer—Tom Keane; and, by this and by that, I'm ready to do yer honer's bidding from this hour out—”

“Well, we shall be good friends, I see,” interrupted Linton; “you may, perhaps, be useful to me, and I can also be able to serve you. Now, which is the regular entrance to this chamber?”

“There, sir; it's the last door as ye see in the long passage. Them is all bedrooms alone there, but it's not safe to walk down, for the floor is rotten.”

Linton noted down in a memory far from defective the circumstances of the chamber, and then followed his guide through the remainder of the house, which in every quarter presented the same picture of ruin and decay.

“The bit of candle is near out,” said Tom, “but sure there is n't much more to be seen; there's rooms there was never opened, and more on the other side, the same. The place is as big as a barrack, and here we are once more on the grand stair.”

For once, the name was not ill applied, as, constructed of Portland stone, and railed with massive banisters of iron, it presented features of solidity and endurance, in marked contrast to the other portions of the edifice. Linton cast one more glance around the gloomy entrance, and sallied forth into the free air. “I 'll see you to-morrow, Tom,” said he, “and we'll have some talk together. Good night.”

“Good night, and good luck to yer honer; but won't you let me see your honer out of the grounds,—as far as the big gate, at least?”

“Thanks; I know the road perfectly already, and I rather like a lonely stroll of a fine night like this.”

Tom, accordingly, reiterated his good wishes, and Linton was suffered to pursue his way unaccompanied. Increasing his speed as he arrived at a turn of the road, he took the path which led off the main approach, and led down by the river-side to the cottage of Tubber-beg. There was a feeling of strong interest which prompted him to see this cottage, which now he might call his own; and as he went, he regarded the little clumps of ornamental planting, the well-kept walks, the neat palings, the quaint benches beneath the trees, with very different feelings from those he had bestowed on the last-visited scene. Nor was he insensible to the landscape beauty which certain vistas opened, and, seen even by the faint light of a new moon, were still rich promises of picturesque situation.

Suddenly, and without any anticipation, he found himself on turning a little copse of evergreens, in front of the cottage, and almost beneath the shadow of its deep porch. Whatever his previous feelings of self-interest in every detail around, they were speedily routed by the scene before him.

In a large and well furnished drawing-room, where a single lamp was shining, sat an old man in an easy-chair, his features, his attitude, and his whole bearing indicating the traces of recent illness. Beside him, on a low stool almost at his feet, was a young girl of singular beauty,—the plastic grace of her figure, the easy motion of the head, as from time to time she raised it to throw upwards a look of affectionate reverence, and the long, loose masses of her hair, which, accidentally unfastened, fell on either shoulder, making rather one of those ideals which a Raphael can conceive than a mere creature of every-day existence. Although late autumn, the windows lay open to the ground, for, as yet, no touch of coming winter had visited this secluded and favored spot. In the still quiet of the night, *her* voice, for she alone spoke, could be heard; at first, the mere murmur of the accents reached Linton's ears, but even from them he could gather the tone of cheering and encouragement in which she spoke. At length he heard her say, in a voice of almost tremulous enthusiasm, “It was so like you, dear papa, not to tell this Mr. Cashel that you had yourself a claim, and, as many think, a rightful one, to this same estate, and thus not trouble the stream of his munificence.”

“Nay, child, it had been as impolitic as unworthy to do so,” said the old man; “he who stoops to receive a favor should detract nothing from the generous sentiment of the granter.”

“For my part, I would tell him,” said she, eagerly, “that his noble conduct has forever barred my prosecuting such a claim, and that if, to-morrow, the fairest proofs of my right should reach me, I'd throw them in the fire.”

“To get credit for such self-sacrifice, Mary, one must be independent of all hypothesis; one must do, and not merely promise. Now, it would be hard to expect Mr. Cashel to feel the same conviction I do, that this confiscation was repealed by letters under the hand of Majesty itself. The Brownes, through whom Cashel inherits, were the stewards of my ancestors, entrusted with all their secret affairs, and cognizant of all their family matters. From the humble position of dependents, they suddenly sprang into wealth and fortune, and ended by purchasing the very estate they once lived on as day-laborers,—sold as it was, like all confiscated estates, for a mere fraction of its value.”

“Oh, base ingratitude!”

“Worse still; it is said, and with great reason to believe it true, that Hammond Browne, who was sent over to London by my great grandfather to negotiate with the Government, actually received the free pardon and the release of the confiscation, but concealed and made away with both, and, to prevent my grandfather being driven to further pursuit, gave him the lease of this cottage on the low terms we continue to hold it.”

A low, faint cough from the old man warned his granddaughter of the dangers of the night air, and she

arose and closed the windows. They still continued their conversation, but Linton, unable to hear more, returned to his inn, deeply reflecting over the strange disclosures he had overheard.

CHAPTER XXIV. BREAKFAST WITH MR. CORRIGAN.

How cold is treachery.

Play.

“Who can Mr. Linton be, my dear?” said old Mr. Corrigan, as he sat at breakfast the next day, and pondered oyer the card which, with a polite request for an interview, the servant had just delivered. “I cannot remember the name, if I ever heard it before; but should we not invite him to join us at breakfast?”

“Where is he, Simon?” asked Miss Leicester.

“At the door, miss, and a very nice-looking gentleman as ever I saw.”

“Say that I have been ill, Simon, and cannot walk to the door, and beg he'll be kind enough to come in to breakfast.”

With a manner where ease and deference were admirably blended, Linton entered the room, and apologizing for his intrusion, said, “I have come down here, sir, on a little business matter for my friend Roland Cashel, and I could not think of returning to town without making the acquaintance of one for whom my friend has already conceived the strongest feeling of interest and regard. It will be the first question I shall hear when I get back, 'Well, what of Mr. Corrigan, and how is he?'”

While making this speech, which he delivered in a tone of perfect frankness, he seemed never to have noticed the presence of Miss Leicester, who had retired a little as he entered the room, and now, on being introduced to her, made his acknowledgments with a grave courtesy.

“And so our young landlord is thinking of taking up his residence amongst us?” said Corrigan, as Linton assumed his place at the breakfast-table.

“For a few weeks he purposes to do so, but I question greatly if the tranquil pleasures and homely duties of a country life will continue long to attract him; he is very young, and the world so new to him, that he will scarcely settle down anywhere, or to anything, for some time to come.”

“Experience is a capital thing, no doubt, Mr. Linton; but I 'd rather trust the generous impulses of a good-hearted youth in a country like this, long neglected by its gentry. Let him once take an interest in the place and the people, and I'll vouch for the rest. Is he a sportsman?”

“He *was*, when in Mexico; but buffalo and antelope hunting are very different from what this country offers.”

“Does he read?—is he studious?” said Mary.

“Not even a newspaper, Miss Leicester. He is a fine, high-spirited, dashing fellow, and if good-nature and honorable intentions could compensate for defective education and training, he would be perfect.”

“They'll go very far, depend on it, Mr. Linton. In these days, a man of wealth can buy almost anything. Good sense, judgment, skill, are all in the market; but a generous nature and a warm heart are God's gifts, and can neither be grafted nor transplanted.”

“You'll like him, I'm certain, Mr. Corrigan.”

“I know I shall. I have reason for the anticipation; Tiernay told me the handsome words he used when according me a favor—and here comes the doctor himself.” And as he spoke, Dr. Tiernay entered the room, his flushed face and hurried breathing bespeaking a hasty walk. “Good-morrow, Tiernay. Mr. Linton, let me present our doctor; not the least among our local advantages, as you can tell your friend Mr. Cashel.”

“We've met before, sir,” said Tiernay, scanning, with a steady gaze, the countenance which, wreathed in smiles, seemed to invite rather than dread recognition.

“I am happy to be remembered, Dr. Tiernay,” said Linton, “although I fancy our meeting was too brief for much acquaintance; but we'll know each other better, I trust, hereafter.”

“No need, sir,” whispered Tiernay, as he passed close to his side; “I believe we read each other perfectly already.”

Linton smiled, and bowed, as though accepting the speech in some complimentary sense, and turned toward Miss Leicester, who was busily arranging some dried plants in a volume.

“These are not specimens of this neighborhood?” said Linton, taking up some heaths which are seldom found save in Alpine regions.

“Yes, sir,” interrupted Tiernay, “you 'll be surprised to find here productions which would not seem native to these wilds.”

“If you take an interest in such things,” said old Corrigan, “you can't have a better guide than my granddaughter and Tiernay; they know every crag and glen for twenty miles round; all I bargain for is, don't be late back for dinner. You 'll give us your company, I hope, sir, at six?”

Linton assented, with a cordial pleasure that delighted his inviter; and Mary, so happy to see the gratified expression of her grandfather's face, looked gratefully at the stranger for his polite compliance.

“A word with you, sir,” whispered Tiernay in Linton's ear; and he passed out into the little flower-garden, saying, as he went, “I 'll show Mr. Linton the grounds, Miss Mary, and you shall not have to neglect your household cares.”

Linton followed him without speaking, nor was a word interchanged between them till they had left the cottage a considerable distance behind them. “Well, sir,” said Linton, coming to a halt, and speaking in a voice of cold and steadfast purpose, “how far do you propose that I am to bear you company?”

“Only till we are beyond the danger of being overheard,” said Tiernay, turning round. “Here will do perfectly. You will doubtless say, sir, that in asking you for an explanation of why I see you in this cottage, that I am exceeding the bounds of what right and duty alone impose.”

“You anticipate me precisely,” said Linton, sarcastically, “and to save you the embarrassment of so obviously impertinent a proceeding, I beg to say that I shall neither afford you the slightest satisfaction on this or any other subject of inquiry. Now, sir, what next?”

“Do you forget the occasion of our first meeting?” said the doctor, who actually was abashed beneath the practised effrontery of his adversary.

“Not in the least, sir. You permitted yourself on that occasion to take a liberty, which from your age and other circumstances I consented to pass unnoticed. I shall not always vouch for the same patient endurance on my part; and so pray be cautious how you provoke it.”

“It was at that meeting,” said the doctor, with passionate earnestness, “that I heard you endeavor to dissuade your friend from a favorable consideration of that man's claim, whose hospitality you now accept of. It was with an insolent sneer at Mr. Cashers simplicity—”

“Pray stop, sir; not too far, I beseech you. The whole affair, into which by some extraordinary self-delusion you consider yourself privileged to obtrude, is very simple. This cottage and the grounds appertaining to it are mine. This old gentleman, for whom I entertain the highest respect, is *my* tenant. The legal proof of what I say, I promise to submit to you within the week; and it was to rescue Mr. Cashel from the inconsistency of pledging himself to what was beyond his powers of performance, that I interfered. *Your* very ill-advised zeal prevented this; and rather than increase the awkwardness of a painful situation, I endured a very unprovoked and impertinent remark. Now, sir, you have the full explanation of my conduct, and my opinion of yours; and I see no reason to continue the interview.” So saying, Linton touched his hat and turned back towards the cottage.

CHAPTER XXV. TUBBERMORE TRANSFORMED.

Ay, sir, the knave is a deep one.

Old Play.

To save our reader the tedious task of following Mr. Linton's movements, however necessary to our story some insight into them may be, we take the shorter, and therefore pleasanter course, of submitting one of his own brief notes to Roland Cashel, written some three days after his arrival at Tubbermore:—

“Still here, my dear Cashel, still in this Tipperary Siberia, where our devotion to your service has called and still retains us,—and what difficulties and dangers have been ours! What a land!—and what a people! Of a truth, I no longer envy the rich, landed proprietor, as, in my ignorance, I used to do some weeks back. To begin: Your Château de Tubbermore, which seems a cross between a jail and a county hospital without, and is a downright ruin within, stands in a park of thistles and docks whose luxuriant growth are a contemptuous reflection upon your trees, which positively don't grow at all. So ingeniously placed is this desirable residence, that although the country, the river, and the mountains, offer some fine landscape effects, not a vestige of any of them can be seen from your windows. Your dining-room, late a nursery for an interesting family of small pigs, looks out upon the stables, picturesque as they are in fissured walls and tumbling rafters; and one of the drawing-rooms—they call it the blue room, a tint so likely to be caught up by the spectators—opens upon a garden,—but what a garden! Fruit-trees, there are none—stay, I am unjust, two have been left standing to give support to a clothes-line, where the amiable household of your care-taker, Mr. Cane, are pictorially represented by various garments, crescendo from the tunic of tender years to the full-grown 'toga.' But why enumerate small details? Let me rather deal in negatives, and tell you there is not a whole pane of glass in the entire building, not a grate, few doors, little flooring, and actually no roof. The slates, where there are such, are so loose that the wind rattles among them like the keys of a gigantic piano, and usually ends with a grand Freischutz effect, which uncovers a room or two. The walls are everywhere so rotten, that if you would break a loop-hole, you throw down enough to drive a 'break' through; and as for the chimneys, the jackdaw may plead the Statute of Limitations, and defy to surrender a possession which certainly dates from the past century! Perystell is in despair; he goes about sticking his thumb through the rotting timbers, and knocking down partitions with a tick of his foot, and exclaiming against the ignorance of the last age of architects, who, I take it, were pretty much like

their successors, save in the thefts committed from Greek and Roman models. This is not tempting, nor the remedy for it easy. Stone and mortar are as great luxuries here as ice-cream at Calcutta; there are no workmen, or the few are merely artificers in mud. Timber is an exotic, glass and iron are traditions; so that if you desire to be an Irish country gentleman, your pursuit of territorial ascendancy has all the merit of difficulty. Now, que faire? Shall we restore, or, rather, rebuild, or shall we put forty pounds of Dartford gunpowder in one of the cellars, and blow the whole concern to him who must have devised it? Such is the course I should certainly adopt myself, and only feel regret at the ignoble service of the honest explosive.

"Perystell, like all his tribe, is a pedant, and begins by asking for two years, and I won't say how many thousand pounds. My reply is, 'Months and hundreds, vice years and thousands'—and so we are at issue. I know your anxiety to receive the people you have invited, and I feel how fruitless it would be to tell you with what apologies I, if in your place, should put them off; so pray instruct me how to act. Shall I commission Perystell to go to work in all form, and meanwhile make a portion of the edifice habitable? or shall I—and I rather admire the plan—get a corps of stage artificers from Drury Lane, and dress up the house as they run up a provincial theatre? I know you don't care about cost, which, after all, is the only real objection to the scheme; and if you incline to my suggestion about the fireworks for a finish, it will be perfectly appropriate.

"'My own cottage'—so far, at least, as I could see of it without intruding on the present occupant—is very pretty: roses, and honeysuckle, and jasmines, and such-like ruralities, actually enveloping it. It is well placed, too, in a snug little nook, sheltered from the north, and with a peep at the river in front,—just the sort of place where baffled ambition and disappointment would retire to; and where, doubtless, some of these days, Tom Linton, not being selected by her Majesty as Chief Secretary for the Home Office, will be announced in the papers to have withdrawn from public life, 'to prosecute the more congenial career of literature.' There is a delicious little boudoir, too,—such is it at present, you or I would make it a smoking crib,—looking over the Shannon, and with a fine bold mountain, well wooded, beyond. I should like a gossip with you in that bay-window, in the mellow hour, when confidence, which hates candles, is at its full.

"Have I told you everything? I scarcely know, my head is so full of roof-trees, rafters, joists, gables, and parapets. Halt! I was forgetting a pretty—that is not the word—a handsome girl, daughter or granddaughter of our tenant, Mr. Corrigan, one of those saintly, virginal heads Raphael painted, with finely pencilled eyebrows, delicate beyond expression above; severe, in the cold, un-impassioned character of the mouth and lips; clever, too, or, what comes to nearly the same, odd and eccentric, being educated by an old St. Omer priest who taught her Latin, French, Italian, with a dash of theology, and, better than all, to sing Provençal songs to her own accompaniment on the piano. You 'll say, with such companionship, Siberia is not so bad after all, nor would it, perhaps, if we had nothing else to think of. Besides, she is as proud as an Austrian archduchess, has the blood of, God knows how many, kings—Irish, of course—in her veins, and looks upon me, Saxon that I am, as a mountain-ash might do on a mushroom."

There was no erasure but one, and that very slight, and seeming unimportant; he had written Tubber-beg at the top of the letter, and, perceiving it, had changed it to Tubber-more, the fact being that he had already established himself as an inmate of the "Cottage," and a guest of Mr. Corrigan. We need not dwell on the arts by which Linton accomplished this object, to which, indeed, Mr. Corrigan's hospitable habits contributed no difficulty. The "doctor" alone could have interposed any obstacle; and he, knowing the extent of Linton's power, did not dare to do so, contenting himself to watch narrowly all his proceedings, and warn his friend whenever warning could no longer be delayed.

Without enjoying the advantages of a careful education, Linton's natural quickness counterfeited knowledge so well that few, in every-day intercourse, could detect the imposition. He never read a book through, but he skimmed some thousands, and was thoroughly familiar with that process so popular in our Universities, and technically termed "cramming" an author. In this way, there were few subjects on which he could not speak fairly,—a faculty to which considerable fluency and an easy play of fancy lent great assistance. His great craft, however, was—and whatever may be said on the subject, it would seem the peculiar gift of certain organizations—that he was able, in an inconceivably short time, to worm himself into the confidence of almost all with whom he came in contact. His natural good sense, his singularly clear views, his ever ready sympathy, but, more than all, the dexterity with which he could affect acquaintance with topics he was all but totally ignorant of, pointed him out as the very person to hear the secrets of a family.

Mr. Corrigan was not one to exact any great efforts of Linton's tact in this walk; his long isolation from the world, Joined to a character naturally frank, made him communicative and open; and before Linton had passed a week under his roof, he had heard all the circumstances of the old forfeiture, and the traditionary belief of the family that it had been withdrawn under a special order of the King in council.

“You are quite right,” said Linton, one night, as this theme bad been discussed for some hours, “never to have alluded to this in any correspondence with Cashel. His hasty and excitable temper would have construed the whole into a threat; and there is no saying how he might have resented it.”

“I did not speak of it for a very different reason,” said old Corrigan, proudly; “I had just accepted a favor—and a great one—at his hands, and I would not tarnish the lustre of his noble conduct by even the possibility of self-interest.”

Linton was silent; a struggle of some kind seemed working within him, but he did not speak, and at last sauntered from the room, and passed out into the little garden in front.

He had not gone far, when he heard a light footstep on the gravel behind him. He turned, and saw Mary Leicester.

“I have followed you, Mr. Linton,” said she, in a voice whose agitation was perceptible, “because I thought it possible that some time or other, in your close intimacy with Mr. Cashel, you might allude to this topic, and I know what distress such a communication would occasion to my grandfather. Our claim—if the word be not inapplicable—can never be revived; for myself, there is no condition of privation I would not rather meet, than encounter the harassing vicissitudes of a struggle which should embitter my poor dear grandfather's few years on earth. The very mention of the theme is sure to render him irritable and unhappy. Promise me, then, to avoid the subject as much as possible here, and never to advert to it elsewhere.”

“Should I not be doing you a gross injustice by such a pledge?” said Linton, mildly.

“I can endure that; I cannot support the alternative. Make me this promise.”

“I make it, truly and solemnly; would it were in my power to pledge myself to aught of real service to Miss. Leicester.”

“There is one such,” said Mary, after a pause, “and yet I am ashamed to ask it,—ashamed of the presumption it would imply,—and yet I feel acquitted to my own heart.”

“What is it?—only tell me how I can serve you,” said Linton, passionately.

“I have scarce courage for the avowal,” said she, in a low, faint voice. “It is not that my self-love can be wounded by any judgment that may be pronounced; it is rather that I dread failure for itself. In a word, Mr. Linton, certain circumstances of fortune have pressed upon my grandfather's resources, some of which I am aware of—of others ignorant. So much, however, do I know, that the comforts, so necessary to his age and habits, have diminished one by one, each year seeing some new privations, where increasing infirmity would demand more ease. In this emergency, I have thought of an effort—you will smile at the folly, perhaps, but be lenient for the motive—I have endeavored to make some of the many reminiscences of his own early years contribute to his old age, and have written certain short sketches of the time when, as a youth, he served as a soldier of the body-guard of Louis XVI. I know how utterly valueless they are in a literary point of view, but I have thought that, as true pictures of a time now probably passed away never to return again, they might have their interest Such is my secret. My entreaty is, to ask of you to look at them, and, if not utterly unworthy, to assist me regarding their publication.”

“I not only promise this, but I can pledge myself to the success,” said Linton; “such recitals of life and manners as I have listened to from Mr. Corrigan would be invaluable; we know so little in England—”

“Nay, let me stop you; they are written in French. My hope is to procure their insertion in some French journal, as is the custom now-a-days. Here they are,” said she, handing him a packet with a trembling hand. “I have but to say, that if they be all I fear them, you will be too true a friend to peril me by a rejection.” And without waiting for a reply, she hurried back to the house.

Many minutes had not elapsed ere Linton found himself in his room, with the open manuscript before him. It was quite true, he had not in anticipation conceived a very high idea of Miss Leicester's efforts, because his habit, like that of a great number of shrewd people, was to regard all amateur performances as very inferior, and that only they who give themselves wholly up to any pursuit attain even mediocrity. He had not, however, read many pages ere he was struck by the evidence of high ability. The style was everywhere simple, chaste, and elegant; the illustrations natural and graceful; and the dialogue, when, occurring, marked by all the epigrammatic smartness which characterized the era.

The sketches also had the merit of life-pictures,—real characters of the day, being drawn with a vigor that only actual knowledge could impart. All these excellences Linton could perceive and estimate; but there were many very far above his power of appreciation. As it was, he read on, fascinated by the interest the scenes inspired, nor ceased till the last page was completed, when, throwing himself on his bed, he fell soon asleep, and dreamed of Mary Leicester.

His very first care, on waking, was to resume the manuscript, and see how far the impression first made might be corroborated by afterthought. It was while reading, that the post had just arrived, bringing, among other letters, one in Phillis's hand, which was, though brief, significant:—

Sir,—There is no time to be lost. The K.'s are here every day, and Lord C—— spends every morning here till three or four O'C.

Mr. Meek has written to ask for Mr. C.'s interest in the borough; what answer given, not known. Mr. C. would seem to be again pressed for money. He was here twice yesterday. The rumor is that Mr. C. will marry Miss O. K. immediately. Pearse overheard Mr. K. warning Mr. C. against Mr. Linton as a very dangerous intimate. Ld. C. F. said, when sitting here yesterday, “I have known Master Tom some years, and never knew the man he did not help to ruin with whom he had any influence.” Mr. C. said something about being on his guard, and “suspecting;” but the exact words were not heard. Lord K. and Lady breakfasted with Mr. C. to-day, and stayed till two. Lady K. swept down with her dress a Sevres jar in the boudoir; heard Mr. C. say that he would not give the fragments for the most precious vase in the Tuileries. Lord

K. asked what he said, and her Ladyship replied that Mr. C.'s vase was unhappily the fellow of one in the Tuileries, and looked confused at the accident. Mr. Linton is warned to lose no time, as Mr. C. is hourly falling deeper into other influences, and every day something occurs to injure Mr. L's interest. Honored sir, in duty yours,
P.

N.B.—The yacht came into harbor from Cowes last night.

The same day which brought this secret despatch saw one from Linton to Cashel, saying, that by the aid of four hundred workmen in various crafts, unceasing toil, and unwearied zeal, Tubbermore would be ready to receive his guests by the following Wednesday. A steamer, hired specially, had brought over from London nearly everything which constitutes the internal arrangement of a house; and as money had been spent without control, difficulties melted away into mere momentary embarrassments,—impossibilities, there were none. The letter contained a long list of commissions for Cashel to execute, given, however, with no other object than to occupy his time for the remaining few days in town as much as possible. This written and sent off, Linton addressed himself to his task of preparation with an energy few could surpass, and while the trades-people were stimulated by increased pay to greater efforts, and the work was carried on through the night by torchlight; the whole demesne swarmed with laborers by whom roads were cut, paths gravelled, fences levelled, flower-plots devised; even the garden—that labyrinth of giant weeds—was reduced to order, till in the hourly changing aspect of the place it was hard not to recognize the wand of enchantment It was, indeed, like magic to see how fountains sprang up, and threw their sprayey showers over the new-planted shrubs; new paths led away into dense groves of trees; windows, so late half walled up, now opened upon smooth, shaven turf, or disclosed a reach of swelling landscape; and chambers, that a few days back were the gloomy abode of the bat and the night-owl, became of a sudden cheerful and lightsome.

