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CELT AND SAXON

By George Meredith

1910

BOOK 2.

XII. MISS MATTOCK XIII. THE DINNER-PARTY XIV. OF ROCKNEY XV. THE MATTOCK FAMILY XVI. OF THE GREAT MR. BULL AND THE CELTIC AND SAXON VIEW OF HIM: AND SOMETHING OF RICHARD ROCKNEY XVII. CROSSING THE RUBICON XVIII. CAPTAIN CON'S LETTER XIX. MARS CONVALESCENT

CHAPTER XII

MISS MATTOCK

Mrs. Adister O'Donnell, in common with her family, had an extreme dislike of the task of composing epistles, due to the circumstance that she was unable, unaided, to conceive an idea disconnected with the main theme of her communication, and regarded, as an art of conjuring, the use of words independent of ideas. Her native superiority caused her to despise the art, but the necessity for employing it at intervals subjected her to fits of admiration of the conjurer, it being then evident that a serviceable piece of work, beyond her capacity to do, was lightly performed by another. The lady's practical intelligence admitted the service, and at the same time her addiction to the practical provoked disdain of so flimsy a genius, which was identified by her with the genius of the Irish race. If Irishmen had not been notoriously fighters, famous for their chivalry, she would have looked on them as a kind of footmen hired to talk and write, whose volubility might be encouraged and their affectionateness deserved by liberal wages. The promptitude of Irish blood to deliver the war-cry either upon a glove flung down or taken up, raised them to a first place in her esteem: and she was a peaceful woman abhorring sanguinary contention; but it was in her own blood to love such a disposition against her principles.

She led Patrick to her private room, where they both took seats and he selected a pen. Mr. Patrick supposed that his business would be to listen and put her words to paper; a mechanical occupation permitting the indulgence of personal phantasies; and he was flying high on them until the extraordinary delicacy of the mind seeking to deliver itself forced him to prick up all his apprehensiveness. She wished to convey that she was pleased with the news from Vienna, and desired her gratification to be imparted to her niece Caroline, yet not so as to be opposed to the peculiar feelings of her brother Edward, which had her fullest sympathy; and yet Caroline must by no means be requested to alter a sentence referring to *Adiante*, for that would commit her and the writer jointly to an insincerity.

'It must be the whole truth, madam,' said Patrick, and he wrote: 'My dear Caroline,' to get the start. At once a magnificently clear course for the complicated letter was distinguished by him. 'Can I write on and read it to you afterward? I have the view,' he said.

Mrs. Adister waved to him to write on.

Patrick followed his 'My dear Caroline' with greetings very warm, founded on a report of her flourishing good looks. The decision of Government to send reinforcements to Ireland was mentioned as a prelude to the information from Vienna of the birth of a son to the Princess Nikolas: and then; having conjoined the two entirely heterogeneous pieces of intelligence, the composer adroitly interfused them by a careless transposition of the prelude and the burden that enabled him to play ad libitum on regrets and rejoicings; by which device the lord of Earlsfont might be offered condolences while the lady could express her strong contentment, inasmuch as he deplored the state of affairs in the sister island, and she was glad of a crisis concluding a term of suspense thus the foreign-born baby was denounced and welcomed, the circumstances lamented and the mother congratulated, in a breath, all under cover of the happiest misunderstanding, as effective as the cabalism of Prospero's wand among the Neapolitan mariners, by the skilful Irish development on a grand scale of the rhetorical figure anastrophe, or a turning about and about.

He read it out to her, enjoying his composition and pleased with his reconciliation of differences. 'So you say what you feel yourself, madam, and allow for the feelings on the other side,' he remarked. 'Shall I fold it?

There was a smoothness in the letter particularly agreeable to her troubled wits, but with an awful taste. She hesitated to assent: it seemed like a drug that she was offered.

Patrick sketched a series of hooked noses on the blotter. He heard a lady's name announced at the door, and glancing up from his work he beheld a fiery vision.

Mrs. Adister addressed her affectionately: 'My dear Jane!' Patrick was introduced to Miss Mattock.

His first impression was that the young lady could wrestle with him and render it doubtful of his keeping his legs. He was next engaged in imagining that she would certainly burn and be a light in the dark. Afterwards he discovered her feelings to be delicate, her looks pleasant. Thereupon came one of the most singular sensations he had ever known: he felt that he was unable to see the way to please her. She confirmed it by her remarks and manner of speaking. Apparently she was conducting a business.