Stuccoed ceilings, mirror-panelled windows, gilded cornices, and carved architraves—all of which would imply time and long labor—were there at once and on the moment, for the good fairy who did these things knows not failure,—the banker's check-book. From the great hall to the uppermost chamber the aspect of all bespoke comfort. The elegances of life, Linton well knew, are like all other refinements,—not capable of being “improvised,” but the daily comforts are. The meaner objects which make up the sum of hourly want,—the lazy ottoman, the downy-pillowed fauteuils, the little squabs that sit in windows to provoke flirtations and inspire confidences; the tempting little writing-tables that suggest pen and ink; the billiard-table, opening on the flower-garden, so redolent of sweet odors that you feel exonerated for the shame of an in-door occupation; the pianos and guitars and harps scattered about in various places, as though to be ever ready to the touch; the books and prints and portfolios that give excuse to the lounging mood, and text for that indolent chitchat so pleasant of a morning,—all these, and a thousand other things, seen through the long perspective of a handsome suite of rooms, do make up that sum, for which our own dear epithet, “comfort,” has no foreign equivalent.

We have been often compelled, in this veracious history, to reflect with harshness on certain traits of Mr. Linton's morality. Let us make him the small *amende* in our power to say, that in his present functions he was unsurpassable; and here, for the moment, we leave him.

CHAPTER XXVI. BAD GENERALSHIP

“They alle agrede to disagree,
A moste united Familie!”

Great was the excitement and bustle in the Kennyfeck family on the arrival of a brief note from Roland Cashel, setting forth that the house at Tubbermore was at length in a state to receive his guests, who were invited for the following Wednesday.

Although this visit had rarely been alluded to in Cashel's presence, it was a very frequent topic of the family in secret committee, and many were the fears inspired by long postponement that the event would never come off. Each, indeed, looked forward to it with very different feelings. Independent of all more purely personal views, Mrs. Kennyfeck speculated on the immense increase of importance she should obtain socially, in the fact of being domesticated in the same house with a commander of the forces and his lady, not to speak of secretaries, *aides-de-camp*, and Heaven knows what other functionaries. The young ladies had prospective visions of another order; and poor Kennyfeck fancied himself a kind of agricultural Metternich, who was about, at the mere suggestion of his will, to lay down new territorial limits on the estate, and cut and carve the boundaries at his pleasure.

Aunt Fanny, alone, was not warmed by the enthusiasm around her; first of all, there were grave doubts if she could accompany the others, as no precise invitation had ever been accorded to her; and although Mrs. Kennyfeck stoutly averred “she was as good as asked,” the elder daughter plainly hinted at the possible awkwardness of such a step, Olivia preserving between the two a docile neutrality.

“I 'm sorry for *your* sake, my dear,” said Miss O'Hara to Olivia, with an accent almost tart, “because I thought I might be useful.”

“It is very provoking for all our sakes,” said Miss Kennyfeck, as though quietly suffering the judgment to be pronounced; “we should have been so happy all together.”

“If your father was any good, he 'd manage it at once,” said Mrs. K., with a resentful glance towards poor Mr. Kennyfeck, who, with spectacles on his forehead, and the newspaper on his knee, fancied he was thinking.

“We should have some very impertinent remark upon it, I'm certain,” said Miss K., who, for reasons we must leave to the reader's own acuteness, was greatly averse to her aunt accompanying them, “so many of one family! I know how Linton will speak of it.”

“Let him, if he dare; I wonder whose exertions placed Cashel himself in the position he enjoys,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, angrily, and darting a look of profound contempt at her husband, recognizing, doubtless, the axiom of the ignoble means through which Providence occasionally effects our destinies.

“I can remain here, mamma, for that matter,” said Olivia, in a voice of angelic innocence.

“Sweet—artless creature,” whispered her sister, “not to know how all our devices are exercised for her.”

“It 's really too provoking, Fanny,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck; “you were just beginning to acquire that kind of influence over him which would be so serviceable, and once in the country, where so many opportunities for joining him in his walks would occur, I calculated immensely on your assistance.”

“Well, my dear, it can't be helped,” sighed Aunt Fanny.

“Could n't we allude to it to-day, when Cashel calls, and say something about your going away to the country and our regrets at parting, and so on? Olivia, you might do that very easily.”

“It wouldn't do for Olivia,” said Aunt Fanny, very sententiously.

“Quite right, aunt,” chimed in Miss Kennyfeck; “that would be like old Admiral Martin, who shot away all his ammunition firing salutes.”

“Mr. Kennyfeck!” said his spouse, with a voice of command; “I vow he is deafer every day—Mr. Kennyfeck, you must call on Mr. Cashel this morning, and say that we really cannot think of inflicting him with an entire family; that you and I alone—or you and Olivia—”

“No—no, Mr. Kennyfeck and Caroline,” interposed Aunt Fanny, “say that.”

“Thanks for the preference,” said Miss Kennyfeck, with a short nod, “I am to play lightning-conductor; isn't it so?”

“Or shall I propose going alone?” interposed Mr. Kennyfeck, in all the solemnity of self-importance.

“Is n't he too bad?” exclaimed his wife, turning to the others; “did you ever conceive there could be anything as dull as that man? We cannot trust you with any part of the transaction.”

“Here comes Mr. Cashel himself,” said Miss Kennyfeck; as a phaeton drove rapidly to the door, and Cashel, accompanied by a friend, descended.

“Not a word of what we were speaking, Mr. Kennyfeck!” said his wife, sternly, for she reposed slight reliance on his tact.

“Who is with him?” whispered Olivia to her sister; but not heeding the question, Miss Kennyfeck said,—

“Take *my* advice, Livy, and get rid of your duenna. You 'll play your own game better.”

Before there was time for rejoinder, Lord Charles Frobisher and Cashel entered the drawing-room.

“You received my note, I hope, Mrs. Kennyfeck,” said Roland, as he accepted her cordially offered hand. “I only this morning got Linton's last bulletin, and immediately wrote off to tell you.”

“That *is* significant,” whispered Miss Kennyfeck to Olivia. “To give *us* the earliest intelligence.”

“I trust the announcement is not too abrupt.”

“Of course not,—our only scruple is, the largeness of our party. We are really shocked at the notion of inflicting an entire family upon you.”

“Beware the Bear,” whispered Lord C., in a very adroit undertone,—“don't invite the aunt.”

“My poor house will only be the more honored,” said Cashel, bowing, and sorely puzzled how to act.

“You'll have a very numerous muster, Cashel, I fancy,” said Lord Charles, aloud; “not to speak of the invited, but those 'Umbræ,' as the Romans call them, who follow in the suite of such fascinating people as Mrs. White.”

“Not one too many, if there be but room for them; my anxiety is, that my personal friends should not be worst off, and I have come to beg, if not inconvenient, that you would start from this on Tuesday.”

“Do you contract to bring us all down?” said Frobisher. “I really think you ought; the geography of that district is not very familiar to most of us. What says Miss Kennyfeck?”

“I like everything that promises pleasure and amusement.”

“What says her sister?” whispered Cashel to Olivia.

“How do you mean to travel, Mr. Cashel?” said she, in a tone which might be construed into perfect artlessness or the most intense interest.

“With you—if you permit,” said Cashel, in a low voice. “I have been thinking of asking Mrs. Kennyfeck if she would like to go down by sea, and sail up the Shannon. My yacht has just arrived.”

“Mamma cannot bear the water, or it would be delightful,” said Olivia.

“Cannot we manage a lady patroness, then?” said Cashel; “would Miss O'Hara kindly consent?”

“Aunt Fanny, Mr. Cashel wishes to speak to you.”

“Gare la tante!” said Frobisher, between his teeth.

“We were speaking—or rather, I was expressing a hope,” said Cashel, diffidently, “that a yacht excursion round the southern coast, and so up the Shannon, might not be an inappropriate way of reaching Tubbermore. Would Miss O'Hara feel any objection to be of the party?”

“With Caroline and me,” said Olivia, innocently.

Miss O'Hara smiled, and shook her head doubtfully.

“It is very tempting, Mr. Cashel,—too tempting, indeed; but it requires consideration. May I speak a word with you?” And so saying, she withdrew with Cashel into a window recess.

The interview was brief; but as they returned to the circle, Cashel was heard to say,—

“I am really the worst man in the world to solve such difficulties, for in my ignorance of all forms, I incur the risk of undervaluing them; but if you thought by my inviting Lord and Lady Kilgoff—”

“Oh, by no means. My sister would never consent to that. But I will just confer with her for an instant.”

“If the Kilgoff s are asked, it spoils all,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in reply to a whispered communication of her sister.

“I'll manage that,” said Aunt Fanny; “I half hinted you did n't like the companionship for the girls.”

“He'll invite Mrs. Leicester White, or Lady Janet, perhaps.”

“He sha'n't. I 'll take the whole upon myself.”

“You *have* done it, I see,” said Frobisher, coming close to Cashel, and affecting to examine his watch-guard; “and I warned you, notwithstanding.”

“What could I do?” said Cashel, hopelessly.

“What you must do later on,” said Lord Charles, coolly; “cut the whole concern altogether.”

“Have you invited the Dean, Mr. Cashel?” interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck.

“I really cannot inform you, madam. There has been so much confusion—Linton promising to do everything, and ask everybody; but the omission—if such—”

“Should be left where it is,” muttered Frobisher.

“How long should we probably be on the voyage, Mr. Cashel?” asked Miss O'Hara.

“Three—four—or five days—perhaps more.”

“I 'll give you a month's sail, and back 'Time' after all,” said Lord Charles.

“Oh, that is out of the question; we couldn't think of such an excursion,” said Aunt Fanny.

Olivia cast a most imploring look on her aunt, and was silent.

“Another point, Mr. Cashel,” said Miss O'Hara, speaking in a very low whisper; “my sister, who is so particular about her girls,—you know how they have been brought up, so rigidly, and so carefully,—she is afraid of that kind of intimacy that might possibly grow up between them and—and—” Here she came to a full stop. “Did n't I hear you speak of Lady Kilgoff?”

“Yes; I thought her exactly the kind of person you 'd like to have.”

“Oh, she is charming—most delightful; but she is a woman of the world, Mr. Cashel.” said Aunt Fanny, shaking her head.

“Indeed!” muttered Roland, not in the least guessing the drift of the remark.

“No, no, Mr. Cashel, that would never do. These sweet children have no knowledge of such people, further than the common intercourse of society. Lady Kilgoff and Mrs. White—”

“Is she another?”

“She is another, Mr. Cashel,” said Aunt Fanny oracularly.

“Then I see nothing for it but limiting the party to myself and my yacht commander,—Lieutenant Sickleton of the Navy,—and I believe we have as little of the world about us as any one could desire.”

It was full a minute or two before Miss O'Hara could satisfy herself that this speech was not uttered ironically; but the good-natured and frank look of the speaker at last dispelled the fear, and she said,—

“Well, if you really ask my opinion, I'd say, you are right. For our parts—that is, for the girls and myself, I mean—we should like it all the better, and if you would n't find us too tiresome companions—”

Miss O'Hara was interrupted here by Mrs. Kennyfeck, who, with considerable agitation in her manner said, “I must beg pardon for disturbing your agreeable *tête-à-tête*, Mr. Cashel, but I wish to say one word to my sister.”

As they retired together, Frobisher came up, and, drawing his arm within Roland's, led him to a window: “I say, old fellow, you are going too fast here; hold in a bit, I advise you.”

“How do you mean?—what have I done?”

“It's no affair of mine, you know, and you may say I'm devilish impertinent to mix myself up in it, but I don't like to see a fellow 'sold,' notwithstanding.”

“Pray be explicit and frank; what is it?”

“Well, if you 'll not take it ill—”

“I promise I shall not—go on.”

“Do you mean to marry that little girl yonder, with the blue flower in her hair?”

“I cannot say that I do, or that I do not,” said Roland, getting very red.

“Then, you 're making a very bad book, that's all.”

“Oh, you 're quite mistaken; I don't suspect her of the slightest feeling towards me—”

“What has that to say to it, my dear fellow?” interrupted Frobisher. “I did n't imply that she was in love with you! I wanted to warn you about the mess you 're getting into,—the family fracas; the explanation asking; the sermonizing; the letter-writing; the tears, reproaches, distractions,—ay, and the damages, too!—devilish heavy they'd be against one like you, with plenty of 'ready.' Hush! they 're coming.”

Miss O'Hara advanced towards Cashel, and Frobisher retired; her mien and carriage were, however, statelier and more imposing, with less of cordiality than before. “We cannot agree upon the details of this excursion, I find, sir; my sister's scruples, Mr. Kennyfeck's doubts,—the difficulties, in short, of every kind, are such, that I fear we must relinquish it.”

Cashel bowed deeply, without uttering a word; the insinuations of Frobisher were added in his mind to the suspicion that some secret game was being played against him, and his manly nature was insulted by the doubt.

Aunt Fanny, perhaps, perceived she had gone too far, for, reassuming her former smile, she said, “Not that

we despair of one day or other taking a pleasure-trip in your beautiful vessel.”

“You do me too much honor by expressing such a hope,” said Cashel, gravely; and then turning to Frobisher, added, “Will you drive me down to Kingstown? I want to go on board for a few minutes.”

“We see you at seven o'clock I hope?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in a whisper.

“I regret to have made an engagement for to-day, madam,” replied Cashel, stiffly. “Good-morning, ladies. Very sorry, Miss O'Hara, our sea intentions have been a failure. Let me hope for better luck on land.”

“Will you not be here this evening?” said Olivia, as he passed close to her, and there was in the swimming eye and tremulous voice enough to have melted a harder heart than Roland's; but this time he was proof against all blandishments, and with a very cold negative, he departed.

“There is hope for you yet, old fellow,” said Lord Charles, as he walked downstairs beside him; “you did that extremely well.”

Now, although Roland was far from knowing what he had done, or how to merit the praises, he was too well pleased with the momentary repose the flattery afforded to question further. Meanwhile, a very excited scene took place in the house they had just quitted, and to which, for a brief space, we must return.

On a sofa in one corner of the room sat Olivia Kennyfeck, pale and trembling, her eyes tearful, and her whole air bespeaking grief and agitation. At the window close by stood Miss Kennyfeck, the calm composure of her face, the ease of her attitude, the very types of internal quiet. She looked out, up the square, and playing on the woodwork of the window an imaginary pianoforte air, while in the back drawing-room sat Mrs. Kennyfeck and Miss O'Hara, side by side on a sofa, their excited looks and heightened complexions attesting the animation of the controversy, for such in reality it was.

“I thought you would go too far—I knew you would,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an angry gesture of the hand.

“What do you mean by too far?” rejoined her sister. “Is it in the face of a letter like this that you would permit him to continue his attentions, and, worse still, let the girls go off for an excursion of maybe a week or two? Read that.”

“The letter is anonymous, and may be untrue from end to end.”

“Then why not let me test its truth by some allusion to its contents?”

“And banish him from the house ever after,” rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, bitterly. “No, no, Fanny, you mistake him very much; he isn't like one of your old County Clare admirers, that can be huffed to-day, and asked to dinner to-morrow,—not that, indeed, you showed much judgment in your management even of them.”

This allusion to Aunt Fanny's spinsterhood was too palpable to pass unnoticed, and she arose from the sofa with a face of outraged temper.

“It might be a question, my dear, between us, which had the least success,—I, who never got a husband, or you, who married that one.”

If Mr. Kennyfeck had intended by a tableau to have pointed the moral of this allusion, he could not have succeeded better, as he sat bolt upright in his chair, endeavoring through the murky cloud of his crude ideas to catch one ray of light upon all he witnessed; he looked the very ideal of hopeless stupidity. Miss O'Hara, like a skilful general, left the field under the smoke of her last fire, and Mrs. Kennyfeck sat alone, with what Homer would call “a heart-consuming rage,” to meditate on the past.

CHAPTER XXVII. LIEUTENANT SICKLETON'S PATENT PUMP.

The mariner's chart
He knew by heart,
And every current, rock, and shore,
From the drifting sand
Off Newfoundland,
To the son-split cliffs of Singapore.

Captain Pike.

Lord Charles Frobisher was never a very talkative companion, and as Cashel's present mood was not communicative, they drove along, scarcely interchanging a sentence, till the harbor of Kingstown came in sight, and with it the gay pennons that fluttered from the mast of Roland's schooner.

“I suppose that is your yacht,—the large craft yonder?”

“I hope so,” said Cashel, enthusiastically; “she sits the water like a duck, and has a fine rakish look about her.”

“So, then, you never saw her before?”

“Never. I purchased her from description, taking her crew, commander, and all, just as she sailed into Southampton from Zante, a month ago. They sent me a drawing of her, her measurement, tonnage, and draught of water, as also the log of her run in the Mediterranean;—yes, that's she, I can recognize the water-line from the sketch.”

“Is your visit on board going to be a long one?” drawled out Lord Charles, languidly; “for I own I am not the least aquatic, and were it not for lobsters and whitebait I vote the sea a humbug.”

“Then I 'll say good-bye,” said Cashel. “That blue water, that curling ripple, and the fluttering of that bunting, have set me a-thinking about a hundred things.”

“You 'll dine with us at seven, won't you?”

“No, I 'll dine on board, or not dine at all,” said he, as he sprang from the carriage, and, waving his hand in adieu, made his way to the harbor. Taking the first boat that offered, Cashel rowed out to the yacht, just in time to catch Lieutenant Sickleton, who, in full yacht costume, was about to wait on his principal. He was a bluff, good-natured, blunt fellow, who, having neither patronage nor interest in the service, had left the wardroom for the easier, but less ambitious, life of a yacht commander; a thoroughly good seaman, and brave as a lion, he saw himself reduced to a position almost menial from hard and galling necessity. He had twice been to Alexandria with touring lords, who, while treating him well in all essentials, yet mingled so much of condescension in their courtesy as to be all but unendurable. He had gone to America with a young Oxford man, the son of a great London brewer, whose overbearing insolence he had been obliged to repel by a threat of personal consequences. He had taken an invalid family to Madeira, and a ruined duke to Greece, and was now, with the yacht and its company, transferred to Cashel's hands, not knowing—scarce caring—with whom or where his future destinies were to be cast.

The Freemasonry of the sea has a stronger tie than the mere use of technicals. Cashel was not ten minutes on board ere Sickleton and he were like old acquaintances. The “Lucciola” was, in Skeleton's ideas, the best thing that ever ran on a keel; there was nothing she could n't do,—fair weather or foul. She could outsail a Yankee smack in a gale off the coast of Labrador, or beat a felucca in the light winds off the Gulf of Genoa. If these tidings were delightful to Cashel's ears,—the most exciting and heart-stirring he had listened to for many a day,—the gratification was no less to Sickleton that he was about to sail with one who really loved the sea, and thoroughly understood and could value the qualities of his noble craft.

From the vessel, they turned the conversation to all the possible places the world's map afforded for a cruise. Sickleton's experiences were chiefly Eastern,—he knew the Mediterranean as well as he did the Downs; while Cashel's could vie with him in both coasts of the great Spanish peninsula, and all the various channels of the West India islands. For hours they sat discussing soundings, the trade winds, and shore currents, with all the bearings of land points, bluffs, and lighthouses. In talk, they visited half the globe; now staggering under a half-reefed topsail in the Bay of Biscay, now swimming along, with winged and stretching sails, under the blue cliffs of Baia.

“I 'm sure I don't know how you ever could lead a shore life,” said Sickleton, as Cashel described with warm enthusiasm some passages of his rover's existence.

“Nor do I understand how I have borne it so long,” said Cashel; “its dissipations weary, its deceits provoke me. I have lost—if not all—great part of that buoyancy which mingled peril and pleasure create, and I suppose, in a month or two more, I should be about as apathetic, as indolent, and as selfish as any fine gentleman ought to be. Ah, if we had a war!”

“That's it,—that's what I say every day and every night: if we had a war, the world would be worth living, in or dying for. Fellows like myself, for instance, are never thought of in a peace; but they 'look us all out,'—just as they do a storm-jib, when it comes on to blow. No laughing a man out of position, then,—no, faith!”

“How do you mean?” said Cashel, who saw in the intense expression of the speaker how much the words covered.

“Just what happened to myself,—that's all,” said Sickleton; “but if you like to hear how,—the story is n't long, or any way remarkable,—we 'll have a bit of luncheon here, and I'll tell it to you.”

Cashel willingly assented, and very quickly a most appetizing meal made its appearance in the cabin, to which Sickleton did the honors most creditably.

“I 'm impatient for that anecdote you promised me,” said Cashel, as the dessert made its appearance, and they sat in all the pleasant enjoyment of social ease.

“You shall hear it,—though, as I said before, it's not much of a story either; nor should I tell it, if I did n't see that you feel a sort of interest about myself—unhappily, its hero.”

“I 'll not weary you by telling you the story that thousands can repeat, of a service without patronage, no sooner afloat than paid off again, and no chance of employment, save in a ten-gun brig off the coast of Guinea, and I suppose you know what that is?”

Cashel nodded, and Sickleton went on:—

“Well, I passed as lieutenant, and went through my yellow fever in the Niger very creditably. I was the only one of a ship's company in the gun-room on the way back to England, after a two years' cruise; I suppose because life was less an object to me than the other fellows, who had mothers, and sisters, and so on. So it was, I brought the old 'Amphion' safe into dock, and was passed off to wander about the world, with something under forty pounds in my pocket, and a 'good-service letter' from the Admiralty—a document that costs a man some trouble to gain, but that would not get you a third-class place in the rail to Croydon, when you have it. What was I to do?—I had no interest for the Coast-Guard. I tried to become keeper of a lighthouse, but failed. It was no use to try and be a clerk—there were plenty of fellows, better qualified than myself, walking the streets supperless. So I set myself a thinking if I could n't do something for 'the service' that might get me into notice, and make the 'Lords' take me up. There was one chap made his fortune by 'round sterns,' though they were known in the Dutch Navy for two centuries. There was another invented a life-boat; a third, a new floating buoy—and so on. Now I 'm sure I passed many a sleepless night thinking of something that might aid me; at one time it was a new mode of reefing topsails in a gale; at another it was a change in signalizing the distant ships of a squadron; now an anchor for rocky bottoms; now a contrivance for lowering quarter-boats in a heavy sea—till at last, by dint of downright thought and perseverance, I did fall upon a lucky notion. I invented a new hand-pump, applicable for launches and gun-boats,—a thing greatly wanted, very simple of contrivance, and easy to work. It was a blessed moment, to be sure, when my mind, instead of wandering over everything from the round top to the taffrail, at last settled down on this same pump!

“It was not mere labor and study this invention caused me. No! it swallowed up nearly every shilling of my little hoard. I was obliged to make a model, and what with lead and zinc, and solder and leather, and

caoutchouc and copper, I was very soon left without 'tin;' but I had hope, and hope makes up for half rations! At last, my pump was perfect; the next thing was to make it known. There was no use in trying this through any unprofessional channels. Landsmen think that as they pay for the navy, they need not bother their heads about it further. 'My lords,' I knew well, would n't mind me, because my father was n't in Parliament, and so I thought of one of those magazines that devote themselves to the interests of the two services, and I wrote a paper accordingly, and accompanied it by a kind of diagram of my pump. I waited for a month—two—three months—but heard nothing, saw nothing of my invention. I wrote, but could get no answer; I called, but could see no editor; and at last was meditating some personal vengeance, when I received a note. It was then much after midsummer, few people in town, and the magazines were printing anything—as no one reads them in the dog-days—stating that if Lieutenant Sickleton would procure a woodcut of his pump, the paper descriptive of it should appear in the next number. That was a civil way of asking me for five pounds; but help there was none, and so I complied.

“At length I read in the list of the contents, 'Lieutenant Sickleton's New Hand Pump, with an Illustration'—and my heart bounded at the words. It was the nineteenth article—near the end of the number. I forget what the others were—something, of course, about Waterloo, and Albuera, and the Albert chako, and such-like stuff. My pump, I knew, put it where they would, was *the* paper of the month. This feeling was a little abated on finding that, as I walked down Fleet Street on the day of publication, I did n't perceive any sign of public notice or recognition; no one said as I passed, 'That's Sickleton, the fellow who invented the new pump.' I remembered, however, that if my *pump* was known, *I* was not as yet, and that though the portrait of my invention had become fame, my own was still in obscurity.

“I betook myself to the office of the journal, expecting there at least to find that enthusiastic reception the knowledge of my merits must secure, but hang me, if one of the clerks—as to the editor, there was no seeing him—took the slightest trouble about me. I told him, with, I trust, a pardonable swelling of the bosom, that I was 'Sickleton.' I did n't say the famous Sickleton, and I thought I was modest in the omission; but he was n't in the least struck by the announcement, and I quitted the place in disgust.

“Worse than all, when I came to read over my paper, I found, by the errors of the press, that the whole diagram was spoiled. The letters had been misplaced, and the fiend himself, if he wanted it, couldn't work my pump. You see that C D represented the angular crank, F was the stop-cock, and T the trigger that closed the piston. Hang me, if they did n't make F the trigger, and instead of B being the cistern, it was made the jet; so that when you began to work, all the water squirted through the sluices at OPQ over the operator. I went nearly mad. I wrote a furious letter to the editor; I wrote another to the 'Times;' I wrote to the 'Globe,' the 'Post,' and the 'Herald.' I explained, I elucidated, I asked for the Englishman's birthright, as they call it—'Justice'—but no use! In fact, my reclamations could only be inserted as advertisements, and would cost me about a hundred pounds to publish. So I sat down to grieve over my invention, and curse the hour I ever thought of serving my country.

“It was about six months after this—I had been living on some relations nearly as poor as myself—when I one day received an order to 'wait at the Admiralty the next morning.' I went, but without hope or interest. I could n't guess why I was sent for, but no touch of expectancy made me anxious for the result.

“I waited from eleven till four in the ante-room; and at last, after some fifty had had audiences, Lieutenant Sickleton was called. The time was I would have trembled at such an interview to the very marrow of my bones. Disappointment, however, had nerved me now, and I stood as much at ease and composed as I sit here.

“'You are Mr. Sickleton?' said the First Lord, who was a 'Tartar.'

“'Yes, my Lord.'

“'You invented a kind of pump—a hand-pump for launches and small craft, I think?'

“'Yes, my Lord.'

“'You have a model of the invention, too?'

“'Yes, my Lord.'

“'Can you describe the principle of your discovery? is there anything which, for its novelty, demands the peculiar attention of the Admiralty?'

“'Yes—at least I think so, my Lord,' said I, the last embers of hope beginning to flicker into a faint flame within. 'The whole is so simple, that I can, with your permission, make it perfectly intelligible even here. There is a small double-acting piston—'

“'Confound the fellow! don't let him bore us, now,' said Admiral M——— in a whisper quite loud enough for me to overhear it. 'If it amuse his Majesty, that's enough. Tell him what's wanted, and let him go.'

“'Oh, very well,' said the First Lord, who seemed terribly afraid of his colleague. 'It is the king's wish, Mr. Sickleton, that your invention should be tested under his Majesty's personal inspection, and you are therefore commanded to present yourself at Windsor on Monday next, with your model, at eleven o'clock. It is not very cumbrous, I suppose?'

“'No, my Lord. It only weighs four and a half hundredweight.'

“'Pretty well for a model; but here is an order for a wagon. You 'll present this at Woolwich.' He bowed and turned his back, and I retreated.

“Sharp to the hour of eleven I found myself at Windsor on the following Monday. It was past two, however, before his Majesty could see me. There were audiences and foreign ambassadors, papers to read, commissions to sign—in fact, when two o'clock came, the king had only got through a part of his day's work, and then it was luncheon-time. This was over about three; and at last his Majesty, with the First Lord, two admirals, and an old post-captain, who, by the way, had once put me in irons for not saluting his Majesty's guard when coming up to the watch at midnight, appeared on the terrace.

“The place selected for the trial was a neat little parterre outside one of the small drawing-rooms. There was a fountain supplied by two running streams, and this I was to experiment upon with my new pump. It was trying enough to stand there before such a presence; but the uppermost thought in my mind was about my

invention, and I almost forgot the exalted rank of my audience.

“After due presentation to his Majesty, and a few common-place questions about where I had served, and how long, and so on, the king said, 'Come now, sir. Let us see the pump at work, for we haven't much time to lose.'

“I immediately adjusted the apparatus, and when all was ready, I looked about in some dismay, for I saw no one to assist the working. There were present, besides the king and the three naval officers, only two fellows in full-dress liveries, a devilish sight more pompous-looking than the king or the First Lord. What was to be done? It was a dilemma I had never anticipated; and in my dire distress, I stepped back and whispered a word to old Admiral Beaufort, who was the kindest-looking of the party.

“'What is he saying?—what does he want?' said the king, who partly overheard the whisper.

“'Mr. Sickleton remarks, your Majesty, that he will need assistance to exhibit his invention—that he requires some one to work the pump.'

“'Then why did n't he bring hands with him?' said the king, testily. 'I suppose the machine is not self-acting, and that he knew that before he came here.'

“I thought I 'd have fainted at this rebuke from the lips of royalty itself, and so I stammered out some miserable excuse about not knowing if I were empowered to have brought aid—my ignorance of court etiquette—in fact, I blundered—and so far, that the king cut me short by saying, 'Take those people there, sir, and don't delay us;' pointing to the two gentlemen in cocked hats, bags, and swords, that looked as if they could have danced on my grave with delight.

“In a flurry—compared to which a fever was composure—I instructed my two new assistants in the duty, and stationing myself with the hose to direct the operation of the jet, I gave the word to begin. Well! instead of a great dash of water spurting out some fifty feet in height, and fizzing through the air like a rocket, there came a trickling, miserable dribble, that puddled at my very feet! I thought the sucker was clogged—the piston stopped—the valves impeded—twenty things did I fancy—but the sober truth was, these gilded rascals would n't do more than touch the crank with the tips of their fingers, and barely put sufficient force in the pressure to move the arm up and down. 'Work it harder—put more strength to it,' I whispered, in mortal fear to be overheard, but they never minded me in the least Indeed, I almost think one fellow winked his eye ironically when I addressed him.

“'Eh—what!' said the king, after ten minutes of an exhibition that were to me ten years at the galleys, 'these pumps do next to nothing. They make noise enough, but don't bring up any water at all.'

“The First Lord shook his head in assent. Old Beaufort made me a sign to give up the trial, and the post-captain blurted out, in a half-whisper, something about a 'blundering son of a dog's wife' that nearly drove me mad.

“'I say, Sickleton,' said the king, 'your invention's not worth the solder it cost you. You couldn't sprinkle the geraniums yonder in three weeks with it.'

“'It's all the fault of these d——d buffers, please your Majesty,' said I, driven clean out of my senses by failure and disgrace—and, to be sure, as hearty a roar of laughter followed as ever I listened to in my life—'if they 'd only bear a hand and work the crank as I showed them—' As I spoke, I leaned over and took hold of the crank myself, letting the hose rest on my shoulder.

“With two vigorous pulls I filled the pistons full, and, at the third, rush went the stream with the force of a Congrève—not, indeed, over the trees, as I expected, but full in the face of the First Lord; scarcely was his cry uttered, when a fourth dash laid him full upon his back, drenched from head to foot, and nearly senseless from the shock. The king screamed with laughing—the admiral shouted—the old post-captain swore—and I, not knowing one word of all that was happening behind my back, worked away for the bare life, till the two footmen, at a signal from the admiral, laid hold of me by main force, and dragged me away, the perspiration dripping from my forehead, and my uniform all in rags by the exertion.

“'Get away as fast as you can, sir,' whispered old B., 'and thank God if your day's work only puts you at the end of the list.' I followed the counsel—I don't know how—I never could recollect one event from that moment till I awoke the next morning at my aunt's cottage at Blackwall, and saw my coat in tatters, and the one epaulette hanging by a thread; then I remembered my blessed invention, and I think I showed good pluck by not going clean out of my mind.”

There was an earnestness in poor Sickleton's manner that effectually repressed any mirth on Cashel's part—indeed, his sense of the ludicrous gave way before his feeling of sorrow for the hard fortune of the man without a friend. In the partial civilization of the far west, personal prowess and energy were always enough to secure any man's success; but here, each day's experience taught him how much was to be laid to the score of family—of fortune—name—address—and the thousand other accessories of fortune. He had just begun to express his wonder that Sickleton had never tried life in the New World, when the mate appeared at the cabin-door to say that a shore boat was rowing out to the yacht.

A movement of impatience broke from Sickleton. “More of 'em, I suppose,” cried he; “we've had such a lot of sight-seers this morning, since we dropped anchor! most of them affecting to be intimate friends of yours, and all so well acquainted with your habits of life, that I should have become perfectly informed on every particular of your private history only by listening.”

“The chances are,” broke in Cashel, “I did not personally know a man amongst them.”

“I half suspect as much. They spoke far too confidently to be authentic. One would have it you were half ruined already, and had got the yacht over to clear away, and be off. Another, that you were going to be married to a lady with an immense fortune,—a rumor contradicted by a third saying it was an attorney's daughter without a shilling.”

“There's a lady, I see, sir, coming on board,” said the mate, putting in his head once more.

“I 'd swear there was,” growled Sickleton.

“You give them luncheon, I hope?” said Cashel, smiling at the other's impatience.

“Yes; we've had something like an ordinary here, today, and as I heard that to-morrow would be busier still, I have had my boat going backwards and forwards all the morning to prepare.”

“I am desired to show you this card, sir,” said the mate, handing one to Sickleton, who passed it to Cashel.

“Lord Kilgoff—indeed!” said he, surprised, and at once hastened to the deck.

“Mr. Cashel himself here!” exclaimed my Lady, from the stern of a small boat alongside; and after an exchange of friendly recognition, the party ascended the gangway. “This was a pleasure we scarcely looked for, to meet you here,” said his Lordship, blandly. “We had just taken our drive down to the harbor, when accidentally hearing your yacht had arrived, Lady Kilgoff grew desirous to see it.”

“A yacht in harbor is a horse in stable,” said Cashel. “Will you permit me to give you a cruise?”

“I should like nothing in the world so well.”

“It is late—almost six o'clock,” said Lord Kilgoff, looking at his watch.

“And if it be,” said my Lady, coaxingly, “you know Dr. Grover recommended you the sea air and sea excursions. I declare you look better already, don't you think so, Mr. Cashel?” “I protest I do,” said Cashel, thus appealed to; “and if you will only pardon the deficiencies of a floating cuisine, and dine here—”

“How delightful!” broke in my Lady, not suffering even time for an apology.

“It appeared to me there was a haunch of venison hanging over the stern when we came on board?” said my Lord, with his glass to his eye.

“Yes, my Lord,” said Sickleton, touching his hat in salutation; “I've had it there for two hours every day since Tuesday week.”

“And is the wind, and the tide, and everything else as it should be, Mr. Cashel?” said Lady Kilgoff.

“Everything—when you have only uttered your consent,” said he, gallantly.

“What is this, sir?” said my Lord, as, having requested something to drink, Sickleton poured him out a large glassful of scarcely frothing liquid.

“Dry champagne, my Lord. Moot's.”

“And very excellent too. Really, Laura, I am very sorry it should be so late, and we were to have dined with Meek at seven—”

“But only alone—no party, remember that,” said she, persuasively; “how easy to send the carriage back with an apology.”

Cashel looked his thanks, but without speaking.

“Take those red partridges out of ice,” said Sickleton, from the cook's galley, “and let us have those Ostend oysters to-day.”

“I yield,” said my Lord. “Mr. Cashel must take all the consequences of my breach of faith upon himself.”

“I promise to do so, my Lord.”

“A pen and ink, and some paper, Mr. Cashel,” said her Ladyship.

“Will you permit me to show you the way?” said he, handing her down into the little cabin, whose arrangement was all in the perfection of modern taste and elegance.

“How beautiful!” cried she. “Oh! Mr. Cashel, I really do envy you the possession of this fairy ship. You don't know how passionately I love the sea.”

“There are but few things I could hear you say with so much pleasure to me,” said Cashel, gazing with a strange feeling of emotion at the brilliant color and heightened expression of her handsome features.

“There! that is finished,” said she, closing the hastily-written note. “Now, Mr. Cashel, we are yours.” However much of course the words were in themselves, her eyes met Cashel's as she spoke them, and as suddenly fell; while he, taking the letter, left the cabin without speaking—a world of curious conjecture warring in his heart.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A SPLIT IN THE KENNYFECK CABINET

Like “cat and dog!” not so! their strife
They carried on like “man and wife.”

Family Jars.

It may easily have escaped our reader's memory, that on Roland Cashel's hasty departure from Mr. Kennyfeck's, the seeds of a very serious schism had been sown in that respectable family, Mrs. Kennyfeck being firmly persuaded that her liege lord had grossly mismanaged his influence over the young proprietor; the girls as resolutely opposed to each other; and all, with a most laudable unanimity, agreed in thinking that Aunt Fanny “had spoiled everything,” and that but for her odious interference there never would have arisen the slightest coolness between them and their distinguished acquaintance.

“I may lose the agency!” said Mr. Kennyfeck, with a sigh of afflicting sincerity.

“I should n't wonder if he avoids the house,” quoth his wife.

“He evidently rejects all attempts at domination,” said Miss Kennyfeck, with a glance at her aunt. Olivia said nothing; but it was not difficult to see that her thoughts were full of the theme. Meanwhile, Miss O'Hara, in all the dignity of injured rectitude, sat seemingly unconscious of the popular feeling against her, repeating from time to time the ominous words, “We shall see—we shall see;” a species of prophetic warning that, come what may, can always assert its accomplishment.

With such elements of discord and discontent, the breakfast proceeded gradually, and the broken attempts at talk had subsided into a sullen silence, when the butler entered to say that Mr. Phillis begged to speak a few words with Mr. Kennyfeck.

“Let him come in here,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as her husband was rising to leave the room. “I think, if there are to be no more blunders, we had better be present at the conference.”

“Show him in, Pearse,” said Mr. Kennyfeck, in a meek voice; and the gentleman's gentleman entered, in all that easy self-sufficiency so peculiar to his class.

“What is it, Mr. Phillis?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in a commanding tone, meant to convey the information of “where the Court sat,” and to whom he should address his pleading.

“It's a little matter on which I wanted advice, ma'am, for I am really puzzled bow to act. You know, ma'am, that we are expecting large company at our place in the country—Tubb—something—”

“Tubbermore,” interposed Mr. Kennyfeck.

“Yes, sir, Tubbermore. Well, there have been at least twenty messages this morning from different families, who want to know the best way of going, and when Mr. Cashel means to go himself, and where post-horses are to be had, and how they are to get forward where there are none, and so on.”

“Is your master not the person to dictate the answer to these queries?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with her grandest air.

“Of course, ma'am, but he's not here.”

“Where is he, then?” asked she, eagerly.

“He's gone, ma'am; he went last night.”

“Gone! gone where?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an eagerness no artifice could cover.

“It's hard to say, ma'am; but he went down to Kingstown last night, and sailed in the yacht; and from the preparations and sea stores taken from the hotel, it would seem like a long cruise.”

“And did he not mention anything of his intention to *you* Mr. Phillis?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a flattering emphasis on the pronoun.

“A few lines in pencil, ma'am, dated from the harbor, was all I received. Here they are.” And he handed a piece of note-paper across the table. The contents ran thus:—

> *Phillis, send word to Sir Harvey Upton's that I sha'n't dine there to-morrow. Give the bearer of this my dressing-case, and clothes for some days, and have the fourgon ready packed to start for Tubbermore on receiving my next orders.*
>
> *R. C.—Kingstown Harbor.*

“And who brought this note?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, who fancied she was conducting the inquiry in true judicial form.

“One of the yacht sailors, ma'am; he came up on Lord Kilgoff s carriage.”

“On Lord Kilgoff's carriage—how did that happen?”

“The carriage came into town, ma'am, to bring some things my Lady sent for; at least, so the sailor told me.”

“And were Lord and Lady Kilgoff on board the yacht?”

“Yes, ma'am; they both sailed in her last night.”

As though drawn by some irresistible influence, every eye was now turned to Aunt Fanny, who, up to this, had listened to Mr. Phillis with a breathless attention, and if looks could be translated, every glance thus thrown said plainly, “This is *your* doing.”

“Are you certain that the yacht has not returned to Kingstown?” said Miss O'Hara.

“Perfectly, ma'am. It blew a storm last night, and the sailors about the harbor told me it was a great chance that any small vessel could outlive the gale.”

Olivia Kennyfeck became deadly pale at these words, and whispered something in her sister's ear.

“Of course,” replied the other, aloud; then turning to Phillis, said, “Had they a pilot with them?”

“I believe so, miss, but there are so many contradictory reports, one don't know what to credit; some say that Lord Kilgoff was greatly opposed to the cruise, but that her Ladyship insisted, and that, in fact, they got under weigh at last without my Lord's knowing, and while they were at dinner.”

“It was a fearful night!” said Mr. Kennyfeck, whose mind was entirely engrossed by the one idea.

“Take him into the next room, and I'll join you presently,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck to her husband, for that keen-sighted lady had remarked the intense interest with which Mr. Phillis listened to every remark made around him.

“Here's a pretty piece of business!” cried she, as the door closed after her husband and the valet; “and certainly, I must say, we 've no one to thank for it but you, Fanny!”

“Unquestionably not,” echoed Miss Kennyfeck. “Aunt Fanny has the entire merit of this catastrophe.”

“It is most cruel,” sighed Olivia, as she wiped the tears from her eyes, and bent upon her stern relative a glance of most reproachful sadness.

“Are you all mad?” said the assailed individual, her courage and her color rising together. “How can you pretend to connect me with this disgraceful proceeding? Here's a case as clearly prearranged as ever was heard of.”

“Impossible!” cried Mrs. Kennyfeck; “did n't he invite us only yesterday to go down to Tubbermore by sea?”

“And didn't you yourself offer the only impediment?” said Miss Kennyfeck.

“You are very cruel, aunt,” sobbed Olivia.

“You'll drive me out of my senses,” said Miss O'Hara; and certainly her look did not belie her words. “I endeavor to rescue you from the snares of a young debauchee, who, as you well know, has a wife still living —”

“There, I hope you are content now,” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as Olivia fell fainting into her arms; and the window was thrown open, and all were busied in employing the wonted restoratives for such attacks. Meanwhile, hostilities were continued, but in a less rigorous fashion. “You know you've ruined everything—you know well how your officious meddling has destroyed this poor child's fortune; rub her temples, Cary.”

“I know that he is a dissipated, abandoned wretch, that would desert her to-morrow as he has done that unhappy—”

“Hush, she is coming to. You want to kill her.”

“Humph!” muttered Aunt Fanny; “this scene might be very effective with the young gentleman, but is quite thrown away upon me.”

“Aunt, aunt!” cried Miss Kennyfeck, reprovingly.

“If we had just followed our own counsels, we should have this very hour been on the way to Tubbermore, perhaps never to leave it!”

Aunt Fanny shook her head.

“Yes. You may affect to doubt and hesitate, and all that, but where is the wonderful condescension in a Mr. Cashel proposing for the grand-niece of Roger Miles O'Hara, of Kilmurray O'Hara of Mayo, the second cousin

of Lawrence O'Hara Kelly, that ought to be Lord Bally Kelly?”

“Fairly enough, if that was all,” slipped in Miss O'Hara, hoping to escape from all danger by climbing up the genealogical tree whereon her sister was perched.

“If that was all!” repeated Mrs. Kennyfeck, indignantly, catching at the last words, “and what more is wanting, I 'd be glad to ask? But, to be sure, it was rather a mistake to call to our counsels, in such a case, one that never could succeed in her own.”

This terrible taunt at Miss O'Hara's celibacy didn't go unpunished, for, throwing all attempts at conciliation behind her, she rose, with flashing eyes and trembling lips.

“So, it is you that tell me this,” said she—“*you* that dare to sneer at *my* being unmarried—you, that were fain to take up with a Dublin attorney—poor Tom Kennyfeck—the hack of the quarter sessions, serving latitats and tithe notices over the country in his old gig—Indeed, girls, I 'm sorry to speak that way of your father, but it 's well known—”

A loud shriek interrupted the speech, and Mrs. Kennyfeck, in strong hysterics, took her place beside Olivia.

“It will do her good, my dear,” said Aunt Fanny to her niece, as she chafed the hands and bathed the temples of her mother. “I was only telling the truth; she'd never have married your father if Major Kennedy had n't jilted her; and good luck it was he did, for he had two other wives living at the time—just as your friend, Mr. Cashel, wanted to do with your sister.”

“Aunt—aunt—I entreat you to have done. Haven't you made mischief enough?”

“Eaten up with vanity and self-conceit,” resumed the old lady, not heeding the interruption. “A French cook and a coach-and-four,—nothing less! Let her scream, child—sure, I know it's good for her—it stretches the lungs.”

“Leave me—leave the room!” cried Miss Kennyfeck, whose efforts at calmness were rendered fruitless by the torrent of her aunt's eloquence.

“Indeed I will, my dear: I'll leave the house, too. Sorry I am that I ever set foot in it. What with the noise and the racket night and day, it's more like a lunatic asylum than a respectable residence.”

“Send her away—send her away!” screamed Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a cry of horror.

“Do, aunt—do leave the room.”

“I'm going—I'm going, young lady; but I suppose I may drink my cup of tea first—it's the last I 'll ever taste in the same house;” and she reseated herself at the table with a most provoking composure. “I came here,” resumed she, “for no advantage of mine. I leave you without regret, because I see how your poor fool of a father, and your vain, conceited mother—”

“Aunt, you are really too bad. Have you no feeling?”

“That's just what comes of it,” said she, stirring her tea tranquilly. “You set up for people of fashion, and you don't know that people of fashion are twice as shrewd and 'cute as yourself. Faith, my dear, they'd buy and sell you, every one. What are they at all day, but roguery and schemes of one kind or other, and then after 'doing' you, home they go, and laugh at your mother's vulgarity!”

A fresh torrent of cries from Mrs. Kennyfeck seemed to show that unconsciousness was not among her symptoms, and Miss Kennyfeck now hastened from the room to summon her father to her aid.

“Well, you've come to turn me out, I suppose?” said Aunt Fanny, as the old gentleman entered in a state of perplexity that might have evoked the compassion of a less determined enemy.

“My dear Miss Fanny—”

“None of your four courts blarney with me, sir; I'm ready to go—I 'll leave by the coach to-night. I conclude you 'll have the decency to pay for my place, and my dinner too, for I 'll go to Dawson's Hotel this minute. Tell your mother, and that poor dawdle there, your sister, that they 'd be thankful they'd have followed my advice. The rate you're living, old gentleman, might even frighten you. There's more waste in your kitchen than in Lord Clondooney's.

“As for yourself, Caroline, you 're the best of the lot; but your tongue, darling!—your tongue!” And here she made a gesture of far more expressive force than any mere words could give.

“Is she gone?” said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as a slight lull succeeded.

“Yes, mamma,” whispered Miss Kennyfeck; “but speak low, for Mr. Phillis is in the hall.”

“I'll never see her again—I'll never set eyes on her,” muttered Mrs. Kennyfeck.

“I shouldn't wonder, mamma, if that anonymous letter was written by herself,” said Caroline. “She never forgave Mr. Cashel for not specially inviting her; and this, I'm almost sure, was the way she took to revenge herself.”

“So it was,” cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, eagerly seizing at the notion. “Hush, take care Livy doesn't hear you.”

“As for the yacht expedition, it was just the kind of thing Lady Kilgoff was ready for. She is dying to be talked of.”

“And that poor, weak creature, Cashel, will be so flattered by the soft words of a peeress, he'll be intolerable ever after.”

“Aunt Fanny—Aunt Fanny!” sighed Miss Kennyfeck, with a mournful cadence.

“If I only was sure—that is, perfectly certain—that she wrote that letter about Cashel—But here comes your father—take Olivia, and leave me alone.”

Miss Kennyfeck assisted her sister from the sofa, and led her in silence from the room, while Mr. Kennyfeck sat down, with folded hands and bent down head, a perfect picture of dismay and bewilderment.