'You're right, my dear Mrs. Adister, I'm on my way to the Laundry, and I called to get Captain Con to drive there with me and worry the manageress about the linen they turn out: for gentlemen are complaining of their shirt-fronts, and if we get a bad name with them it will ruin us. Women will listen to a man. I hear he has gone down to the city. I must go and do it alone. Our accounts are flourishing, I'm glad to say, though we cannot yet afford to pay for a secretary, and we want one. John and I verified them last night. We're aiming at steam, you know. In three or four years we may found a steam laundry on our accumulated capital. If only we can establish it on a scale to let us give employment to at least as many women as we have working now! That is what I want to hear of. But if we wait for a great rival steam laundry to start ahead of us, we shall be beaten and have to depend on the charitable sentiments of rich people to support the Institution. And that won't do. So it's a serious question with us to think of taking the initiative: for steam must come. It 's a scandal every day that it doesn't while we have coal. I'm for grand measures. At the same time we must not be imprudent: turning off hands, even temporarily, that have to feed infants, would be quite against my policy.'

Her age struck Patrick as being about twenty-three.

'Could my nephew Arthur be of any use to you?' said Mrs. Adister.

'Colonel Adister?' Miss Mattock shook her head. 'No.'

'Arthur can be very energetic when he takes up a thing.' 'Can he? But, Mrs. Adister, you are looking a little troubled. Sometimes you confide in me. You are so good to us with your subscriptions that I always feel in your debt.'

Patrick glanced at his hostess for a signal to rise and depart.

She gave none, but at once unfolded her perplexity, and requested Miss Mattock to peruse the composition of Mr. Patrick O'Donnell and deliver an opinion upon it.

The young lady took the letter without noticing its author. She read it through, handed it back, and

sat with her opinion evidently formed within.

'What do you think of it?' she was asked.

'Rank jesuitry,' she replied.

'I feared so!' sighed Mrs. Adister. 'Yet it says everything I wish to have said. It spares my brother and it does not belie me. The effect of a letter is often most important. I cannot but consider this letter very ingenious. But the moment I hear it is jesuitical I forswear it. But then my dilemma remains. I cannot consent to give pain to my brother Edward: nor will I speak an untruth, though it be to save him from a wound. I am indeed troubled. Mr. Patrick, I cannot consent to despatch a jesuitical letter. You are sure of your impression, my dear Jane?'

'Perfectly,' said Miss Mattock.

Patrick leaned to her. 'But if the idea in the mind of the person supposed to be writing the letter is accurately expressed? Does it matter, if we call it jesuitical, if the emotion at work behind it happens to be a trifle so, according to your definition?'

She rejoined: 'I should say, distinctly it matters.'

'Then you'd not express the emotions at all?'

He flashed a comical look of astonishment as he spoke. She was not to be diverted; she settled into antagonism.

'I should write what I felt.'

'But it might be like discharging a bullet.'

'How?'

'If your writing in that way wounded the receiver.'

'Of course I should endeavour not to wound!'

'And there the bit of jesuitry begins. And it's innocent while it 's no worse than an effort to do a disagreeable thing as delicately as you can.'

She shrugged as delicately as she could:

'We cannot possibly please everybody in life.'

'No: only we may spare them a shock: mayn't we?'

'Sophistries of any description, I detest.'

'But sometimes you smile to please, don't you?'

'Do you detect falseness in that?' she answered, after the demurest of pauses.

'No: but isn't there a soupcon of sophistry in it?'

'I should say that it comes under the title of common civility.'

'And on occasion a little extra civility is permitted!'

'Perhaps: when we are not seeking a personal advantage.'

'On behalf of the Steam Laundry?'

Miss Mattock grew restless: she was too serious in defending her position to submit to laugh, and his goodhumoured face forbade her taking offence.

'Well, perhaps, for that is in the interest of others.'

'In the interests of poor and helpless females. And I agree with you with all my heart. But you would not be so considerate for the sore feelings of a father hearing what he hates to hear as to write a roundabout word to soften bad news to him?'

She sought refuge in the reply that nothing excused jesuitry.

'Except the necessities of civilisation,' said Patrick.

'Politeness is one thing,' she remarked pointedly.

'And domestic politeness is quite as needful as popular, you'll admit. And what more have we done in the letter than to be guilty of that? And people declare it's rarer: as if we were to be shut up in families to tread on one another's corns! Dear me! and after a time we should be having rank jesuitry advertised as the specific balsam for an unhappy domesticated population treading with hard heels from desperate habit and not the slightest intention to wound.'

'My dear Jane,' Mrs. Adister interposed while the young lady sat between mildly staring and blinking, 'you have, though still of a tender age, so excellent a head that I could trust to your counsel blindfolded. It is really deep concern for my brother. I am also strongly in sympathy with my niece, the princess, that beautiful Adiante: and my conscience declines to let me say that I am not.'

'We might perhaps presume to beg for Miss Mattock's assistance in the composition of a second letter more to her taste,' Patrick said slyly.

The effect was prompt: she sprang from her seat.

'Dear Mrs. Adister! I leave it to you. I am certain you and Mr. O'Donnell know best. It's too difficult and delicate for me. I am horribly blunt. Forgive me if I seemed to pretend to casuistry. I am sure I had no such meaning. I said what I thought. I always do. I never meant that it was not a very clever letter; and if it does exactly what you require it should be satisfactory. To-morrow evening John and I dine with you, and I look forward to plenty of controversy and amusement. At present I have only a head for work.'

'I wish I had that,' said Patrick devoutly.

She dropped her eyes on him, but without letting him perceive that he was a step nearer to the point of pleasing her.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DINNER-PARTY

Miss Mattock ventured on a prediction in her mind:

She was sure the letter would go. And there was not much to signify if it did. But the curious fatality that a person of such a native uprightness as Mrs. Adister should have been drawn in among Irishmen, set her thoughts upon the composer of the letter, and upon the contrast of his ingenuous look with the powerful cast of his head. She fancied a certain danger about him; of what kind she could not quite distinguish, for it had no reference to woman's heart, and he was too young to be much of a politician, and he was not in the priesthood. His transparency was of a totally different order from Captain Con's, which proclaimed itself genuine by the inability to conceal a shoal of subterfuges. The younger cousin's features carried a something invisible behind them, and she was just perceptive enough to spy it, and it excited her suspicions. Irishmen both she and her brother had to learn to like, owing to their bad repute for stability: they are, moreover, Papists: they are not given to ideas: that one of the working for the future has not struck them. In fine, they are not solid, not law-supporting, not disposed to be (humbly be it said) beneficent, like the good English. These were her views, and as she held it a weakness to have to confess that Irishmen are socially more fascinating than the good English, she was on her guard against them.

Of course the letter had gone. She heard of it before the commencement of the dinner, after Mrs. Adister had introduced Captain Philip O'Donnell to her, and while she was exchanging a word or two with Colonel Adister, who stood ready to conduct her to the table. If he addressed any remarks to the lady under his charge, Miss Mattock did not hear him; and she listened—who shall say why? His unlike likeness to his brother had struck her. Patrick opposite was flowing in speech. But Captain Philip O'Donnell's taciturnity seemed no uncivil gloom: it wore nothing of that look of being beneath the table, which some of our good English are guilty of at their social festivities, or of towering aloof a Matterhorn above it, in the style of Colonel Adister. Her discourse with the latter amused her passing reflections. They started a subject, and he punctuated her observations, or she his, and so they speedily ran to earth.

'I think,' says she, 'you were in Egypt this time last winter.'

He supplies her with a comma: 'Rather later.'

Then he carries on the line. 'Dull enough, if you don't have the right sort of travelling crew in your boat.'

'Naturally,' she puts her semicolon, ominous of the full stop.

'I fancy you have never been in Egypt?'

'No'

There it is; for the tone betrays no curiosity about Egypt and her Nile, and he is led to suppose that she has a distaste for foreign places.

Condescending to attempt to please, which he has reason to wish to succeed in doing, the task of pursuing conversational intercourse devolves upon him

'I missed Parlatti last spring. What opinion have you formed of her?'

'I know her only by name at present.'

'Ah, I fancy you are indifferent to Opera.'

'Not at all; I enjoy it. I was as busy then as I am now.'

'Meetings? Dorcas, so forth.'

'Not Dorcas, I assure you. You might join if you would.'

'Your most obliged.'