“Well,” said his wife, after a reasonable interval of patient expectation that he would speak—“well, what have you to say for yourself now, sir?”

The poor solicitor, who never suspected that he was under any indictment, looked up with an expression of almost comic innocence.

“Did you hear me, Mr. Kennyfeck, or is it you want to pass off your dulness for deafness? Did you hear me, I say?”

“Yes, I heard—but I really do not know—that is, I am unaware how—I cannot see—”

“Oh, the old story,” sighed she—“injured innocence! Well, sir, I was asking you if you felt gratified with our present prospects? Linton's intimacy was bad enough, but the Kilgoff friendship is absolute, utter ruin. That crafty, old, undermining peer, as proud as poor, will soon ensnare him; and my Lady, with her new airs of a viscountess, only anxious to qualify for London by losing her character before she appears there!”

“As to the agency—”

“The agency!” echoed she, indignantly, “do your thoughts never by any chance, sir, take a higher flight than five per cent.?—are you always dreaming of your little petty gains at rent-day? I told you, sir, how the patron might be converted into a son-in-law—did I not?”

“You did, indeed, and I'm certain I never threw any impediment in the way of it.”

“You never threw any impediment in the way of your child's succeeding to a fortune of sixteen thousand a year! You really are an exemplary father.”

“I 'd have forwarded it, if I only knew how.”

“How good of you! I suppose you 'd have drawn up the settlements if ordered. But so it is—all my efforts through life have been thwarted by you! I have labored and toiled day and night to place my children in the sphere that their birth, on one side at least, would entitle them to, and you know it.”

Now this Mr. Kennyfeck really did not know. In his dull fatuity he always imagined that he was the honey-gatherer of the domestic hive, and that Mrs. Kennyfeck had in her own person monopolized the functions of queen bee and wasp together.

“Your low, pettifogging ambition never soared above a Softly or a Clare Jones for your daughters, while I was planning alliances that would have placed them among the best in the land—and how have I been rewarded? Indifference, coolness, perhaps contempt!” Here a flood of tears, that had remained dammed up since the last torrent, burst forth in convulsive sobs. “Ungrateful man, who ought never to have forgotten the sacrifice I made in marrying him—the rupture with every member of my family—the severance of every tie that united me to my own.”

She ceased, and here, be it remembered, Mrs. Kennyfeck seemed to address herself to some invisible jury empanelled to try Mr. Kennyfeck on a serious charge.

“He came like a serpent into the bosom of our peaceful circle, and with the arts that his crafty calling but too well supplied, seduced my young affections.”

Mr. Kennyfeck started. It had never before occurred to him that Don Juan was among his range of parts.

“False and unfeeling both,” resumed she. “Luring with promises never intended for performance, you took me from a home, the very sanctuary of peace!”

Mr. Kennyfeck wiped his forehead in perplexity; his recollection of the home in question was different. Sanctuary it might have been, but it was against the officers of the law and the sheriff, and so far as a well-fastened hall door and barricaded windows went, the epithet did not seem quite unsuitable.

“Ah!” sighed she—for it is right to remark that Mrs. Kennyfeck was a mistress of that domestic harmony which consists in every modulation, from the grand adagio of indignant accusation to the rattling andante of open abuse—“had I listened to those older and wiser than I, and who foretold the destiny that awaited me, I had never seen this unhappy day! No, sir! I had not lived to see myself outraged and insulted, and my only sister turned out of the house like a discarded menial.”

Had Mr. Kennyfeck been informed that for courteously making way for a Bencher in the Hall he was stripped of his gown and degraded from his professional rank, he could not have been more thoroughly amazed and thunderstruck.

He actually gasped with excess of astonishment, and, if breath had been left him, would have spoken; but so it was, the very force of the charge stunned him, and he could not utter a word.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Kennyfeck, who in the ardor of combat had imitated certain Spanish sailors, who in the enthusiasm of a sea-fight loaded their cannons with whatever came next to hand, was actually shocked by the effect of her own fire. For the grandeur of a peroration she had taken a flying leap over all truth, and would gladly have been safe back again at the other side of the fence.

For an instant not a word dropped from either side, and it was clear that he who spoke first had gained the victory. This was the lady.

“Go, sir”—and she wiped her eyes with that calm dignity by which a scolding wife seems to call up all Christian forgiveness of herself, and stand acquitted before her own conscience—“go, sir, and find out what these people that Cashel has invited mean to do; and if it be their intention to repair to Tubbermore, let us lose no time in setting out; and if we are to go, Mr. Kennyfeck, let as do so as becomes us.”

Mr. Kennyfeck stifled a rising sigh—for he knew what the words denoted—and departed; while Mrs. Kennyfeck, with her heart lightened of a heavy load, rose to join her daughters, and discuss dress and “toilette,” the great commissariat of the approaching campaign.

CHAPTER XXIX. STORM AND WRECK.

Tut, never mind the swell, love,
The sails may sweep the brine;
But the craft will steer as well, love,
With your soft hand in mine.

It was upon a delicious evening, a little before sunset, that a yacht worked out of the harbor of Kingstown, all her canvas spread to catch the light air of wind, which scarcely ruffled the glassy surface of the Bay. The craft, with her snow-white sails, her tall and taper spars, her gay bunting from gaff and peak, was all that the scene wanted to render it a perfect picture; and so, to all seeming, thought the many spectators who crowded the pier and the shore, and gazed with admiration at the graceful vessel, as she glided silently above her own image in the water.

Various were the comments and criticisms from those who surveyed her course; some, in wondering conjecture whither she was bound; others, not a whit better informed, boldly affecting some secret knowledge of her destination, and even, by such pretty pretension, assuming airs of superiority.

“She belongs to that rich young fellow, Roland Cashel,” said one of these, “who, by the way, is getting through his fortune tolerably fast. The story goes, that he has spent two hundred thousand already, and is borrowing at immense interest.”

“Was n't he a smuggler, or a privateer's-man, or something of the kind?”

“No; he made all the money in the slave trade.”

“I always heard that he succeeded to a landed estate,” softly insinuated a modest-looking old gentleman.

“Not at all, sir. Such, I am aware, was the common belief; the fact, however, is, that he had invested large sums in land, and was then able to escape the scrutiny many would have instituted regarding the origin of his wealth.”

“Who is it he is always riding with about town—a handsome girl, on a brown horse?”

“On a gray, you mean.”

“No, a brown, with a bang tail.”

“No, no, it's a gray. She's a daughter of Tom Kennyfeck, the attorney.”

“The gentleman is right,” interposed a third. “I 've seen him very often with a lady mounted on a brown thorough-bred.”

“Oh! that's Lady Kilgoff, the handsomest woman in Ireland.”

“She was much better-looking two years ago,” simpered out an ensign, affectedly. “I used to dance with her and her sister at the race balls of Ashby.”

The group immediately fell back, in tacit acknowledgment of the claim of one so aristocratically associated.

“Didn't you know her, Hipsley?” lisped out the ensign to a brother officer, who was admiring a very green baby on the arm of a very blooming nursery-maid. “You knew the Craycrofts, didn't you?”

“Lady Kilgoff's maiden name, sir, was Gardiner,” said the timid old gentleman who spoke before.

The ensign stuck his glass in one eye, and gazed at him for a second or two, with consummate effrontery, and then, in a voice intended for the most cutting drollery, said,—

“Are, you certain it was n't 'Snooks'?”—a rejoinder so infinitely amusing that the bystanders laughed immoderately, and the bashful man retired, overwhelmed in confusion.

“They 're off for a good long cruise,” said one, looking through his pocket telescope at the yacht, which now was steering to the southward, with a fresher breeze.

“I suspect so. They took on board five or six hampers from the hotel, just before they sailed.”

A very warm controversy now arose as to where the yacht was bound for, and who were the parties who went on board of her in the harbor; points which, in the absence of all real knowledge, admitted of a most animated debate. Meanwhile, an old weather-beaten sailor, in a pilot coat, continued to gaze alternately from the sky to the sea, and back again, and at last murmured to himself,—

“They 'll catch it before midnight, if they don't haul their wind, and get into shelter.”

Some drifting clouds, dropping slight rain as they passed, soon after cleared the pier of its loiterers, and night fell, dark and starless, while the wind freshened, and the sea fretted and chafed upon the rocks, and even sent its spray high against the strong lighthouse.

Let us now quit the shore, and bear company with the party on board, who, having dined sumptuously, sat sipping their coffee on deck, while the swift craft skimmed the calm waters of the bay, and unfolded in her course the beautiful panorama of the shore—the bold steep bluff of Brayhead, the curved strand of Killiney, the two “Sugar Loaves” rising from the bosom of dark woods, and, in the distance, the higher chain of the Wicklow mountains, while on the opposite side Howth seemed like a blue island studding the clear surface of the bay. Lord Kilgoff and Mr. Sickleton paid but passing attention to the bright picture around. A learned discussion on naval matters, wherein my Lord took the opportunity of storing his mind with a goodly stock of technicals, to be used at some future occasion, occupied them altogether, leaving her Ladyship and Roland Cashel to the undisturbed enjoyment of the scene and its associations.

They paid the highest tribute the picturesque can exact—they sat in silence watching the changing tints, which from red faded to violet, then gray, and at last grew dark with closing night, while the wind freshening sent the sea rushing swiftly past, and made their light craft heave and pitch heavily.

“We are returning to Kingstown, I trust?” said my Lord to Sickleton, who had left him for a moment, to give orders about shortening sail. “It appears to me like a threatening night.”

“It looks dirty, my Lord,” said Sickleton, dryly, as he walked aft with the pilot, and conferred with him in a low tone.

“Are we making for Kingstown, Mr. Cashel?” said my Lord, in a voice he was not able to divest of anxiety.

“I believe not,” said Cashel, rising, and approaching the compass. “No, we are lying down channel straight as we can go.”

“Ay, and very well for us that we can do it,” growled out the pilot. “If we make the Hook Light before we

tack, I shall say we 're lucky.”

“Does he mean there is any danger, Mr. Cashel?” said Lady Kilgoff, but in a voice devoid of tremor.

“None whatever; but I am sadly distressed at having carried you out so far, since I find that in the present state of the tide, and with the wind still driving more to the north, we cannot bear up for Kingstown, but must run along the shore.”

“Think nothing of that,” said she, gayly; “real peril I have no fancy for—a mere inconvenience is of no moment whatever; but”—here she dropped her voice very low—“say something to my Lord—give him some encouragement.”

“It blows fresh, my Lord, and if it were not for the trespass on your comfort, I should almost rejoice at the occasion of showing you my yacht's qualities as a sailing-boat.”

“I should prefer taking your word for them, sir,” said Lord Kilgoff, tartly; “a pleasure-trip is one thing, a night in a small vessel exposed to a heavy gale is another.”

“You 're right, my Lord,” said the pilot, who heard but a part of the observation; “it will be a gale before morning.”

“Luff! luff, there!” shouted Sickleton; and at the same instant a heavy sea thundered against the bow and broke over the fore part of the vessel with a crashing sound.

“I think when we see the lighthouse of Kingstown so near us,” said Lord Kilgoff, “there ought to be no great difficulty in returning.”

“That's not the harbor-light you see yonder—that's the Kish, my Lord,” said the pilot “Keep her up, my man, keep her up, the wind is freshening.”

“Will you indeed forgive me for this disastrous turn of our cruise?” said Cashel, as he fastened his boat-cloak around Lady Kilgoff's throat, after several vain efforts to induce her to go below.

“If you only prevent my Lord from scolding, I shall enjoy it immensely,” said she, in a half whisper.

“I trust, Lady Kilgoff,” said his Lordship, approaching, and steadying himself by the bulwarks, “that this night'a experience will induce you to distrust your own judgment when in opposition to mine. I foresaw the whole of it. It is now blowing a fierce gale—”

“Not a bit of it, my Lord,” interposed the pilot, bluntly; “but it will blow great guns 'fore daybreak, or I 'm mistaken.”

“And where shall we be then?” asked my Lord, querulously.

“Rayther hard to tell,” said the pilot, laughing. “If she be as good a sea-boat as they say, and that we don't carry away any of our spars, we may run for Cove. I take it—”

“For Cove! Gracious mercy! and if she be not as good a vessel as it is said she is, sir, what then, pray?”

The pilot made no reply, but gave orders to set the jib, as she was laboring too much by the head.

The wind increased, and with it the sea, which, dividing at the bow, fell in great cataracts over the vessel, sweeping along the entire deck at every plunge she gave.

“I wish she were a little deeper in the water,” whispered Sickleton to Cashel. “We have n't within fifteen tons of our ballast on board. But she 's a sweet craft, ain't she? Keep her, there—steady, man.”

“We could n't stand round in stays, and bear up for the harbor?” asked Cashel, on whom Lord Kilgoff's face of misery had made a strong impression.

“Impossible! At least the pilot, who knows this coast well, says there is a shore current here runs eight knots.”

“What shall we do with him? He 'll scarce live through the night.”

“Let us get him down below, and, once snug in a berth, he 'll fall asleep, and forget everything.”

Cashel shook his head doubtfully, but determined to try the plan at all hazards.

“Would my Lord be persuaded to lie down, do you think?” said Roland, approaching Lady Kilgoff, who, enveloped in the folds of the heavy boat-cloak, sat calm and collected near the wheel.

“Is there danger?” asked she, hurriedly.

“Not the least; but he seems so ill, and every sea rushes-over him as he stands.”

“You should go down, my dear Lord,” said she, addressing him; “Mr. Cashel is afraid you 'll catch cold here?”

“Ah, is he indeed?” said Lord Kilgoff, in a snappish asperity. “He is too good to bestow a thought upon me.”

“I am only anxious, my Lord, that you should n't suffer from your complaisance so unhappily rewarded.”

“Very kind, exceedingly kind, sir. It is, as you say, most unhappy—a perfect storm, a hurricane. Gracious mercy! what's that?”

This exclamation was caused by a loud smash, like the report of a cannon-shot, and at the same moment the taper topmast fell crashing down, with all its cordage clattering round it. The confusion of the accident, the shouting of voices, the thundering splash of the sea, as, the peak having fallen, the craft had lost the steadying influence of the mainsail, all seemed to threaten immediate danger. Cashel was about to spring forward and assist in cutting away the entangled rigging, when he felt his hand firmly grasped by another, whose taper fingers left no doubt to whom it belonged.

“Don't be alarmed—it is nothing,” whispered he encouragingly; “the mishap is repaired in a second.”

“You 'll not leave me,” said she, in a low tone, which thrilled through every fibre of his heart. He pressed her hand more closely, and tried, but in vain, to catch a glimpse at her face.

Meanwhile the disordered rigging had been repaired, and two men under Sickleton's direction, lifting the drooping and scarce conscious peer from the deck, carried him down below.

If the old instincts of Roland Cashel's sailor life would have rendered the scene interesting to him, watching as he did the way his craft “behaved,” and marking well the fine qualities she possessed as a sea-boat, there

was another and far more intense feeling then occupying him as he stood close beside that swathed and muffled figure, who, pale and silent, marked by some gesture, from time to time, her dependence upon him. To Roland, the rattle of the gale, the hissing sea, the strained and creaking cordage, all, not only brought back old memories of his once life, but effectually seemed to dispel the colder mood of mind which admixture with the world of fashion had impressed upon him. He was again, if not in reality, in heart and spirit, the bold buccaneer that walked the Western seas, bursting with life, and eager for adventure. Every plunge that sent the bowsprit down, every squall that bent the taper mast, and laid the vessel half-seas under, inspirited and excited him, not the less that the wild storm called forth every form of encouragement to her, who vibrated between actual terror and a strange sense of delight.

Roland lay at her feet, partly as a barrier against the surging water that, breaking over the bow, swept the entire deck, partly that he might mark those beauteous features, on which the binnacle light occasionally cast its glare.

“It is fine,” murmured she, in a low, soft voice, “and I almost feel as if my own terrors should serve to heighten the sense of ecstasy. I tremble while I delight in it.”

There was an expression of intense excitement in her eyes as she spoke, and her pale features for an instant flushed, as Roland's look met hers.

“How I glory in your words,” cried he, wild with enthusiasm; “I feel like one who suddenly awakes to life out of some long and dreary sleep,—rather this is the sleep, this is itself the vision in which I lie, here, beneath your smile, while we are borne onward through the hissing foam. Oh, would it but last—would that this dark and starless night could be for years, and that we might thus cleave the black waters on and on!”

“And whither to?” asked she, in a whisper scarcely breathed.

“Whither to?” echoed he; “what matters it, while we journey thus? The sun-tipped icebergs of the North Sea, or the rosy mountains of the Spice Island; the balmy shores of Quito, or the bleak coast of Labrador—all are alike to me.”

“A large vessel under the lee!” sang out a voice from the bow, and the cry was repeated still louder, while the pilot shouted, “Show a light at the mast-head; put your helm hard up!” The double command was scarce obeyed, when a huge black mass heaved past them, her great yards almost seeming to grate the cordage. The looming size of the immense object that towered overhead, and the death-like stillness of the yacht's crew till the danger was past, thrilled with a cold terror through her, and instinctively she grasped Roland's hand more closely. The gale had now become furious, and as the light spars were barely able to sustain even the little canvas spread, the sea swept over the vessel as she lay storm-tossed and scarce navigable. The hatches were fastened down, the boats strongly secured, and every precaution of seamanship adopted; and so long as these were in performance, and a certain activity and bustle prevailed, so long did Lady Kilgoff's courage appear to support her; but when all was done, and the men resumed their places in watchful silence, and her mind was left to the contemplation of the raging hurricane alone, she seemed to sink, and, with a faint, low sigh, glided from the seat and fell fainting to the deck.

“You cannot take her below,” said Sickleton, as Cashel, raising her in his arms, was about to carry her to the cabin; “we dare not open the hatches. See, there it comes again!” and, as he spoke, a great wave broke over the vessel's quarter and fell in torrents over the deck, washing, as it receded, several loose spars overboard. By the aid of coats and cloaks innumerable, Cashel at last succeeded in enveloping the fair form beside him, and supporting her head upon his arm as he sat, he saw, to his unspeakable delight, that she soon dropped into a calm sleep.

“This is a disastrous bit of pleasuring,” said Sickleton, as he stood holding on by one of the braces; “who could have supposed such a gale was brewing?”

“Well, well,” replied Cashel, “if it comes no worse—”

“If it does, we can't stand through it, that's all,” said the lieutenant, dryly. “The old pilot says we shall have to make a tack to keep clear of the Hook; but what boat can sail on a wind with a storm-jib and three-reefed topsail?”

“She behaves nobly,” said Roland, as he gazed at the sleeping form, to guard which seemed all his care.

Sickleton mistook the remark, and said, “Ay, that I knew she would; but the sea is tremendous for a small craft, and see how close we have the land under our lee—that black mass yonder.”

“I 'd give all I own in the world that she were safe on shore,” murmured Cashel, not heeding the other's observation; “I cannot forgive myself for having induced her to venture out.”

The lieutenant made no reply, but peered for a few seconds through the skylight of the cabin. “My Lord is lying like a dead man,” said he; “fright and sea-sickness together have nearly done for him, and yet it was only two hours back he thought he 'd make a good figure at the Admiralty. There,” continued he, “day is breaking yonder; we shall soon know our fate; if the gale freshens after sunrise, it is all up with us.”

“Run the craft in shore and I 'll engage to save her,” said Cashel, eagerly. “I'm a strong swimmer in surf; I rescued a Malabar girl once, and in a sea nearly as heavy as this.”

Sickleton smiled incredulously, and turned away.

“It is freshening, by Jove!” said he, as a squall struck the vessel, and laid her almost on her beam ends, while every plank shivered as though she were rending in pieces.

“It's coming stronger, sir,” said the pilot, as he shook the sea from his rough coat and bent his gaze steadfastly towards the east; “I 'd rather not see that red sunrise. Keep her away, man, keep her away!”

“Shall we try it?” muttered Sickleton, to some whispered observations of the other.

“We may as well,” rejoined the pilot; “she 'll never hold steerage way with her present canvas, and if she won't bear the mainsail we must go on shore, and no help for it.”

“Bear a hand there, boys!” cried Sickleton; “shake out the mainsail!”

“You 'll carry away the mast,” cried Cashel, as he heard the order.

“It 's like enough,” growled the pilot, “but yonder's the lee-shore.”

“I could save her—I 'm certain I could save her,” said Cashel.

“He's thinking of the lady,” said the pilot to Sickleton; and the contemptuous tone showed how humbly he estimated him.

“Breakers ahead!—shoal water!” shouted a voice from the bow.

“'Bout ship!” cried Sickleton; “stand by sheets and tacks there—down helm! Are ye ready, men?” And the next moment the obedient vessel spun round, and was cleaving the water on another tack.

“What is it? where am I? is this a dream?” said Lady Kilgoff, as she moved back the hair from her eyes, and looked up at Cashel, who for hours had never moved or stirred.

“To *me* it has been a delicious dream,” said Cashel, as he met her glance; “and if it were not that you may feel alarmed, it would be still such.”

“What a terrible sea! Where are we?”

“Not far from shore,” said Cashel, encouragingly.

“A devilish deal too near it, though,” muttered the pilot, under his breath.

“Oh, I remember all now. Where is my Lord, Mr. Cashel? Is he ill?”

“He 's gone below—he is sleeping, I believe. It has been a wild night for *you*; and you 've passed it here on the deck.”

“Here?” said she, looking up and blushing, for she still lay supported against Roland, and one of his hands held the boat-cloak across her.

“Yes, here,” said Cashel, with a voice and manner that made the color mount to her cheeks and as suddenly desert them again.

Meanwhile the lieutenant had gone below, and reappeared with a chart, over which he and the pilot now bent in the deepest consideration.

“Then that must have been the 'Calf' Light we saw to the eastward,” said Sickleton, pointing to the map.

“I 'd say so too,” replied the other, “if such a run did n't seem impossible; but we only tripped our anchor last night before sunset.”

“Ten hours, though!—one can do a deal in ten hours!” said the lieutenant.

“It may be worth as many years sometimes!” said Cashel, in a whisper to her at his side.

“Breakers right ahead!” shouted the man at the bow.

“We 're among the 'Barrels!'” cried, the pilot; “back the topsail! down mainsail!—”

But it was too late! Like a sea-bird rising to its flight, the light craft bounded forward, till her shining copper glanced above the waves, and then, with a spring, dashed onward, amid the foam and spray that rose like a mist around her. The frothy shower flew over the deck, while the hissing water spurted up on every side with a crashing, splintering sound. The keel came down, and while a loud cry broke forth, “She 's struck!” the mast snapped suddenly across, and fell with its draped rigging into the sea.

“Stand by! cut away the boats!” shouted Sickleton; and seizing a hatchet, gave the example himself, while Cashel, lifting the now lifeless form of Lady Kilgoff, placed her in the boat. The confusion and terror became now extreme. The breaking sea had already forced its way through the vessel's bottom, and issued in a clear jet of blue water from the hatchways. The first boat launched was rapidly crowded, and scarcely had it touched the water than it was swamped. For an instant the struggling figures were seen battling with the waves, but in a moment after they were gone!

Mainly through Sickleton and Cashel's exertions, the second boat was got ready, and just about to be launched, when Roland turned to seek Lord Kilgoff, whom, up to that moment, he had entirely forgotten. Scarcely had he reached the binnacle, when the old man, pale and almost dead with terror, stood before him. “Is she safe, sir?—is my Lady safe?” cried he, tremulously.

“Quite so; come along, there 's not a moment to lose.”

“Oh, Mr. Cashel, do not leave me!” cried Lady Kilgoff, as the boat was lifted from its place, and swung by the halyards from side to side.

“You cannot surely resist that appeal, sir,” said Lord Kilgoff, his withered and worn features flushed with a pang of sudden anger.

“I must see to *your* safety, my Lord, or none else is likely to do it,” said Cashel, sternly; and as he spoke he lifted the old man and placed him in the boat. “Stay where you are, Sickleton,” cried he to the lieutenant; “I 'll cut her adrift. So there! my boys, all together—larboard now.” And as the vessel heaved over to the surge, the boat was launched. A shrill cry of terror was heard above the raging storm; for Cashel, in his eagerness to secure the others' safety, had perilled his own, and now the boiling surf rushed between the yacht and the boat, defying every effort to approach.

“Never fear for me,” said Roland, boldly; “the distance is short, and I 've swum in many a heavier surf.” And he swung himself, as he spoke, by a loose stay into the sea. Nobly breasting the mad waves, he was seen at intervals, now borne on the white-crested billows, now deep down in the dark trough of waters. His Indian teaching had taught him, too, to dive at times through the coming surf, and thus escape its force, and so did he emerge from the great mass of waters that seemed almost to have buried him. Bending to the oars, the boat's crew pulled manfully through the tide, and at last gaining a little bay, floated into calm water, just as Cashel had got a footing on a reef of rock, a short distance from land.

“Safe!” cried he, as he drew his wearied limbs up the little craggy eminence, from which he could see the yacht still storm-lashed and heaving, and follow with his eyes the boat, as with bounding speed she made for shore.

No sooner had Sickleton safely landed his freight than he put out again to rescue those in the yacht, while Cashel, bruised, bleeding, and torn, made his way slowly to the little hut where Lord and Lady Kilgoff had taken shelter.

His entrance was little noticed. The cabin was full of country people and fishermen,—some earnestly proffering advice and counsel, others as eagerly questioning all about the recent calamity. In a great straw chair, beside the fire, sat Lord Kilgoff, his head resting on a country-woman's shoulder, while another bathed his temples to restore animation.

“Where is she?” said Cashel, passionately; and the tone and look of the speaker turned attention towards him.

“'T is her husband,” whispered the woman of the house, courtesying respectfully to the youth, who, in all the torn disorder of his dress, looked the gentleman; and with that she drew him into an inner room, where upon a low settle lay the pale and scarce breathing form of Lady Kilgoff.

“Don't be afeared, yer honer, she 'll be betther in a minute or two. She has more courage than her father there,” and she pointed to the outside room where Lord Kilgoff sat. “Indeed, the first word she spoke was about yerself.”

Cashel made a gesture to be silent, and sat down beside the settle, his gaze fixed on the features, which, in their calm loveliness, had never seemed more beautiful.

The stillness that now reigned in the little cabin, only broken by the low whisperings without, the calm tranquillity so suddenly succeeding to the terrible convulsion, the crowd of sensations pressing on the brain, and, above all, the immense fatigue he had gone through, brought on such a sense of stupor that Cashel fell heavily on the floor, and with his head leaning against the settle, fell into a sound sleep.

Before evening had closed in most of the party had recovered from their fatigues, and sat grouped in various attitudes round the blazing fire of the cabin. In a deep, old-fashioned straw chair, reclined, rather than sat, Lady Kilgoff; a slightly feverish flush lent a brilliancy to her otherwise pale features, deepening the expression of her full soft eyes, and giving a more animated character to the placid beauty of her face. Her hair, in all the loose freedom of its uncared for state, fell in great voluptuous masses along her neck and shoulders, while part of a finely-turned arm peeped out beneath the folds of the wide scarlet cloak which the fisherman's wife had lent her in lieu of her own costly “Cashmere.”

Next to her sat Roland; and although dressed in the rough jacket of a sailor, his throat encircled by a rude cravat of colored worsted, he seemed in the very costume to have regained some of his long-lost joyousness, and, notwithstanding the sad event of the night, to be in a very ecstasy of high spirits. Sickleton, too, seemed like one who regarded the whole adventure as a circumstance too common-place for much thought, and busied himself writing letters to various persons at Cashel's dictation, sorely puzzled from time to time to follow out the thread of an intention, which Roland's devotion to the lady at his side more than once interrupted.

The most disconsolate and woe-begone of all was the poor peer, who, propped up by cushions, sat with unmeaning gaze steadily riveted on the fire. There was something so horribly absurd, too, in the costume in which he was clad, that converted all pity into a sense of ridicule. A great wide pea-jacket encircled his shrunken, wasted figure to the knees, where the thin attenuated legs appeared, clad in blue worsted stockings, whose wide folds fell in a hundred wrinkles around them; a woollen cap of red and orange stripes covered his head, giving a most grotesque expression to the small and fine-cut features of his face. If Lady Kilgoff and Cashel had not been too much interested on other topics, they could not have failed to discover, in the occasional stealthy glances that Sickleton cast on the old lord, that the costume had been a thing of his own devising, and that the rakish air of the nightcap, set sideways on the head, was owing to the sailor's inveterate fondness for a joke, no matter how ill-timed the moment or ill-suited the subject of it.

Behind them, and in a wider circle, sat the fisherman and his family, the occasional flash of the fire lighting up the gloom where they sat, and showing, as in a Rembrandt, the strong and vigorous lines of features where health and hardship were united—the whole forming in the light and shadow a perfect subject for a painter.

From the first moment of the mishap, Lord Kilgoff had sunk into a state of almost child-like imbecility, neither remembering where he was, nor taking interest in anything, an occasional fractious or impatient remark at some parsing inconvenience being all the evidence he gave of thought. It devolved, therefore, upon Cashel to make every arrangement necessary,—an assumption on his part which his natural respect and delicacy made no small difficulty. As for Lady Kilgoff, she appeared implicitly to yield to his judgment on every point; and when Roland suggested that, instead of returning to Dublin and all its inevitable rumors, they should at once proceed to Tubbermore, she assented at once, and most willingly.

It was with this object, then, that Sickleton sat, pen in hand, making notes of Cashel's directions, and from time to time writing at his dictation to various tradesmen whose services he stood in need of. It would certainly have called for a clearer head, and a calmer than Roland's, to have conducted the conversation with the lady and the command to the gentleman, who sat at either side of him. Many a sad blunder did he make, and more than once did the reply intended for her Ladyship find its way into the epistle of the lieutenant, nor did the mistake appear till a reading of the document announced it. At these, a burst of laughter was sure to break forth, and then my Lord would look up, and, passing his fingers across his temples, seem trying to recall his lost and wandering faculties—efforts that the changeful play of his features showed to be alternately failing and succeeding, as reason, tide-like, ebbed and flowed within his brain.

It was as Sickleton wrote down at Cashel's direction the order for a considerable sum of money to be distributed among the crew of the yacht, that Lord Kilgoff, catching as it were in a momentary lucidness the meaning of the words, said aloud, “This is not munificence, sir. I tell you this is the wasteful extravagance of the buccaneer, not the generosity of a true gentleman.”

The other suddenly started at the words, and while Lady Kilgoff's deep flush of passion and Cashel's look of astonishment exhibited their feelings, Sickleton's hearty laugh showed the racy enjoyment deficient delicacy can always reap from an awkward dilemma.

“But, my Lord, you mistake Mr. Cashel,” said Lady Kilgoff, eagerly bending forward as she spoke. “His noble gift is to compensate these brave fellows for a loss, as well as reward them for an act of devotion.—How silly in me to reason with him! see, Mr. Cashel, his mind is quite shaken by this calamity.”

“Your defence compensates a hundred such reproofs,” said Cashel, with warmth. “Well, Mr. Sickleton,” said he, anxious to quit a painful topic, “what of this schooner yacht you spoke of awhile ago?”

“The handsomest craft that ever swam,” said the lieutenant, delighted to discuss a favorite theme. “Lord Wellingham has married, and they say won't keep her any longer. You 'll get her for ten thousand, and the story is she cost about fourteen.”

“But perhaps Mr. Cashel may soon follow her noble owner's example,” said Lady Kilgoff, smiling, and with a subdued look towards Roland.

“Don't give him bad counsel, my Lady.”

“It really does seem to me a kind of inveteracy thus to talk of buying a new yacht within a few hours after losing one.”

“Like a widower looking out for a new wife, I suppose,” said the lieutenant, laughing.

“No, sir, I beg to correct you,” broke in my Lord, with a snappishness that made the bearers start; “her Ladyship is not yet a widow, although her levity might seem to imply it.”

“My Lord, I must protest against this sarcastic humor,” said she, with a mild dignity. “Our terrible catastrophe may have disturbed your right judgment, but I pray select another theme for misconstruction. Mr. Cashel, I will wish you a good-night. In the difficulty in which I am placed, I can only say that my perfect confidence in your counsel satisfies me it will be such as you ought to give and I to follow.”

“Yes, sir, of course; when the lady says, 'Follow,' I hope you know a gentleman's devoir better than to disobey.” These words were uttered by the old man with a sneering impertinence that augured no absence of mind; but ere the door closed upon Lady Kilgoff his face had again put on its former dull and vacant stare, and it was clear that the momentary intelligence was past and over.

“Now, Sickleton,” said Cashel, as if at length able to give his mind to the details before him, “you will haste to Dublin; send us the carriages with all the speed you can muster; pack off her Ladyship's maid and the wardrobe, and don't forget that dressing-case at Seward's. I should like to have her crest upon it, but there's no time for that—besides, we should only have more scandal in Dublin when it got abroad. Then for Kennyfeck: tell him I have no money, and stand much in need of it, for, as my Lord says, mine are buccaneer's habits; and lastly, run over to Cowes and secure the yacht—we must have her. I'm much mistaken, or our friends here will take a cruise with us among the Greek Islands one of these days.”

“Treacherous navigation, too!” said Sickleton, with a dryness that seemed to imply more than the mere words.

“What if it be, man! they say there's nothing much worse anywhere than the line of coast here beside us.”

“Well, and have n't we suffered enough to make us credit the report?” He paused, and then dropping his voice to a low and cautious whisper, added, “Not but that I shall call you lucky if all the danger has ended with the loss of the vessel.”

“How? What do you mean?” asked Cashel, in atone of great eagerness.

“Cannot you guess?” said the other, with an imperturbable coolness.

“No, on my honor, I have n't a thought whither your words point.”

“Then, faith, the peril is fifty times greater and nearer than I suspected,” cried he, warmly. “When a man cracks on all that he can carry, and more than is safe, you at least give him credit for knowing the channel, and understanding its bearings; but when he tells you that he neither knows the course nor the soundings, why you set him down as mad.”

“I shall not be very far removed from that condition if you'll not condescend to explain yourself more freely,” said Cashel, with some irritation of manner. “Where is this danger? and what is it?”

Sickleton looked at him for a second or two, then at the old peer; and, at last, with a scarcely perceptible

movement of his head, motioned towards the door by which Lady Kilgoff had just passed out.

“You surely cannot mean—you do not suppose—”

“No matter what I suppose; all I say is, there are worse breakers ahead of you just now than the 'Lucciola' had last night; haul your wind, and draw off while you have time. Besides, look yonder,”—and he pointed with a jerk of his thumb to Lord Kilgoff, who still sat with stolid gaze fixed upon the red embers of the fire,—“that would be a victory with but little honor!”

Cashel started to his feet, and, passing his hand over his forehead, seemed, as it were, trying to disabuse his mind of some painful illusion. His features, flushed and animated an instant before, had grown almost livid in pallor; and he stood, with one hand leaning on the chair from which he had risen, like one recovering from a fainting fit At last, and with a voice husky and hoarse from emotion, he said, “Sickleton, if I had thought this—if, I say, I even believed what you hint at possible—”

“Pooh! pooh!” broke in the other; “why anchor in three fathoms when you 've deep water beside you? You 'll not hug a lee-shore with a fresh breeze on your quarter; and all I ask is, that you 'd not risk the loss of that noble craft merely that you may spoil the wreck.”

Cashel grasped the rough seaman's hand in both his own, and shook it with warmth.

“I can only say this,” said the bluff lieutenant, rising, “if such be the object of your cruises, you must seek another shipmate than Bob Sickleton; and so good-night.”

“Are you going?” said Cashel, with a sorrowful voice. “I wish you were not about to leave thus.”

“I have given you your bearings; that ought to be enough for you. Good-night, once more.” And with this the honest-hearted lieutenant threw his boat-cloak around him, and sallied forth to the door, before which a chaise was in waiting to convey him to Dublin.

As for Roland, his agitated and excited mind banished all desire for sleep, and he wandered out upon the beach, where, resolving many a good intention for the future, he walked to and fro till day was breaking.

CHAPTER XXX. MISS LEICESTER'S DREAM AND ITS FULFILMENT

Old walls have mouths as well as ears.

The Convent: a Play.

To us of the present day, who see what Genii are guineas, fairy tales are mere allegories. Your true sorcerer is a credit “on Coutts,” and anything may be esteemed within his power who reckons by tens of thousands.

Tom Linton was experimenting on this problem somewhat largely at Tubbermore, where the old, misshapen, ugly house had undergone such a series of transformations inside and out that the oldest inhabitant might have failed to recognize it. Roman cement and stucco—those cosmetics of architecture—had given to the front a most plausible air; and what with a great flagged terrace beneath and a balustrade parapet above, the whole had put on a wonderful look of solidity and importance. French windows and plate-glass, stuccoed architraves and richly traceried balconies, from which access was had to various terraces and flower-plats, contributed an appearance of lightness to the building; and what was lost in architectural elegance, was fully recompensed by convenience and facility of enjoyment.

Within, the arrangements were excellent, and, as regarded the object in view, perfect; various suites of apartments, so separated as to be actually like residences, abounded throughout, so that the guests might either indulge their solitude undisturbed, or mix in the wide circle of the general company. For the latter, a magnificent suite of rooms led along the entire basement story. Here, considering the shortness of the time and the difficulties encountered, Linton's skill was pre-eminently distinguished. Painting was too slow a process for such an emergency, and accordingly the walls were hung with rich silks and stuffs from the looms of Lyons, draped in a hundred graceful fashions, while the floors, laid down in the rough, were concealed by the massive texture of Persian carpets, the most costly ever brought to this country. The air of comfort and “livableness”—if we may coin a word—depicted on every side, took away the reproach of ostentatious splendor, which perhaps might have been applied to rich decorations and gorgeous details in a mere country house. And this was managed with no mean skill; and he must have been a stern critic who could have canvassed too rigidly the merit of appliances so manifestly provided for his own enjoyment. Books and pictures—the Penates of domesticity—were there, and everything possible was done to give a semblance of long habitation to that which but a few weeks back had been a dreary ruin.

A critical eye might have detected in many instances the evidences of a more refined taste than Mr. Linton's, and so was it Miss Leicester had frequently aided him by her advice and suggestions, and every day, when the weather permitted, saw old Mr. Corrigan and his granddaughter repair to Tubbermore, whose progress they watched with a degree of interest only felt by those whose retirement admits few sources of amusement There was a secret cause of pride, too, in seeing the old residence of the family—marred as had been its proportions by frequent and tasteless additions—resume something of its once grandeur. Mary, whose earliest lessons in infancy had been the tales of her powerful ancestors, who lorded over an almost princely tract, entered heart and soul into a course which favored so many of fancy's pleasantest fictions. Her greatest delight, however, was in the restoration of one part of the building, which all former innovators had apparently despaired of, and left as a species of storehouse for every kind of lumber. This was a great square tower, with an adjoining chapel, the floor of which was formed by the tombstones of her earliest ancestors. One compartment of a stained-glass window showed “the helmet and torch,” the arms of the O'Regans, from which the family, by a corruption, took the name of Corrigan; and various other mementos abounded to prove

the high station they had once supported.

Strongly imbued with a knowledge of the tales and customs of the period, Mary restored the chapel to all the emblazoned splendor of the sixteenth century. The rich carvings that modern research has discovered and carried away from the châteaux of the Low Countries were adapted to the place, and speedily the interior put on an air of highly preserved and cherished antiquity.

The tower adjoining was also converted into a great chamber of audience,—a “Ritter-Saal,”—hung round with weapons of the chase and war, while great buffets displayed a wealth of antique plate and china, of gem-wrought cups and massive flagons, that lent a lustre to its otherwise too stern appearance. Lighted by a range of stained windows far from the ground, the tempered sunlight cast a mellow glance on every object; and here, in the silence of the noon, when the workmen had gone to dinner, Mary used to sit alone, some strange spell fascinating her to a spot where echoes had once awoke to the tramp of her own kinsmen's footsteps.

“Tell me, Mr. Linton,” said she, as he entered suddenly, and found her seated in her favorite place, “what part of the chapel adjoins the wall we see yonder?”

“That,” said Linton, musing for a second,—“that, if I mistake not, must be what you styled the crypt; the—”

“Exactly!” cried she, with animation. “The crypt is somewhat lower than this chamber, two steps or so?”

“About as much.”

“How strange, how very strange!” she said, half to herself.

“What is strange!” said Linton, smiling at the intense preoccupation of her features.

“You will laugh outright,” said she, “if I tell you. It was a dream I had last night about this chamber.”

“Pray let me hear it,” said Linton, seating himself, and affecting a deep interest “I own to a most implicit confidence in dreams.”

“Which is more than I do,” said she, laughing. “This has, however, so much of truth about it, as the locality is concerned, and thus far it is curious. Are you certain that you never told me before that the crypt lay outside of that wall?”

“Perfectly; since I only learned as much myself about an hour ago.”

“How singular!”

“Come, do not torture my curiosity further. Let us have your dream.”

“It was very short. I dreamed that I was sitting here musing and thinking over the lives and fortunes of some of those who once dwelt within these walls, and comparing their destiny with that of their descendants, only admitted, as it were, on sufferance, when suddenly a door opened slowly there,—there, in the very midst of that wall,—and I could see down into the crypt, and the chapel beyond it. On the altar there were candles lighted, and I thought the figure of a man crossed and recrossed below the steps, as if settling and arranging the books and cushions; and, at last, he turned round, and I perceived that he carried in his hands a small and strongly clasped box, and, as he came towards me, he seemed to hold this out for me to take; but, as I did not move or stir, he laid it down within the doorway, and, as he did so, the wall gradually closed up again, and no vestige of the door could be seen. Nay, so perfectly unshaken did all appear that I remember remarking a cobweb that stretched from the frame of a picture, and hung over the spot where the door seemed to be; and there,” cried she, starting up,—“there, Mr. Linton, as I live, there is the cobweb!”

“Which, without doubt, you observed yesterday,” said Linton, “and in your sleep the vision of our neglect was renewed.”

“No, no; I never saw it before. I am confident that I never noticed it yesterday. I am sorry I revealed my dream to you,” said she, perceiving that, in spite of all his tact, incredulity had lent a look of pitying compassion to his features.

“On the contrary, I beg of you to believe in all my interest for your recital; nay, I'll prove it too.”

“How so?” said she, eagerly.

“Simply enough. I 'll give orders at once to have a door made here, and then we shall see if the view you describe of the crypt and the chapel can be seen from this point.”

“Why don't you add, and of the figure with the casket, too?” said she, smiling; “for I see you regard them all as alike veracious.”

“In any case,” cried Linton, “if he lay down the treasure—and treasure it must be—here in the doorway, I 'll take care that the walls do not swallow it up again; we shall be able to find it in the morning.”

“And will you really have this done?”

“I 'll give the orders this very day.”

“I must not be so silly,” said she, after a pause; “the whole is too absurd. No, Mr. Linton, do not, I beg of you, do not take any notice of my folly.”

“At all events,” said Linton, “your dream is a most happy inspiration; a door here will be a great improvement, and if the vista takes in the chapel, so much the better. Remember, too,” added he, in a lower and more feeling voice,—“remember what I have told you so often, that whatever we do here has, so to say, no other reward than the pleasure it gives me the doing. Our great patron has about as much gratefulness in his composition as taste. He will neither feel thankful for our exertions, nor sensible of their success, and is just as likely to desecrate yon Ritter-Saal, by making it his smoking-room.”

“If I thought so,” said she, proudly, and then stopped suddenly. “But how can it concern me? I have only to wonder how you can accept of an intimacy so distasteful.”

This, in its very abruptness, was a home-thrust; and so much did Linton feel it that he reddened, at first with shame, and then with anger at his want of composure.

“There are many circumstances in life, Miss Leicester,” said he, gravely, “which demand heavy sacrifices of personal feeling; and happy if sometimes the recompense come in seeing that our self-devotion has worked

well for others! I may one day explain myself more fully on this head.”

Before Mary could answer, a messenger came to say that her grandfather was waiting to return with her to the cottage, and she bid Linton good-bye with a degree of interest for him she had never felt before. Linton stood in a window and watched her as she went, nor did his eye quit the graceful form till it disappeared in the covering of the trees. “Yes,” said he to himself, “I have struck the right chord at last! She neither is to be dazzled by the splendor nor excited by the ambitions of the great world. The key to the mystery of her nature lies in the very fact of her position in life,—the indignant struggle against a condition she feels beneath her; she can sympathize with this. She is just the very girl, too, to awaken Laura's jealousy, so brilliantly handsome, so much of elegance in mien and deportment Ay! the game will win; I may stake all upon it. Who is that?” said he, starting suddenly, as a door banged behind him, and he saw Tom Keane, who had been a silent listener to his soliloquy. Linton well knew that, shrewd as the man was, the words could have conveyed little or nothing to his intelligence, and carelessly asked what had the post brought.

“A heap of letters, yer honer,” said he, laying the heavily loaded bag on the table. “I never see so many come to the town afore.”

As Linton unlocked the bag and emptied its contents before him, his face suddenly grew dark and angry, for none of the letters, as he turned them over, were for himself; they were all addressed Roland Cashel, Esq., and marked “private.” At last he saw one with his own name, and, motioning to Keane to leave him undisturbed, he sat down to read it. It came from his correspondent, Mr. Phillis, and was of the briefest:

Sir,—All has gone wrong. R. C. sailed last night on a yachting excursion with Lord and Lady K., some say for Wales, others for the Isle of Wight. The truth I cannot ascertain. The persons invited to Tubbennore are all preparing to set out, but eagerly asking where C. is to be found. There has been something like a breach at K.'s, and I fancy it is about Lady Kilgoffs going in the yacht, which, although seeming accident, must have been planned previously. If you had been here the matter might have taken another turn, as C. appears very tired of K.'s agency, and the difficulty of obtaining money from him.

I have received a few lines from C., dated from “the harbor,” to order a “fourgon” to be got ready; but I shall pretend not to have received the note, and leave this, if you desire it, for Tubbermore on hearing from you.

Yours, in duty,

R. Phillis.

Linton crashed the note passionately in his fingers, and with a cheek almost purple, and swollen knotted veins about the forehead and temples, he hastily walked to and fro in the apartment. “So, madam,” said he, “is this, then, the reason of your compliance? Was this the source of that yielding to my wishes that induced you to come here? And to dare this towards *me!*” A fiendish laugh burst from him as he said, “Silly fool; so long as you played fair, the advantage was all on your own side. Try to cheat, and you 'll see who's the victor! And that cub, too,” added he, with a hoarse passion, “who ventures a rivalry with me! Hate has an inspiration that never deceives; from the first moment I saw him I felt that for him.”

“You say you wanted the masons, sir,” said Keane, opening the door, where he had been endeavoring, but ineffectually, to catch the clew of Linton's words.

“Yes, let them come here,” said he, with his ordinary composure. “You are to break a door there,” said he, as the men entered, “and I wish to have it done with all speed. You 'll work all night, and be doubly paid.” As he spoke, he sauntered out to muse over the late tidings he had received, and plan within himself the coming campaign.

Thus loitering and reflecting, time slipped by and evening drew near.

“We must have a light here,” said one of the masons. “This room is never very bright, and now it is almost dark as night. But what have we here?” And at the moment his hammer sent forth a ringing sound as if it had struck upon metal.

“What can it be?” said the other; “it seems like a plate of iron.”

Linton now drew nigh, as he overheard these words, and stationing himself at a small window, beheld the two men as they labored to detach what seemed a heavy stone in the wall.

“It's not a plate of iron, but a box,” cried one.

“Hush,” said the other, cautioning silence; “if it's money there 's in it, let us consider a bit where we 'll hide it.”

“It sounds empty, anyhow,” said the first, as the metal rang clearly out under the hammer. Meanwhile Linton stood overwhelmed at the strange connection between the dream and the discovery. “It is a box, and here's the key fastened to it by a chain,” cried the former speaker. He had scarcely succeeded in removing the box from the wall, when Linton was standing, unseen and noiseless, behind him.

“We 'll share it fair, whatever it is,” said the second.

“Of course,” said the other. “Let us see what there is to-share.” And so he threw back the lid, and beheld, to his great dismay, nothing but a roll of parchment fastened by a strap of what had once been red leather, but which crumbled away as he touched it.

“'T is Latin,” said the first, who seemed the more intelligent of the two, after a vain effort to decipher the heavily engrossed line at the top.

“You are right,” said Linton; and the two men started with terror on seeing him so near. “It is Latin, boys; it was the custom of the monks to bury their prayers in that way once, and to beg whoever might discover the document to say so many masses for the writer's soul; and Protestant though I be, I do not think badly of the

practice. Let us find out the name.” And thus saying, he took up the roll and perused it steadily. For a long time the evening darkness, the difficulty of the letters, and the style of the record, impeded him; but as he read on, the color came and went in his cheek, his hand trembled with agitation, and had there been light enough to have noted him well, even the workmen must have perceived the excitement under which he labored.

“Yes,” said he, at last, “it is exactly as I said; it was written by a monk. This was an old convent once, and Father Angelo asks our prayers for his eternal repose, which assuredly he shall have, heretic that I am! Here, boys, here's a pound-note for you; Father Rush will tell you how to use it for the best. Get a light and go on with your work, and if you don't like to spend the money in masses, say nothing about the box, and I 'll not betray your secret.”

A dry laugh and a significant leer of the eye showed that he had accurately read his hearers' inmost thoughts, and Linton sat down as if to await their return; but no sooner had they left the spot than he hastened with all speed to the inn, to con over his newly discovered treasure, and satisfy himself as to its importance and authenticity.

Drawing close the curtains of his windows, and locking the door of his room, like one who would be alone, he again opened the casket, and took out the scroll. With bent-down head and steady gaze, he perused it from end to end, and then sat with riveted eyes fixed upon the signature and massive seal which were appended to the foot of the document. “That this should have been revealed in a dream,” said he, at length, “is almost enough to shake one's faith in the whole! Am I myself awake, and is it real what I see before me?” He walked the room with uncertain steps, then opened wide the window, then closed it again, once more took up the paper and studied it. In fact, it was clear to see that a sceptical nature, the very habit of doubt, had indisposed him to believe in even that which his very senses corroborated.

“What would I give for some lawyer's craft at this moment!” said he, as the drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead, and his clenched hands were clasped together in strong emotion; “what would I give for the keenness that could pierce through every line of this, and see it free of flaw—ay, that is the point! And then, Master Roland,”—here his voice grew full and round,—“and then we should see who is the master and who the dependent, if with a word—with one word—I could unmake you, and from the insolence of your sudden wealth bring you down once more to your fitting station! Never did Fortune stand by me like this! Let me, however, not lose the game from over-strength; caution is needed here. Before Corri-gan shall know himself the rightful owner of Tubbermore, he must be satisfied to see Tom Linton his son-in-law. A glorious hit that deals vengeance on every hand. Ay, my lady, we shall acquit our debt to *you* also!” From the heat of overwhelming passion he again turned to the document which lay open on the table. “What if it were only a copy? But this is scarce possible; the signatures look real, and the seal cannot be counterfeit. Whom could I trust to inspect it? With whom dare I place it for a day, or even an hour? No! I 'll never suffer it out of my own

keeping! I know not if the power to strike is not the very acme of revenge!”

As he walked the room in deepest agitation he chanced for an instant to catch a glimpse of Tubbermore, which, in the bright light of a newly-risen moon, could be seen above the trees.

“So then it may chance that I have not expended my labor in vain, and that this same house may be yet my own. Mine!” cried he, in ecstasy,—“mine those swelling woods, that princely park; the high position which wealth bestows, and the power that I could speedily accomplish in political life. There may be many who have more ambition to strive for: I 'll swear there are few men living have more grudges to pay off.”

And with this speech, uttered in an accent of withering hate and scorn, he again returned to gaze at the open parchment. The document, surmounted by the royal arms, and engrossed in a stiff old-fashioned hand, was a free pardon accorded by his Majesty George the Second to Miles Hardress Corrigan, and a full and unqualified restoration to his once forfeited estates. Certain legal formalities were also enjoined to be taken, and certain oaths to be made, as the recognition of this act of his sovereign's grace.

Such was the important document on which now he gazed, reading and re-reading it, till every word became riveted on his memory.

CHAPTER XXXI. THE GUESTS BEGIN TO ARRIVE.

“Hark they come! they come!”

An unusual bustle and commotion in the little inn awoke Linton early on the following morning. These were caused by the arrival of a host of cooks, coachmen, grooms, footmen, and scullions, with a due proportion of the other sex, all engaged in London, and despatched—“as per order”—to form the household of Tubbermore.

As Linton proceeded with his dressing, he overheard the multifarious complaints and lamentations of this town-reared population over the dirt and destitution of their newly adopted land,—criticisms which, as they scrupled not to detail aloud, evoked rejoinders not a whit more complimentary to the Saxon; the hostess of the Goat—being an energetic disciple of that great authority who has pronounced both the land and its people as the paragons of creation—leading the van of the attack, and certainly making up for any deficiencies in her cause by the force of her eloquence.

“Arrah! who wanted ye here at all?” said she, addressing the circle, stunned into silence by her volubility. “Who axed ye? Was it to plaze us, or to fill yer pockets with the goold of ould Ireland, ye kem? Oh, murther! murther!—is n't it the sin and the shame to think how the craytures is eatin' us up! Faix! maybe ye 'll be sorry enough for it yet. There's more than one amongst you would like to be safe home again, afore long! A set of lazy thieves, no less. The heavens be my bed, but I never thought I 'd see the day they 'd be bringing a 'naygur' to Ireland to teach us music!”

This singular apostrophe, which seemed to fill the measure of her woe, so far attracted Linton's curiosity to comprehend it, that he opened the window and looked out, and at once discovered, by the direction of the eyes of the circle, the object of the sarcasm. He was a well-built man, of a dark swarthy complexion and immense beard and mustache, who sat on a stone bench before the door, occupied in arranging the strings of his guitar. The air of unmoved tranquillity showed that he did not suspect himself to be the butt of any sarcasm, and he pursued his task with a composure that vouched for his ignorance of the language.

“Who is our friend?” said Linton, addressing the coachman, and pointing to the musician.

“We calls him Robinson Crusoe, sir,” replied the other; “we took him up on the road from Limerick. We

never seed him afore.”

“So, then, he doesn't belong to our force. I really had begun to fear that Mr. Gunter had pushed enlistment too far.”

Meanwhile the stranger, attracted by the voice, looked up, and seeing Linton, immediately removed his cap, with an air of quiet courtesy that was not lost upon the shrewd observer to whom it was tendered.

“You are a sailor, I perceive?” said Tom, as he walked out in front of the inn. The other shook his head dubiously.

“I was asking,” said Linton, changing his language to French, “if you had been a sailor?”

“Yes, sir,” replied he, again removing his cap, “a sailor from Trieste.”

“And how came you here?”

“Our vessel was lost off the Blasquets, sir, on Wednesday night. We were bound for Bristol with fruit from Sicily, and caught in a gale; we struck, and all were lost, except myself and another, now in hospital in the large city yonder.”

“Were you a petty officer, or a common seaman?” said linton, who had been scanning with keen eye the well-knit frame and graceful ease of the speaker.

“A common sailor, sir,” rejoined he, modestly.

“And how comes it that you are a musician, friend?” asked Linton, shrewdly.

“Every one is in my country, sir—at least, with such humble skill as I possess.”

“What good fortune it was to have saved your guitar from shipwreck!” rejoined Linton, with an incredulous twinkle of his gray eyes.

“I did not do so, sir,” said the sailor, who either did not, or would not, notice the sarcasm. “My good friends here”—pointing to the servants—“bought this for me in the last town we came through.”

Linton again fixed his eyes upon him; it was evident that he was hesitating between belief and an habitual sense of distrust, that extended to everything and everybody. At last he said,—

“And what led you hither, my friend?”

“Chance,” said the man, shrugging his shoulders. “I could have no preferences for one road over another—all were strange—all unknown to me. I hoped with the aid of my guitar, to get some clothes once more together, and then to find some vessel bound for the Adriatic.”

“What can you do besides that?” said Linton, “for it strikes me a fellow with thews and sinews like yours was scarcely intended to thrum catgut.”

“I can do most things where a steady eye, and a strong; hand, and a quick foot are needed. I 've been a hunter in the forests of Dalmatia—herded the half-wild cattle on the Campagna at Rome—sailed a felucca in the worst Levanters of the gulf—and to swim in a high sea, or to ride an unbroken horse, I'll yield to but one man living.”

“And who may he be?” said Linton, aroused at the southern enthusiasm so suddenly excited.

“A countryman of mine,” said the sailor, sententiously; “his name is not known to you.”

“How sad such gifts as these should have so little recompense in our days,” said Linton, with an affected sincerity. “There was a time, in your own country, too, when a fellow like yourself would not have had long to seek for a patron.”

The Italian's cheek grew deeper in its flush, and his dark eyes seemed almost to kindle beneath the shaggy brows; then correcting, as it seemed, the passionate impulse, he said: “Ay, true enough, sir; there were many who had the gold to squander, who had not the hand to strike, and, as you say, fellows like me were high in the market.”

“And no great hardship in it, either,” said Linton. “There is a justice surer and quicker than the law, which I, for one, think right well of.”

Either not following the import of the speech, or not caring to concur in it, the Italian did not reply.

“I have a notion that we may find out some employment for you here,” said Linton. “What name are we to call you?”

“Giovanni,” said the sailor, after a moment's hesitation, which did not escape the shrewdness of his questioner.

“Giovanni be it,” said Linton, easily; “as good as another.”

“Just so,” rejoined the Italian, with a hardihood that seemed to sit easily upon him.

“I think, friend,” said Linton, drawing nearer to him—and, although the foreign language in which he spoke effectually prevented the others from understanding what passed, instantly his voice dropped into a lower and more confidential tone—“I think, friend, we shall soon understand each other well. You are in want of a protector; I may yet stand in need of an attached and zealous fellow. I read people quickly, and it seems to me that we are well met. Stay here, then; we shall soon have a large company arriving, and I 'll try and find out some exercise for your abilities.”

The Italian's dark eyes flashed and twinkled as though his subtle nature had already enlarged upon the shadowy suggestions of the other, and he made a significant gesture of assent.

“Remember, now, in whose service you are,” said Linton, taking out his purse, and seeking among its contents for the precise piece of coin he wanted—“remember, that I am not the master here, but one who has to the full as much power, and that I can prove a strong friend, and, some say, a very dangerous enemy. Here is the earnest of our bargain,” said he, handing him a guinea in gold; “from this hour I count upon you.”

The Italian nodded twice, and pocketing the money with a cool audacity that told that such contracts were easily comprehended by him, touched his cap, and sauntered away, as though to follow out some path of his own choosing. Linton looked after him for a moment, but the next his attention was taken off by seeing that Mr. Corrigan and his granddaughter were advancing hastily towards him.

“So you have really accepted my suggestion,” said Mary, with a flush of pleasure on her cheek; “the door has been opened, and the vista is exactly as my dream revealed it.”

“In all save the chief ingredient,” replied Linton, laugh-. ing; “we want the monk and the casket.”

“Hush!” said she, cautiously; “grandpapa is a firm believer in all dreams and visions, and would not hear them spoken of irreverently.”

“Assuredly, I never was less in the mind to do so,” replied Linton, with a degree of earnestness that made Mary smile, little suspecting at the time to what his speech owed its fervor.

“We've come to take a last look at the 'Hall,' Mr. Linton,” said the old man. “Tom Keane tells me that your gay company will soon arrive; indeed, rumor says that some have already reached Limerick, and will be here to-morrow.”

“This is more than I knew of,” said Linton; “but here comes the redoubted Tom himself, and with a full letter-bag, too.” Hastily unlocking the leather sack, Tom Linton emptied its contents upon a grassy bench, where the party seated themselves to learn the news. “There are no secrets here,” said Linton, tossing over the letters, with nearly all of whose handwriting he was familiar; “help me, Miss Leicester, I beg, to get through my task. Pray break some of the seals, and tell us who our dear friends are whose presence is so soon to charm and enliven us. And will you, too, sir, bear your part?” Thus invited, old Mr. Corrjgan put on his spectacles, and slowly prepared to assist in the labor.

“That's the Dean's hand, Miss Leicester—the Dean of Drumcondera. I hope he 's not coming; I 'm sure he was never invited.”

“He regrets he cannot be with you this week, but will certainly come next, and take the liberty of presenting his distinguished friend, the Hofrath von Dunnersleben, professor of Oriental Literature at Hochenkanperhausen.”

“This is painting the lily with a vengeance; 'color on color' is bad heraldry, but what shall we say of the taste that brings 'bore upon bore'?”

“'Mrs. Leicester White has prevailed upon Mr. Howie to defer his departure from Ireland—'”

“This is too bad,” interrupted Linton. “What fortune have you, sir? I hope better tidings than Miss Leicester.”

“This is a strange kind of scrawl enough,” said the old man; “it runs thus:—'Dear Tom, we are starting for your wild regions this evening—two drags and a mail phaeton. I have sent Gipsy and the white fetlocked colt by Hericks, and will bring Tom Edwards with me. The mare looks well, but fleshy; you must look to it that we haven't heavy ground—'”

“Oh, I know who that's from,” said Linton, hastily taking the letter from Corrigan's hand; “it's Lord Charles Frobisher,—a silly fellow, that never thinks of anything but horse-racing and training.”

“He would seem to speculate on something of the kind here,” said Corrigan; “at least, it looks very like premeditation, this sending off grooms and racers.”

“He does so everywhere he goes,” said Linton, affecting to laugh; “a surgeon would no more travel without his lancets, than Charley without some chance of a 'match;' but what's this?

“Dear Mr. Cashel,—I and my little girl are already *en route* for your hospitable castle, too happy to assist in the celebration of your house-warming—”

“Oh, that's Meek,” said Linton. “And now for this rugged little hand here.

“Lady Janet and Sir Andrew MacFarline—”

“Strange style,—the lady first,” interposed Miss Leicester.

“She is always so,” said Linton, continuing the perusal—

—“will reach Tubbermore by Tuesday, and have only to request that their apartments may not have a north aspect, as Lady J. has still a heavy cold hanging over her. Sir A.'s man, Flint, will arrange the rooms himself and, with Mr. Cashel's permission, give directions about double doors—if there be none.

“Sir A. has taken the liberty of mentioning to Gordon that the sherry is far too hot and acrid, and hopes Mr. Cashel will pardon his having ordered some dozens of 'Amontillado' for trial. Lady J. asks, as a favor, that plants and flowers may be banished from the house during her brief stay, Dr. Grimes positively forbidding all herbaceous odors; and if the cook could make the 'cuisine' particularly simple, it would also oblige her, as Dr. G. says she ought not to be exposed to the irritation of tempting viands, even to see them at table.

“Lady J. hopes that the society will be cheerful without dissipation, and gay without debauch; above all, she stipulates for early hours, and trusts that by eleven, at latest, the house will have retired to rest. Lady Janet has no objection to meeting any one Mr. Cashel may honor with his invitation, but leaves it to Mr. C.'s discretion not to abuse this liberality. Were she to particularize, she should merely suggest that the Kennyfecks, except perhaps the elder girl, are odious—Mrs. White a perfect horror—the Meeks something too atrocious—and that rather than meet the Kilgoffs and their set, Lady J. would almost prefer to relinquish all her much-anticipated pleasure. Mr. Linton can be, and very often is, gentlemanlike and amusing, but 'Lintonism,' as occasionally practised, is intolerable.

“Lady Janet has ventured on these remarks, far less for her own convenience than in the discharge of what she feels to be a duty to a very young and inexperienced man, whose unsuspecting nature will inevitably expose him to the very insidious attacks of selfishness, cunning, and to that species of dictation that sooner or later ends in debasing and degrading him who permits himself to be its subject.

“Janet MacFarline.”

“What a chaste specimen of disinterestedness her Ladyship's own letter,” said Mary. “Is she a near relative, or a very old friend of Mr. Cashel's family?”

“Neither; a mere acquaintance, undistinguished by anything like even a passing preference.”

“She is a Lady Janet,” interposed old Corrigan, “and it is surprising what charms of influence pertain to those segments of great families, as they descend a scale in society, and live among the untitled of the world;

besides that, whatever they want in power, they 'take out' in pretension, and it does quite as well.”

“She is 'mauvaise langue,'” said Linton; “and there are few qualities obtain such sway in society. But who comes here in such haste? It is Tom Keane. Well, Tom, what has happened—is the Hall on fire?”

“No, sir; but the company 's comin' rowlin' in as fast as 'pays' down the big avenue, and into the coort; there was three coaches all together, and I see two more near the gate.”

“Then we shall leave you to your cares of host,” said Corrigan, rising; “but don't forget that when affairs of state permit, we shall be delighted to see you at the cottage.”

“Oh, by all means, Mr. Linton. I have acquired the most intense curiosity to hear about your fine company and their doings—pray compassionate my inquisitiveness.”

“But will you not join us sometimes?” said Linton; “can I not persuade you to make part of our little company? for I trust we shall be able to have some society worth showing you.”

The old man shook his head and made a gesture of refusal.

“Nay,” said he, “I am so unfitted for such scenes, and so grown out of the world's ways, that I am going to play hermit, and be churlish enough to lock the wicket that leads down to the cottage during the stay of your visitors—not against *you*, however. You'll always find the key at the foot of the holly-tree.”

“Thanks—I'll not forget it,” said Linton; and he took a cordial leave of his friends, and returned to the house, wondering as he went who were the punctual guests whose coming had anticipated his expectations.

He was not long in doubt upon this point, as he perceived Mr. Phillis, who, standing on the terrace before the chief entrance, was giving directions to the people about, in a tone of no small authority.

“What, Phillis! has your master arrived?” cried Linton, in astonishment.

“Oh, Mr. Linton!” cried the other, obsequiously, as hat in hand he made his approaches, “there has been such a business since I wrote—”

“Is he here? Is he come?” asked Linton, impatiently.

“No, sir, not yet; nor can he arrive before to-morrow evening. You received my letter, I suppose, about the result of the yachting-party and Lady Kilgoff?”

“No! I know not one word about it,” said Linton, with a firmness that showed how well he could repress any trace of anxiety or excitement. “Come this way, out of the hearing of these people, and tell me everything from the beginning.”

Phillis obeyed, and walked along beside him, eagerly narrating the whole story of Cashel's departure, to the moment when the yacht foundered, and the party were shipwrecked off the coast of Wexford.

“Well, go on,” said Linton, as the other came to a full stop. “What then?”

“A few lines came from Mr. Cashel, sir, with orders for certain things to be sent down to a little village on the coast, and directions for me to proceed at once to Tubbermore and await his arrival.”

Linton did not speak for some minutes, and seemed totally occupied with his own reflections, when by hazard he caught the words “her Ladyship doing exactly as she pleases—”

“With whom?” asked he, sternly.

“With Mr. Cashel, sir; for it seems that notwithstanding all the terror and danger of the late mishap, Mr. Sickleton has been despatched to Cowes to purchase the 'Queen of the Harem,' Lord Wellingham's new yacht, and this at Lady Kilgoff's special instigation. Mr. Sickleton slept one night at our house in town, and I took a look at his papers; there was nothing of any consequence, however, except a memorandum about 'Charts for the Mediterranean,' which looks suspicious.”

“I thought, Phillis, I had warned you about the Kilgoff intimacy. I thought I had impressed you with the necessity of keeping them from him.”

“So you had, sir; and, to the very utmost of my power, I did so; but here was a mere accident that foiled all my care and watchfulness.”

“As accidents ever do,” muttered Linton, with suppressed passion. “The game of life, like every other game, is less to skill than chance! Well, when can they be here?”

“To-morrow afternoon, sir, if not delayed by something unforeseen; though this is not at all unlikely, seeing the difficulty of getting posters. There are from thirty to forty horses engaged at every stage.”

“Whom have we here?” cried Linton, as a large travelling-carriage suddenly swept round the drive, and entered the court.

“Sir Andrew MacFarline's baggage, sir; I passed them at the last change. One would say, from the preparations, that they speculate on a somewhat lengthy visit. What rooms are we to assign them, sir?”

“The four that look north over the billiard-room and the hall; they are the coldest and most cheerless in the house. Your master will occupy the apartments now mine; see, here is the plan of the house; Lord and Lady Kilgoff have 4, 5, and 6. These that are not marked you may distribute how you will. My quarters are those two, beyond the library.”

Linton was here interrupted by the advance of a tall, stiff-looking old fellow, who, carrying his hand to his hat in military guise, stood straight before him, saying, in a very broad accent, “The gen'ral's mon, sir, an't please ye.”

“Well, friend, and what then?” replied Linton, half testily.

“I 've my leddy's orders, sir, to tak' up a good position, and a warm ane, in the hoos yonder, and if it's no askin' too much, I 'd like to speer the premises first.”

“Mr. Phillis, look after this, if you please,” said Linton, turning away; “and remember my directions.”

“Come with me, friend,” said Phillis; “your mistress, I suppose, does not like cold apartments?”

“Be ma saul, if she finds them so, she 'll mak' the rest of the hoos over warm for the others,” said he, with a sardonic grin, that left small doubt of his sincere conviction.

“And your master?” said Phillis, in that interrogatory tone which invites a confidence.

“The gen'ral 's too auld a soldier no to respec deescepline,” said he, dryly.

“Oh, that's it, Sanders.”

“Ma name's Bob Flint, and no Saunders,—gunner and driver i' the Royal Artillery,” said the other, drawing himself up proudly; “an' if we are to be mair acquaint, it's just as well ye 'd mind that same.”

As Bob Flint possessed that indescribable something which would seem, by an instinct, to save its owner from impertinences, Mr. Phillis did not venture upon any renewed familiarity, but led the way into the house in silence.

“That's a bra' cookin' place ye've got yonder,” said Bob, as he stopped for a second at the door of the great kitchen, where already the cooks were busied in the various preparations; “but I'm no so certain my leddy wad like to see a bra' giggot scooped out in tha' fashion just to mak' room for a wheen black potatoes inside o' it;”—the operation alluded to so sarcastically being the stuffing of a shoulder of mutton with truffles, in Provencal mode.

“I suppose her Ladyship will be satisfied with criticising what comes to table,” said Phillis, “without descending to the kitchen to make objections.”

“If she does, then,” said Flint, “she's mair ceevil to ye here than she was in the last hoos we spent a fortnight, whar she discharged twa maids for no making the beds as she'd taw'd them, forbye getting the coachman turned off because the carriage horses held their tails ower high for her fancy.”

“We'll scarce put up with that here,” said Phillis, with offended dignity.

“I dinna ken,” said Bob, thoughtfully; “she made her ain nephew carry a pound o' dips from the chandler's, just, as she said, to scratch his pride a bit. I 'd ha' ye mind a wee hoo ye please her fancy. You 're a bonnie mon, but she'll think leetle aboot sending ye packing.”

Mr. Phillis did not deign a reply to this speech, but led the way to the suite destined for her Ladyship's accommodation.

CHAPTER XXXII. HOW THE VISITORS FARED

They come—they come!

—Harold.

Linton passed the greater part of the night in letter-writing. Combinations were thickening around him, and it demanded all the watchful activity he could command to prevent himself being overtaken by events. To a confidential lawyer he submitted a case respecting Corrigan's title, but so hypothetically and with such reserve that it betrayed no knowledge of his secret—for he trusted no man. Mary Leicester's manuscript was his next care, and this he intrusted to a former acquaintance connected with the French press, entreating his influence to obtain it the honor of publication, and, instead of remuneration, asking for some flattering acknowledgment of its merits. His last occupation was to write his address to the constituency of his borough, where high-sounding phrases and generous professions took the place of any awkward avowals of political opinion. This finished, and wearied by the long-sustained exertion, he threw himself on his bed. His head, however, was far too deeply engaged to permit of sleep. The plot was thickening rapidly—events, whose course he hoped to shape at his leisure, were hurrying on, and although few men could summon to their aid more of cold calculation in a moment of difficulty, his wonted calm was now disturbed by one circumstance—this being, as he called it to himself—Laura's treachery. No men bear breaches of faith so ill as they who practise them with the world. To most persons the yacht voyage would have seemed, too, a chance occurrence, where an accidental intimacy was formed, to wane and die out with the circumstance that created it. Not so did *he* regard it. He read a prearranged plan in every step she had taken—he saw in her game the woman's vanity to wield an influence over one for whom so many contended—he knew, too, how in the great world an “*éclat*” can always cover an “indiscretion”—and that, in the society of that metropolis to which she aspired, the reputation of chaperoning the rich Roland Cashel would be of incalculable service.

If Linton had often foiled deeper snares, here a deep personal wrong disturbed his powers of judgment, and irritated him beyond all calm prudential thoughts. Revenge upon her, the only one he had ever cared for, was now his uppermost thought, and left little place for any other.

Wearied and worn out, he fell asleep at last, but only to be suddenly awakened by the rattling of wheels and the quick tramp of horses on the gravel beneath his window. The one absorbing idea pervading his mind, he started up, muttering, “*She* is here.” As he opened his window and looked down, he at once perceived his mistake—Mrs. Kennyfeck's well-known voice was heard, giving directions about her luggage—and Linton closed the casement, half relieved and half disappointed.

For a brief space the house seemed astir. Mrs. Kennyfeck made her way along the corridor in a mingled commentary on the handsome decorations of the mansion and Mr. Kennyfeck's stupidity, who had put Archbold's “Criminal Practice” into her bag instead of Debrett's “Peerage,” while Linton could overbear a little quizzing conversation between the daughters, wherein the elder reproached her sister for not having the politeness to bid them “welcome.” The slight commotion gradually subsided, all became still, but only for a brief space. Again the same sound of crashing wheels was heard, and once more Linton flung open his window and peered out into the darkness. It was now raining tremendously, and the wind howling in long and dreary cadences.

“What a climate!” exclaimed a voice Linton knew to be Downie Meek's. His plaint ran thus:—

“I often said they should pension off the Irish Secretary after three years, as they do the Chief Justice of

Gambia.”

“It will make the ground very heavy for running, I fear,” said the deep full tone of a speaker who assisted a lady to alight.

“How you are always thinking of the turf, Lord Charles!” said she, as he rather carried than aided her to the shelter of the porch.

Linton did not wait for the reply, but shut the window, and again lay down.

In that half-waking state, where sleep and fatigue contest the ground with watchfulness, Linton continued to hear the sound of several arrivals, and the indistinct impressions became commingled till all were lost in heavy slumber. So is it. Childhood itself, in all its guileless freedom, enjoys no sounder, deeper sleep than he whose head is full of wily schemes and subtle plots, when once exhausted nature gains the victory.

So profound was that dreamless state in which he lay, that he was never once aware that the door by which his chamber communicated with the adjoining one had been opened, while a select committee were debating about the disposition of the furniture, in total ignorance that he made part of it.

“Why couldn't Sir Andrew take that small room, and leave this for me? I like an alcove vastly,” said Lady Janet, as, candle in hand, she took a survey of the chamber.

“Yes, my leddy,” responded Flint, who, loaded with cloaks, mantles, and shawls, looked like an ambulating wardrobe.

“You can make him a kind of camp-bed there; he'll do very well.”

“Yes, my leddy.”

“And don't suffer that impertinent Mr. Phillis to poke his head in here and interfere with our arrangements. These appear to me to be the best rooms here, and I 'll take them.”

“Yes, my leddy.”

“Where's Sir Andrew?”

“He's takin' a wee drap warm, my leddy, in the butler's room; he was ower wat in the 'dickey' behind.”

“It rained smartly, but I 'm sure the country wanted it,” dryly observed Lady Janet.—“Well, sir, *you* here again?” This sharp interrogatory was addressed to Mr. Phillis, who, after a vain search for her Ladyship over half the house, at length discovered her.

“You are not aware, my Lady,” said he, in a tone of obsequious deference, that nearly cost him an apoplexy, “that these rooms are reserved for my master.”

“Well, sir; and am I to understand that a guest's accommodation is a matter of less importance than a valet's caprice? for as Mr. Cashel never was here himself, and consequently never could have made a choice, I believe I am not wrong in the source of the selection.”

“It was Mr. Linton, my Lady, who made the arrangement.”

“And who is Mr. Linton, sir, who ventures to give orders here?—I ask you, who is Mr. Linton?” As there was something excessively puzzling to Mr. Phillis in this brief interrogatory, and as Lady Janet perceived as much, she repeated the phrase in a still louder and more authoritative tone, till, in the fulness of the accents, they fell upon the ears of him who, if not best able to give the answer, was, at least, most interested in its nature.

He started, and sat up; and although, from the position of his bed in a deep alcove he was himself screened from observation, the others were palpable enough to his eyes.

“Yes,” cried Lady Janet, for the third time, “I ask, who is Mr. Linton?”

“Upon my life, your Ladyship has almost made me doubt if there be such a person,” said Tom, protruding his head through the curtains.

“I vow he's in the bed yonder!” said Lady Janet, starting back. “Flint, I think you are really too bad; this is all your doing, or yours, sir,” turning to Phillis with a face of anger.

“Yes, my Leddy, it's a' his meddlin'.”

“Eh, Leddy Janet, what's this?” said Sir Andrew, suddenly joining the party, after a very dangerous excursion along dark corridors and back stairs.

“We've strayed into Mr. Linton's room, I find,” said she, gathering up various small articles she had on entering thrown on the table. “I must only reserve my apologies for a more fitting time and place, and wish him 'good-night.'”

“I've even dune something o' the same wi' Mrs. Kannyfack,” said Sir Andrew. “She was in bed, though, and so I made my retreat undiscovered.”

“I regret, Lady Janet,” said Linton, politely, “that my present toilet does not permit me to show you to your apartment, but if you will allow Mr. Phillis—”

“Dinna get up, man,” broke in Sir Andrew, as he half pushed the invading party out of the door; “we'll find it vara weel, I 've na doubt.” And in a confused hubbub of excuses and grumblings they withdrew, leaving Linton once more to court slumber, if he could.

“I beg pardon, sir,” said Phillis, popping in his head the minute after, “but Mr. Downie Meek' has taken the rooms you meant for Lady Janet; they've pillaged all the chambers at either side for easy-chairs and cushions to—”

“With all my heart; let them settle the question between them, or leave it to arbitration. Shut the door, pray.”

“Mrs. White, too, and a large party are in the library, and I don't know where to show them into.”

“Anywhere but here, Phillis. Good-night; there's a good man, good-night.”

“They 're all asking for you, sir; just tell me what to say.”

“Merely that I have passed a shocking night, and request I may not be disturbed till late in the afternoon.”

Phillis retired with a groan, and soon a confused hum of many voices could be heard along the corridor, in

every accent of irritation and remonstrance. Self-reproaches on the mistaken and abused confidence which had led the visitors to journey so many miles to “such a place;” mutual condolences over misfortune; abuse of the whole establishment, and “that insufferable puppy the valet” in particular, went round, till at last, like a storm that bad spent its fury, a lull succeeded; one by one the grumblers slipped away, and just as day was breaking, the house was buried in the soundest sleep.

About an hour later, when the fresh-risen son was glistening and glittering among the leaves, lightly tipped with the hoar-frost of an autumnal morning, a handsomely-appointed travelling-carriage, with four posters, drove rapidly up to the door, and an active-looking figure, springing from the box, applied himself to the bell with a vigorous hand, and the next minute, flinging open the carriage-door, said, “Welcome,—at last, I am able to say,—welcome to Tub-bermore.”

A graceful person, wrapped in a large shawl, emerged, and, leaning on his arm, entered the house; but in a moment he returned to assist another and a far more helpless traveller, an old and feeble man, who suffered himself to be carried, rather than walked, into the hall.

“This is Tubbermore, my Lord,” said the lady, bending down, and with a hand slightly touching his shoulder seeming to awake his attention.

“Yes—thank you—perfectly well,” said he, in a low soft voice, while a smile of courteous but vacant meaning stole over his sickly features.

“Not over-fatigued, my Lord?” said Roland, kindly.

“No, sir—we saw the 'Lightship' quite near us.”

“Still thinking of that dreadful night,” said her Ladyship, as she arranged two braids of her fair brown hair more becomingly on her forehead; and then turning to a very comely personage, who performed a series of courtesies, like minute guns, at intervals, added, “If you please, then, we'll retire to our apartment. Your housekeeper, I suppose, Mr. Cashel?”

“I conclude so,” said Roland; “but I am equally a stranger here with yourself.”

“Mrs. Moss, at your service, sir,” said the housekeeper, with another courtesy.

“Mrs. Moss, then,” said Roland, in an undertone, “I have only to remark that Lord and Lady Kilgoff must want for nothing here.”

“I understand, sir,” said Mrs. Moss; and whether the words, or the look that accompanied them, should bear the blame, but they certainly made Cashel look half angry, half ashamed.

“Then good-night—or good-morrow, I believe it should be,” said Lady Kilgoff. “I'm sure, in charity, we should not keep you from your bed a minute longer. You had a severe night outside.”

“Good-night—good-night, my Lord,” said Cashel; and the handsome form of the lady moved proudly on, while the servant assisted the poor decrepid husband slowly after.

Roland looked after them for an instant, and whether from some curiosity to see the possessions which called him master, or that he felt indisposed to sleep, he passed out into the lawn and stood some minutes gazing at the strange and somewhat incongruous pile before him.

Perhaps something of disappointment mingled with his thoughts—perhaps it was only that strange revulsion which succeeds to all long-excited expectation, when the moment of satisfying it has come, and speculation is at an end forever—but he was turning away, in half sadness, when he caught sight of a hand waving to him a salute from one of the windows. He had just time to answer the gesture, when the shutter was closed. There was one other saw the motion, and noted well the chamber from whence it came. Linton, awoke by the arrival of the carriage, had watched every step that followed, and now sat, with half-drawn curtains, eagerly marking everything that might minister to his jealous anger.

As for Cashel, he sauntered on into the wood, his mind wandering on themes separated by nearly half the world from where his steps were straying.

CHAPTER XXXIII. ROLAND'S INTRODUCTION TO MR. CORRIGAN

And while the scene around them smiled,
With pleasant talk the way beguiled.

Haile: Rambles.

As Roland Cashel strolled along alone, he could not divest himself of a certain feeling of disappointment, that, up to the present, at least, all his wealth had so little contributed to realize those illusions he had so often fancied. The plots, the wiles and cunning schemes by which he had been surrounded, were gradually revealing themselves to his senses, and he was rapidly nearing the fatal “bourne” which separates credulity from distrust.

If we have passed over the events which succeeded the loss of the yacht with some appearance of scant ceremony to our reader, it is because, though in themselves not totally devoid of interest, they formed a species of episode which only in one respect bore reference to the current of our story. It is not necessary, no more than it would be gratifying, to us to inquire with what precise intentions Lady Kilgoff had sought to distinguish Roland by marks of preference. Enough, if we say that he was neither puppy enough to ascribe the feeling to anything but a caprice, nor was he sufficiently hackneyed in the world's ways to suspect it could mean more.

That he was flattered by the notice, and fascinated by the charms of a very lovely and agreeable woman,

whose dependence upon him each day increasing drew closer the ties of intimacy, is neither strange nor uncommon, no more than that she, shrewdly remarking the bounds of respectful deference by which he ever governed his acquaintance, should use greater freedoms and less restricted familiarity with him, than had he been one of those fashionable young men about town with whom the repute of a conquest would be a triumph.

It is very difficult to say on what terms they lived in each other's society. It were easier, perhaps, to describe it by negatives, and say that assuredly if it were not love, the feeling between them was just as little that which subsists between brother and sister. There was an almost unbounded confidence—an unlimited trust—much asking of advice, and, in fact, as many of my readers will say, fully as much peril as need be.

From her, Cashel first learned to see the stratagems and schemes by which his daily life was beset. Too proud to bestow more than a mere passing allusion to the Kennyfecks, she directed the whole force of her attack upon that far more dangerous group in whose society Roland had lately lived. For a time she abstained altogether from even a chance reference to Linton; but at length, as their intimacy ripened, she avowed her fear of him in all its fulness. When men will build up the edifice of distrust, it is wonderful with what ingenuity they will gather all the scattered materials of doubt, with what skill arrange and combine them! A hundred little circumstances of a suspicious nature now rushed to Roland's memory, and his own conscience corroborated the history she drew of the possible mode by which Linton acquired an influence over him.

That Linton had been the “evil genius” of many, Cashel had often heard before, but always from the lips of men; and it is astonishing, whether the source be pride, or something less stubborn, but the warning which we reject so cavalierly from our fellows, comes with a wondrous force of conviction from the gentler sex.

For the heavy sums he had lost at play, for all the wasteful outlay of his money, Cashel cared little; but for the humiliating sense of being a “dupe” and a “tool,” his outraged pride suffered deeply; and when Lady Kilgoff drew a picture, half real, half imaginary, of the game which his subtle associate was playing, Roland could scarce restrain himself from openly declaring a rupture, and, if need be, a quarrel with him.

It needed all her persuasions to oppose this course; and, indeed, if she had not made use of one unanswerable argument, could she have succeeded. This was the inevitable injury Linton could inflict upon *her*, by ascribing the breach to her influence. It would be easy enough, from such materials as late events suggested, to compose a history that would ruin her. Lord Kilgoff's lamentable imbecility, the result of that fatal night of danger; Cashel's assiduous care of her; her own most natural dependence upon him,—all these, touched on with a woman's tact and delicacy, she urged, and at last obtained his pledge that he would leave to time and opportunity the mode of terminating an intimacy he had begun to think of with abhorrence.

If there be certain minds to whom the very air they breathe is doubt, there are others to whom distrust is absolute misery. Of these latter Cashel was one. Nature had made him frank and free-spoken, and the circumstances of his early life had encouraged the habit. To nourish a grudge would have been as repulsive to his sense of honor as it would be opposed to all the habits of his buccaneering life. To settle a dispute with the sword was invariably the appeal among his old comrades; and such arbitraments are those which certainly leave the fewest traces of lingering malice behind them. To cherish and store up a secret wrong, and wait in patience for the day of reckoning, had something of the Indian about it that, in Roland's eyes, augmented its atrocity.

Oppressed with thoughts like these, and associating every vexation he suffered as in some way connected with that wealth whose possession he fancied was to satisfy every wish and every ambition, he sauntered on, little disposed to derive pleasure from the presence of those external objects which fortune had made his own.

“When I was poor,” thought he, “I had warm and attached friends, ready to exult in my successes, and sympathize with me in my sorrows. If I had enemies, they were brave fellows, as willing to defend their cause with the sword as myself. None flattered or frowned on him who was richer than the rest. No subtle schemes lay in wait for him whose unsuspecting frankness exposed him to deception; we were *bons camarades*, at least,” said he, aloud, “and from what I have seen of the great world, I 've lived to prize the distinction.”

From this revery he was suddenly recalled by observing, directly in front of him, an elderly gentleman, who, in a stooping posture, seemed to seek for something among the dry leaves and branches beside a low wicket.

“This is the first fruit of our gay neighborhood,” said the old man, testily, as he poked the dead leaves with his cane; “we 're lucky if they leave us without more serious inconvenience.”

“Can I assist you in your search?—have you lost something?” said Cashel, approaching.

“There is a key—the key of the wicket—hid somewhere hereabouts, young man,” said the other, who, scarcely bestowing a look upon Roland, continued his investigation as busily as before.

Cashel, undaunted by the somewhat ungracious reception, now aided him in his search, while the other continued: “I 've known this path for nigh forty years, and never remember this wicket to have been locked before. But so it is. My old friend is afraid of the invasion of this noisy neighborhood, and has taken to lock and key to keep them out. The key he promised to hide at the foot of this tree.”

“And here it is,” said Cashel, as he unlocked the wicket and flung it wide.

“Many thanks for your help, but you have a better reward than my gratitude, in eyes some five-and-thirty years younger,” said the old man, with the same half-testy voice as before. “Perhaps you 'd like to see the grounds here, yourself; come along. The place is small, but far better kept than the great demesne, I assure you; just as many an humble household is more orderly than many a proud retinue.”

Roland was rather pleased by the quaint oddity of his new companion, of whom he thought, but could not remember where, he had seen the features before.

“You are a stranger in these parts, I conclude?” said the old man.

“Yes. I only arrived here about an hour ago, and have seen nothing save the path from the Hall to this spot.”

“There 's little more worth the seeing on yonder side of the paling, sir. A great bleak expanse, with stunted trees and a tasteless mansion, full of, I take it, very dubious company; but perhaps you are one of them?”

“I confess as much,” said Roland, laughing; “but as I have not seen them, don't be afraid I 'll take up the cudgels for my associates.”

“Labor lost if you did,” said the other, bluntly. “I only know of them what the newspapers tell us; but their names are enough.”

“Are they all in the same category, then?” asked Cashel, smiling.

“Pigeons or hawks; dupes or swindlers,—an ugly alternative to choose from.”

“You are candid, certainly, friend,” said Cashel, half angrily; “but don't you fancy there is rather too much of frankness in saying this to one who has already said he is of the party?”

“Just as he likes to take it,” said the old man, bluntly. “The wise man takes warning where the fool takes umbrage. There 's a fine view for you—see! there's a glorious bit of landscape,” cried he, enthusiastically, as they came to an opening of the wood and beheld the wide expanse of Lough Deny, with its dotted islands and ruined tower.

Roland stood still, silently gazing on the scene, whose beauty was heightened by all the strong effect of light and shade.

“I see you have an eye for landscape,” said the old man, as he watched the expression of Cashel's features.

“I 've been a lover of scenery in lands where the pursuit was well rewarded,” said Roland, thoughtfully.

“That you may; but never in a country where the contemplation called for more thought than in this before you. See, yonder, where the lazy smoke rises heavily from the mountain side, high up there amid the fern and the tall heath, that is a human dwelling,—there lives some cottier a life of poverty as uncheered and unpitied as though he made no part of the great family of man. For miles and miles of that dreary mountain some small speck may be traced where men live and grow old and die out, unthought of and uncared for by all beside. This misery would seem at its full, if now and then seasons of sickness did not show how fever and ague can augment the sad calamities of daily life. There are men—ay, and old men too—who never have seen bread for years, I say, save when some gamekeeper has broken it to feed the greyhounds in a coursing party.”

“And whose the fault of all this?” said Cashel, eagerly.

“It is easy to see, sir,” said the other, “that you are no landed proprietor, for not only you had not asked the question, but you had not shown so much emotion when putting it So it is,” muttered he to himself. “It is so ever. They have most sympathy with the poor who have least the power to help them.”

“But I ask again, whose the fault of such a system?” cried Cashel.

“Ask your host yonder, and you 'll soon have an answer to your question. You 'll hear enough of landlords' calamities,—wrecking tenantry, people in barbarism, irreclaimably bad, sunk in crime, black in ingratitude. Ask the peasant, and he 'll tell you of clearances,—whole families turned out to starve and die in the highways; the iron pressure of the agent in the dreary season of famine and fever. Ask the priest, and he will say, it is the galling tyranny of the 'rich man's church' establishment consuming the substance, but restoring nothing to the people. Ask the rector, and he 'll prove it is popery,—the debasing slavery of the very blackest of all superstitions; and so on. Each throws upon another the load which he refuses to bear his share of, and the end is, we have a reckless gentry and a ruined people; all the embittering hatred of a controversy, and little of the active working of Christian charity. Good-bye, sir. I ask pardon for inflicting something like a sermon upon you. Good-bye.”

“And yet,” said Cashel, “you have only made me anxious to hear more from you. May I ask if we are likely to meet again, and where?”

“If you should chance to be sick during your visit here, and send for the doctor, it's likely they 'll fetch me, as there is no other here.”

Cashel started, for he at once remembered that the speaker was Dr. Tiernay, the friend of his tenant, Mr. Corrigan. As the doctor did not recognize him, however, Roland resolved to keep his secret as long as he could.

“There, sir,” said Cashel, “I see some friends accosting you. I 'll say good-bye.”

“Too late to do so now,” said the other, half sulkily. “Mr. Corrigan would feel it a slight if you turned back, when his table was spread for a meal. You 'll have to breakfast here.”

Before Roland could answer, Mr. Corrigan came forward from beneath the porch, and, with a hand to each, bid them welcome.

“I was telling this gentleman,” said Tiernay, “that he is too far within your boundaries for retreat. He was about to turn back.”

“Nay, nay,” said the old man, smiling; “an old fellow like you or me may do a churlish thing, but a young man's nature is fresher and warmer. I tell you, Tiernay, you 're quite wrong; this gentleman will breakfast here.”

“With pleasure,” said Cashel, cordially, and entered the cottage.

CHAPTER XXXIV. ROLAND “HEARS SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE.”

Ay, sir, I saw him 'hind the arras.

Sir Gavin.

Cashel would have devoted more attention to the tasteful arrangement of the drawing-room into which they

were ushered, if he had not been struck with the handsome and graceful form of a young girl, who from time to time passed before his eyes in an inner chamber, engaged in the office of preparing breakfast, and whom he at once recognized as the granddaughter of whom Linton wrote.

“We were talking of poor Ireland,” said Tiernay, “and all her sorrows.”

“I'll engage you were,” cried Corrigan, laughing, “and I 'll swear you did not make a mournful topic a whit less gloomy by your way of treating it—And that's what he calls entertaining a stranger, sir,—like a bankrupt merchant amusing a party by a sight of his schedule. Now, I 'll wager a trifle my young friend would rather hear where a brace of cocks was to be found, or the sight of a neat grass country to ride over after the fox-hounds,—and I can do both one and the other. But here comes Mary,—my granddaughter, Miss Leicester, sir.”

Mary saluted the stranger with an easy gracefulness, and she shook the doctor's hand cordially.

“You are a little late, doctor,” said she, as she led the way into the breakfast-room.

“That was in part owing to that rogue Keane, who has taken to locking the gate of the avenue, by way of seeming regular, and some one else has done the same with the wicket here. Now, as for fifty years back all the cows of the country have strayed through the one, and all the beggars through the other, I don't know what 's to come of it.”

“I suppose the great house is filling?” said Mary, to withdraw him from a grumbling theme; “we heard the noise of several arrivals this morning early.”

“This gentleman can inform you best upon all that,” said Tiernay; “he himself is one of the company.”

“But I am ignorant of everything,” said Cashel; “I only arrived here a little after daybreak, and, not caring to sleep, I strolled out, when my good fortune threw me into your way.”

“Your friends are likely to have fine weather, and I am glad of it,” said Corrigan. “This country, pretty enough in sunshine, looks bleak and dreary when the sky is lowering; but I 've no doubt *you'd* rather have

'A southerly wind and a cloudy sky,'

as the song says, than the brightest morning that ever welcomed a lark. Are you fond of hunting?”

“I like every kind of sport where horse, or gun, or hound can enter; but I 've seen most of such pastimes in distant countries, where the game is different from here, and the character of the people just as unlike.”

“'I have hunted the wild boar myself,” said old Corrigan, proudly, “in the royal forests at Meudon and Fontainebleau.”

“I speak of the antelope and the jaguar, the dark leopard of Guiana, or the brown bison of the Andes.”

“That is indeed a manly pastime!” said Mary, enthusiastically.

“It is so,” said Cashel, warmed by the encouragement of her remark, “more even for the endurance and persevering energy it demands than for its peril. The long days of toil in search of game, the nights of waking watchfulness, and then the strange characters and adventures among which you are thrown, all make up a kind of life so unlike the daily world.”

“There is, as you say, something highly exciting in all that,” said Corrigan; “but, to my thinking, hunting is a royal pastime, and loses half of its prestige when deprived of the pomp and circumstance of its courtly following. When I think of the old forest echoing to the tantarara of the *cor de chasse*, the scarlet-clad *piqueurs* with lance and cutlass, the train of courtiers mounted on their high-mettled steeds, displaying all the address of the *salon*, and all the skill of the chase, to him who was the centre of the group,—the king himself—”

“Are you not forgetting the fairest part of the pageants papa?” broke in Mary.

“No, my dear, that group usually waited to join us as we returned. Then, when the '*Retour de la Chasse*' rang out from every horn, and the whole wood re-echoed with the triumphant sounds, then might be seen the queen and her ladies advancing to meet us. I think I see her yet, the fair-haired queen, the noblest and most beautiful in all that lovely circle, mounted on her spotted Arabian, who bore himself proudly beneath his precious burden. Ah! too truly did Burke say, 'the Age of Chivalry was past,' or never had such sorrows gone unavenged. Young gentleman, I know not whether you have already conceived strong opinions upon politics, and whether you incline to one or other of the great parties that divide the kingdom, but one thing I would beseech you,—be a Monarchist. There is a steadfast perseverance in clinging to the legitimate Sovereign. Like the very observance of truth itself, shake the conviction once, and there is no limit to scepticism.”

“Humph!” muttered Tiernay, half aloud. “Considering how royalty treated your ancestors, your ardor in their favor might be cooled a little.”

“What's Tiernay saying?” said the old man.

“Grumbling, as usual, papa,” said Mary, laughing, and not willing to repeat the remark.

“Trying to give a man a bias in politics,” said the doctor, sarcastically, “is absurd, except you accompany the advice with a place. A man's political opinions are born with him, and he has as much to do with the choice of his own Christian name as whether he 'll be a Whig or a Tory.”

“Never mind him, sir,” said Corrigan to Cashel; “one might travesty the well-known epigram, and say of him that he never said a kind thing, nor did a rude one, in his life.”

“The greater fool he, then,” mattered Tiernay, “for the world likes him best who does the exact opposite; and here comes one to illustrate my theory. There, I see him yonder; so I 'll step into the library and look over the newspaper.”

“He cannot endure a very agreeable neighbor of ours,—a Mr. Linton,” said Corrigan, as the doctor retired, —“and makes so little secret of his dislike that I am always glad when they avoid a meeting.”

“Mr. Linton is certainly more generous,” said Mary, “for he enjoys the doctor's eccentricity without taking offence at his rude humor.”

“Good-breeding can be almost a virtue,” said the old man, with a smile.

“It has this disadvantage, however,” said Cashel: “it deceives men who, like myself, have little knowledge of life, to expect far more from politeness than it is ever meant to imply,—just as on the Lima shore, when we carried off a gold Madonna, we were never satisfied if we missed the diamond eyes of the image.”

The old man and his granddaughter almost started at the strange illustration; but their attention was now called off by the approach of Linton, whom they met as he reached the porch.

“Come here a moment, sir,” said the doctor, addressing Cashel, from the little boudoir; “here are some weapons of very old date found among the ruins beside where we stand.” And Roland had just time to quit the breakfast-room before Linton entered it.

“The menagerie fills fast,” said Linton, as he advanced gayly into the apartment: “some of our principal lions have come; more are expected; and all the small cages have got their occupants.”

“I am dying of curiosity,” said Mary. “Tell us everything about everybody. Who have arrived?”

“We have everything of a household save the host. He is absent; and, stranger than all, no one knows where.”

“How singular!” exclaimed Corrigan.

“Is it not? He arrived this morning with the Kilgoffs, and has not since been heard of. I left his amiable guests at the breakfast-table conversing on his absence, and endeavoring to account for it under every variety of 'shocking accident' one reads of in the morning papers. The more delicately minded were even discussing, in whispers, how long it would be decent to stay in a house if the owner committed suicide.”

“This is too shocking,” said Mary.

“And yet there are men who do these things! Talleyrand it was, I believe, who said that the fellow who shot himself showed a great want of *savoir vivre*. Well, to come back: we have the Kilgoffs, whom I have not seen as yet; the Meeks, father and daughter; the MacFarlines; Mrs. White and her familiar, a distinguished author; the whole Kennyfeck tribe; Frobisher; some five or six cavalry subalterns; and a large mob of strange-looking people, of both sexes, making up what in racing slang is called the 'ruck' of the party.”

“Will it not tax your ingenuity, Mr. Linton, to amuse, or even to preserve concord among such a heterogeneous multitude?” said Mary.

“I shall amuse them by keeping them at feud with each other, and, when they weary of that, let them have a grand attack of the whole line upon their worthy host and entertainer. Indeed, already signs of rebellious ingratitude have displayed themselves. You must know that there has been a kind of petty scandal going about respecting Lady Kilgoff and Mr. Cashel.”

“My dear sir,” said Mr. Corrigan, gravely, but with much courtesy, “when my granddaughter asked you for the latest news of your gay household, she did so in all the inconsiderate ignorance her habits and age may warrant; but neither she nor I cared to hear more of your guests than they ought to have reported of them, or should be repeated to the ears of a young lady.”

“I accept the rebuke with less pain,” said Linton, smiling easily, “because it is, in part at least, unmerited. If you had permitted me to continue, you should have seen as much.” Then, turning to Miss Leicester, he added: “You spoke of amusement, and you 'll acknowledge we are not idle. Lord Charles Frobisher is already marking out a race-course; Meek is exploring the political leaning of the borough; the Kennyfecks are trying their voices together in every room of the house; and Lady Janet has every *casserole* in the kitchen engaged in the preparation of various vegetable abominations which she and Sir Andrew take before breakfast; and what with the taking down and putting up of beds, the tuning of pianofortes, sol-fa-ing here, bells ringing there, cracking of tandem whips, firing off percussion-caps, screaming to grooms out of window, and slamming of doors, Babel was a scene of peaceful retirement in comparison. As this, too, is but the beginning, pray forgive me if my visits here be more frequent and enduring than ever.”

“Your picture of the company is certainly not flattering,” said Mary.

“Up to their merits, notwithstanding; but how could it be otherwise? To make a house pleasant, to bring agreeable people together,—to assemble those particles whose aggregate solidifies into that compact mass called society,—is far harder than is generally believed; vulgar folk attempt it by getting some celebrity to visit them. But what a failure that is! One lion will no more make a party than one swallow a summer. New people, like our friend Cashel, try it by asking everybody. They hope, by firing a heavy charge, that some of the shot will hit. Another mistake! He little knows how many jealousies, rivalries, and small animosities are now at breakfast together at his house, and how ready they are, when no other game offers, to make him the object of all their apite and scandal.”

“But why?” said Mary. “Is not his hospitality as princely as it is generously offered? Can they cavil with anything in either the reception itself or the manner of it?”

“As that part of the entertainment entered into *my* functions, Miss Leicester, I should say, certainly not. The whole has been well 'got up.' I can answer for everything save Cashel himself; as Curran said, 'I can elevate all save the host.' He is irreclaimably *en arrière*,—half dandy, half Delaware, affecting the man of fashion, but, at heart, a prairie hunter.”

“Hold, sir!” cried Cashel, entering suddenly, his face crimson with passion. “By what right do you presume to speak of me in this wise?”

“Ha! ha! ha!” broke out Linton, as he fell into a chair in a burst of admirably feigned laughter. “I told you, Miss Leicester, how it would be; did I not say I should unearth the fox? Ah! Roland, confess it; you were completely taken in.”

Cashel stared around for an explanation, and in the astonishment of each countenance he fancied he read a condemnation of his conduct All his impulses were quick as thought, and so he blushed deeply for his passionate outbreak, as he said,—

“I ask pardon of you, sir, and this lady for my unseemly anger. This gentleman certainly deserves no apology from me. Confound it, Master Tom, but assuredly you don't fire blank cartridge to startle your game.”

“No use to tickle lions with straws,” said Linton; and the insinuated flattery succeeded.

“Let me now bid you welcome to my cottage, Mr. Cashel,” said Corrigan; “although this incognito visit was an accident, I feel happy to see you here.”

“Thank you, thank you,” replied Cashel. “I shall be even more grateful still if you permit me to join in Linton's petition, and occasionally escape from the noisy festivities of the Hall, and come here.”

While Corrigan and Cashel continued to interchange mutual assurances of esteem and regard, Linton walked to a window with Miss Leicester.

“We had no conception that our guest was Mr. Cashel,” said Mary; “he met Dr. Tiernay accidentally in the park, and came along with him to breakfast.”

“And did not the doctor remember him?” said Linton, shrewdly.

“Oh, no; he may probably recollect something of having met him before, three weeks hence, but he is so absent!”

“I thought Roland would have taken the quizzing better,” said Linton, thoughtfully. “There 's no knowing any man, or—woman either. *You* perceived what I was at, certainly.”

“No, indeed. I was as much deceived as Mr. Cashel. I thought, to be sure, that you were unusually severe, but I never suspected the object.”

“How droll! Well, I am a better actor than I fancied,” said Linton, laughing; then added, in a lower tone, “Not that the lesson should be lost upon him; for, in sober earnest, there was much truth in it.”

“We were greatly pleased with him,” said Mary, “and now, knowing who he is, and what temptations such a young man has to over-estimate himself, are even more struck by his unassuming quietude.”

Linton only smiled, but it was a smile of most compassionate pity.

“I conclude that you mean to show yourself to your company, then, Mr. Cashel?” said he, turning suddenly about.

“I'm ready,” said Roland. “I'd go, however, with an easier conscience if Mr. Corrigan would only promise me to come and see us there sometimes.”

“I'm a very old fellow, Mr. Cashel, and have almost outlived the habits of society; but if any one's invitation shall bring me beyond these walls, it shall be yours.”

“I must be content with that,” said Roland, as he shook the proffered hand; and then, with a cordial farewell to Miss Leicester, took Linton's arm, and retired.

CHAPTER XXXV. MISS JEMIMA MEEK.

If you show him in Hyde Park—Lauk! how they will stare!
Though a very smart figure in Bloomsbury Square,

The Snob.

Cashel's was not a nature to dwell upon a grievance, and he would have, at once and forever, forgotten the late scene with Linton if it were not coupled in his mind with suspicions derived from various different sources. This made him silent and reserved as he walked along, and so palpably inattentive to all his companion's efforts at agreeability that Linton at last said, “Well, Cashel, if you can dispense with sleep, you certainly seem to take the compensation in dreaming. Here have I been retailing for you the choicest bits of gossip and small-talk, not only without the slightest gratitude, but even without common attention on your part!”

“Very true,” said Cashel; “the reproach is quite just, and no man can be more agreeable at the expense of his friends than yourself.”

“Still harping on my daughter, eh?” cried Linton. “I never thought you the man to misconstrue a jest; but if you really are offended with my folly—”

“If I really were offended,” said Cashel, almost sternly, “I should not leave it to be inferred from my manner.”

“That I am sure of,” cried Linton, assuming an air of frankness; “and now, since all that silly affair is forgotten—”

“I did not say so much,” interrupted Cashel. “I cannot forget it; and that is the very reason I am annoyed with myself, with you, and with all the world.”

“Pooh! nonsense, man; you were not used to be so thin-skinned. Let us talk of something else. Here are all our gay friends assembled: how are we to occupy and amuse them?”

Cashel made no reply, but walked on, seemingly lost in thought.

“By the way,” said Linton, “you've told me nothing of your adventures. Haven't you had something very like a shipwreck?”

“The yacht is lost,” said Cashel, dryly.

“Actually lost!” echoed the other, with well-assumed astonishment. “How fortunate not to have had the Kennyfeck party on board, as I believe you expected.”

“I had the Kilgoffs, however,” rejoined Roland.

“The Kilgoffs! you amaze me. How did my Lord ever consent to trust his most precious self on such an enterprise?”

Cashel shrugged his shoulders, without uttering a word in reply.

“But come, do condescend to be a little more communicative. How, and when, and where did the mishap

occur?”

“She foundered on the southern coast some time after midnight on the 15th. The crew and passengers escaped by the boats, and the craft went to pieces.”

“And the Kilgoffs, how did they behave in the moment of peril?”

“My Lord seemed insensible to all around; Lady Kilgoff with a dignified courage quite admirable.”

“Indeed!” said Linton, slowly, while he fixed his eyes on Cashel's face, where an expression of increased animation now displayed itself.

“She has a fine generous nature,” continued Cashel, not heeding the remark. “It is one of the saddest things to think of, how she has been mated.”

“She is a peeress,” said Linton, curtly.

“And what of that? Do your aristocratic distinctions close the heart against every high and noble sentiment, or can they compensate for the absence of every tie that attaches one to life? Is not some poor Indian girl who follows her wild ranchero husband through the dark valleys of Guiana, not only a happier, but a better wife than your proud peeress?”

Linton shook his head and smiled, but did not reply.

“I see how my old prejudices shock you,” said Cashel. “I only grieve to think how many of them have left me; for I am sick—sick at heart—of your gay and polished world. I am weary of its double-dealing, and tired of its gilded falsehood. Since I have been a rich man, I have seen nothing but the servile flattery of sycophancy, or the insidious snares of deeper iniquity. There is no equality for one like myself. The high-born wealthy would treat me as a *parvenu*, the vulgar rich only reflect back my own errors in broader deformity. I have known no other use of wealth than to squander it to please others; I have played high, and lost deeply; I have purchased a hundred things simply because some others wished to sell them; I have entertained and sat among my company, waiting to catch and resent the covert insult that men pass upon such as me; and will you tell me—you, who know the world well—that such a life repays one?”

“Now, let me write the credit side of the account,” said Linton, laughing, and affecting a manner of easy jocularity. “You are young, healthy, and high-spirited, with courage for anything, and more money than even recklessness can get rid of; you are the most popular fellow among men, and the greatest favorite of the other sex, going; you get credit for everything you do, and a hundred others that men know you could, but have not done; you have warm, attached friends,—I can answer for one, at least, who 'll lay down his life for you.” He paused, expecting some recognition, but Cashel made no sign, and he resumed: “You have only to propose some object to your ambition, whether it be rank, place, or a high alliance, to feel that you are a favorite with fortune.”

“And is it by knowing beforehand that one is sure to win that gambling fascinates?” said Roland, slowly.

“If you only knew how the dark presage of failure deters the unlucky man, you 'd scarce ask the question!” rejoined Linton, with an accent of sorrow, by which he hoped to awaken sympathy. The stroke failed, however, for Cashel took no notice of it.

“There goes one whose philosophy of life is simple enough,” said Linton, as he stopped at a break in the holly hedge, beside which they were walking, and pointed to Lord Charles, who, mounted on a blood-horse, was leading the way for a lady, equally well carried, over some sporting-looking fences.

“I say, Jim,” cried Frobisher, “let her go a little free at them; she 's always too hot when you hold her back.”

“You don't know, perhaps, that Jim is the lady,” whispered Linton, and withdrawing for secrecy behind the cover of the hedge. “Jim,” continued Linton, “is the familiar for Jemima. She's Meek's daughter, and the wildest romp—”

“By Jove! how well she cleared it. Here she comes back again,” cried Cashel, in all the excitement of a favorite sport.

“That 's all very pretty, Jim,” called out Frobisher, “but let me observe it's a very Brummagem style of thing, after all. I want you to ride up to your fence with your mare in hand, touch her lightly on the flank, and pop her over quietly.”

“She is too fiery for all that,” said the girl, as she held in the mettlesome animal, and endeavored to calm her by patting her neck.

“How gracefully she sits her saddle,” muttered Cashel; and the praise might have been forgiven from even a less ardent admirer of equestrianism, for she was a young, fresh-looking girl, with large hazel eyes, and a profusion of bright auburn hair which floated and flaunted in every graceful wave around her neck and shoulders. She possessed, besides, that inestimable advantage as a rider which perfect fearlessness supplies, and seemed to be inspired with every eager impulse of the bounding animal beneath her.

As Cashel continued to look, she had taken the mare a canter round a large grass field, and was evidently endeavoring, by a light hand and a soothing, caressing voice, to calm down her temper; stooping, as she went, in the saddle to pat the animal's shoulder, and almost bending her own auburn curls to the counter.

“She is perfect!” cried Roland, in a very ecstasy. “See that, Linton! Mark how she sways herself in her saddle!”

“That comes of wearing no stays,” said Linton, dryly, as he proceeded to light a cigar.

“Now she's at it. Here she comes!” cried Cashel almost breathless with anxiety; for the mare, chafed by the delay, no sooner was turned towards the fence once more, than she stretched out and dashed wildly at it.

It was a moment of intense interest, for the speed was far too great to clear a high leap with safety; the fear was, however, but momentary, for, with a tremendous bound, the mare cleared the fence, and, after a couple of minutes' cantering, stood with heaving flanks and swelling nostril beside the other horse.

“You see my misfortune, I suppose?” said the girl, addressing Frobisher.

“No. She 's not cut about the legs?” said he, as he bent down in his saddle and took a most searching survey of the animal.

“No, the hack is all right But don't you perceive that bit of blue cloth flaunting yonder on the hedge?—that is part of my habit. See what a tremendous rent is here; I declare, Charley, it is scarcely decent” And to illustrate the remark, she wheeled her horse round so as to show the fringed and jagged end of her riding-habit, beneath which a very finely turned ankle and foot were now seen.

“Then why don't you wear trousers, like everybody else?” said Frobisher, gruffly, and scarce bestowing even a passing glance at the well-arched instep.

“Because I never get time to dress like any one else. You order me out like one of your Newmarket boys,” replied she, pettishly.

“By Jove! I wish any one of them had got your hand.”

“To say nothing of the foot, Charley,” said she, roguishly, and endeavoring to arrange her torn drapery to the best advantage.

“No; that may do to astonish our friend Cashel, and make 'my lady' jealous. By the way, Jim, I don't see why you should n't 'enter for the plate' as well as the Kennyfeck girls.”

“I like *you* better, Charley,” said she, curveting her horse, and passaging him alternately from side to side.

“This is the second time to-day I have played the eavesdropper unconsciously,” said Roland, in a whisper, “and with the proverbial fortune of the listener in both cases.” And with these words he moved on, leaving Linton still standing opposite the opening of the hedge.

Cashel had not advanced many paces beneath the shelter of the tall hollies, when Frobisher accidentally caught sight of Linton, and called out, “Ha, Tom,—found you at last! Where have you been hiding the whole morning?—you that should, at least, represent our host here.”

Linton muttered something, while, by a gesture, he endeavored to caution Frobisher, and apprise him of Cashel's vicinity. The fretful motion of hie horse, however, prevented his seeing the signal, and he resumed,—

“One of my people tells me that Cashel came with the Kilgoffs this morning. I say, Tom, you'll have to look sharp in that quarter. Son, there—quiet, Gustave—gently, man!”

“He's too fat, I think. You always have your cattle too heavy,” said Linton, hoping to change the topic.

“He carries flesh well. But what is it I had to tell you? Oh, I remember now,—about the yacht club. I have just got a letter from Derwent, in which he says the thing is impossible. His remark is more true than courteous. He says, 'It's all very well in such a place as Ireland to know such people, but that it won't do in England; besides that, if Cashel does wish to get among men of the world, he ought to join some light cavalry corps for a year or so, and stand plucking by Stanhope, and Dashfield, and the rest of them. They 'll bring him out if he 'll only pay handsomely.'—Soh, there, man,—do be quiet, will you?—The end of it is, that Derwent will not put his name up. I must say it's a disappointment to me; but, as a younger brother, I have only to smile and submit.”

While Lord Charles was retailing this piece of information in no very measured tone, and only interrupted by the occasional impatience of his horse, Linton's eyes were fixed on Cashel, who, at the first mention of his own name, increased his speed, so as to suggest the fond hope that some, at least, of this unwelcome intelligence might have escaped him.

“You'll have to break the thing to him, Tom,” resumed Lord Charles. “You know him better than any of us, and how the matter can be best touched upon.”

“Not the slightest necessity for that, *now*,” said Linton, with a low, deliberate voice.

“Why so?”

“Because you have just done so yourself. If you had only paid the least attention to my signal, you 'd have seen that Cashel was only a few yards in front of me during the entire of your agreeable revelations.”

“By Jove!” exclaimed Frobisher, as his head dropped forward in overwhelming confusion; “what is to be done?”

“Rather difficult to say, if he heard all,” said Linton, coolly.

“You 'd say it was a quiz, Tom. *You 'd* pretend that you saw him all the while, and only did the thing for joke's sake, eh?”

“Possibly enough I might,” replied Linton; “but *you* could n't.”

“How very awkward, to be sure!” exclaimed Frobisher. “I say, Jim, I wish you 'd make up to Cashel a bit, and get us out of this scrape. There's Tom ready to aid and abet you, if only to take him out of the Kilgoffs' way.”

“There never was a more propitious moment, Miss Meek,'” said Linton, passing through the hedge, and approaching close to her. “He's a great prize,—the best estate in Ireland.”

“The nicest stable of horses in the whole country,” echoed Frobisher.

“A good-looking fellow, too; only wanting a little training to make presentable anywhere.”

“That white barb, with the flea-bitten flank, would carry you to perfection, Jim.”

“He 'll be a peer one of these days, if he is only patient enough not to commit himself in politics.”

“And such a hunting country for *you*,” said Frobisher, in ecstasy.

“I tell you I don't care for him; I never did,” said the girl, as a flush of half-angry meaning colored her almost childish features.

“But don't you care to be mistress of fifteen thousand a year, and the finest stud in Ireland?”

“Mayhap a countess,” said Linton, quietly. “Your papa would soon manage that.”

“I 'd rather be mistress of myself, and this brown mare, Joan, here,—that's all I know; and I'll have nothing to do with any of your plots and schemes,” said she, in a voice whose utterance was that of emotion.

“That's it,” said Frobisher, in a low tone to Linton; “there's no getting them, at that age, with a particle of brains.”

“They make up surprisingly for it afterwards,” replied Linton, dryly.

“So you 'll not consent, Jim?” said Frobisher, in a half-coaxing manner to the young girl, who, with averted head, sat in mingled sorrow and displeasure. “Well, don't be pettish about it; I 'm sure I thought it very generous in me, considering—”

She looked round at this moment, and her large eyes were bent upon him with a look which their very tears made passionately meaning.

“Considering what a neat finger you have on a young horse,” said he. And she turned abruptly away, and, as if to hide her emotion, spurred her mare into a bounding canter.

“Take care, Charley, take care what you 're doing,” said Linton, with a look of consummate shrewdness.

Frobisher looked after her for a minute or two, and then seemed to drop into a revery, for he made no reply whatever.

“Let the matter stop where it is,” said Linton, quietly, as if replying to some acknowledgment of the other; “let it stop there, I say, and one of these days, when she marries,—as she unquestionably will do, through papa Downie's means,—somebody of influence, she 'll be a steadfast, warm friend, never forgetting, nor ever wishing to forget, her childhood's companion. Go a little further, however, and you 'll just have an equally determined enemy. I know a little of both sides of the question,” added he, meditatively, “and it needs slight reflection which to prefer.”

“How are you going to amuse us here, Mr. Linton?” said she, cantering up at this moment; “for it seems to me, as old Lord Kilgoff says, that we are like to have a very dull house. People are ordering dinner for their own small parties as unsocially as though they were at the Crown Inn, at Brighton.”

“Yes, by the by,” said Frobisher, “I want to ask you about that. Don't you think it were better to dash a little bit of 'communism' through your administration?”

“I intend to send in my resignation as premier, now that the head of the State has arrived,” said Linton, smiling dubiously.

“I perceive,” said Frobisher, shrewdly, “you expect that the Government will go to pieces, if you leave it.”

“The truth is, Charley,” said he, dropping his voice to a low whisper, and leaning his hand on the horse's mane, “our friend Roland is rather too far in the category 'savage' for long endurance; he grows capricious and self-opinionated. The thin plating comes off, and shows the buccaneer at every slight abrasion.”

“What of that?” said Frobisher, languidly; “his book on Coutts' is unexceptionable. Come, Tom, you are the only man here who has a head for these things. Do exert yourself and set something a-going.”

“Well, what shall it be?” said he, gayly. “Shall we get the country people together, and have hack races? Shall we assemble the squires, and have a ball? Shall we start private theatricals? What says Miss Meek?”

“I vote for all three. Pray do, Mr. Linton,—you, who are so clever, and can do everything,—make us gay. If we only go on as we have begun, the house will be like a model prison,—on the separate and silent system.”

“As you wish it,” said Linton, bowing with assumed gallantry; “and now to work at once.” So saying, he turned towards the house, the others riding at either side of him.

“What shall we do about Derwent's letter, Tom?” asked Frobisher.

“Never speak of it; the chances are that he has heard enough to satisfy the most gluttonous curiosity. Besides, he has lost his yacht.” Here he dropped his voice to a low muttering, as he said, “And may soon have a heavier loss!”

“Is his pace too fast?” said Frobisher, who caught up the meaning, although not the words.

Linton made no reply, for his thoughts were on another track; then, suddenly catching himself, he said, “Come, and let us have a look at the stables; I've not seen our stud yet.” And they turned off from the main approach and entered the wood once more.

END OF VOL. I.

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