A period perfectly rounded. At the same time Miss Mattock exchanged a smile with her hostess, of whose benignant designs in handing her to the entertaining officer she was not conscious. She felt bound to look happy to gratify an excellent lady presiding over the duller half of a table of eighteen. She turned slightly to Captain O'Donnell. He had committed himself to speech at last, without tilting his shoulders to exclude the company by devoting himself to his partner, and as he faced the table Miss Mattock's inclination to listen attracted him. He cast his eyes on her: a quiet look, neither languid nor frigid seeming to her both open and uninviting. She had the oddest little shiver, due to she knew not what. A scrutiny she could have borne, and she might have read a signification; but the look of those mild clear eyes which appeared to say nothing save that there was fire behind them, hit on some perplexity, or created it; for she was aware of his unhappy passion for the beautiful Miss Adister; the whole story had been poured into her ears; she had been moved by it. Possibly she had expected the eyes of such a lover to betray melancholy, and his power of containing the expression where the sentiment is imagined to be most transparent may have surprised her, thrilling her as melancholy orbs would not have done.

Captain Con could have thumped his platter with vexation. His wife's diplomacy in giving the heiress to Colonel Adister for the evening had received his cordial support while he manoeuvred cleverly to place Philip on the other side of her; and now not a step did the senseless fellow take, though she offered him his chance, dead sick of her man on the right; not a word did he have in ordinary civility; he was a burning disgrace to the chivalry of Erin. She would certainly be snapped up by a man merely yawning to take the bite. And there's another opportunity gone for the old country!—one's family to boot!

Those two were in the middle of the table, and it is beyond mortal, beyond Irish, capacity, from one end of a table of eighteen to whip up the whole body of them into a lively unanimous froth, like a dish of cream fetched out of thickness to the airiest lightness. Politics, in the form of a firebrand or apple of Discord, might knead them together and cut them in batches, only he had pledged his word to his wife to shun politics as the plague, considering Mr. Mattock's presence. And yet it was tempting: the recent Irish news had stung him; he could say sharp things from the heart, give neat thrusts; and they were fairly divided and well matched. There was himself, a giant; and there was an unrecognised bard of his country, no other than himself too; and there was a profound politician, profoundly hidden at present, like powder in a mine—the same person. And opposite to him was Mr. John Mattock, a worthy antagonist, delightful to rouse, for he carried big guns and took the noise of them for the shattering of the enemy, and this champion could be pricked on to a point of assertion sure to fire the phlegm in Philip; and then young Patrick might be trusted to warm to the work. Three heroes out skirmishing on our side. Then it begins to grow hot, and seeing them at it in earnest, Forbery glows and couches his

gun, the heaviest weight of the Irish light brigade. Gallant deeds! and now Mr. Marbury Dyke opens on Forbery's flank to support Mattock hardpressed, and this artillery of English Rockney resounds, with a similar object: the ladies to look on and award the crown of victory, Saxon though they be, excepting Rockney's wife, a sure deserter to the camp of the brave, should fortune frown on them, for a punishment to Rockney for his carrying off to himself a flower of the Green Island and holding inveterate against her native land in his black ingratitude. Oh! but eloquence upon a good cause will win you the hearts of all women, Saxon or other, never doubt of it. And Jane Mattock there, imbibing forced doses of Arthur Adister, will find her patriotism dissolving in the natural human current; and she and Philip have a pretty wrangle, and like one another none the worse for not agreeing: patriotically speaking, she's really unrooted by that half-thawed colonel, a creature snow-bound up to his chin; and already she's leaping to be transplanted. Jane is one of the first to give her vote for the Irish party, in spite of her love for her brother John: in common justice, she says, and because she hopes for complete union between the two islands. And thereupon we debate upon union. On the whole, yes: union, on the understanding that we have justice, before you think of setting to work to sow the land with affection:— and that 's a crop in a clear soil will spring up harvest- thick in a single summer night across St. George's Channel, ladies!....

Indeed a goodly vision of strife and peace: but, politics forbidden, it was entirely a dream, seeing that politics alone, and a vast amount of blowing even on the topic of politics, will stir these English to enter the arena and try a fall. You cannot, until you say ten times more than you began by meaning, and have heated yourself to fancy you mean more still, get them into any state of fluency at all. Forbery's anecdote now and then serves its turn, but these English won't take it up as a start for fresh pastures; they lend their ears and laugh a finale to it; you see them dwelling on the relish, chewing the cud, by way of mental note for their friends to-morrow, as if they were kettles come here merely for boiling purposes, to make tea elsewhere, and putting a damper on the fire that does the business for them. They laugh, but they laugh extinguishingly, and not a bit to spread a general conflagration and illumination.

The case appeared hopeless to Captain Con, bearing an eye on Philip. He surveyed his inanimate eights right and left, and folded his combative ardour around him, as the soldier's martial cloak when he takes his rest on the field. Mrs. Marbury Dyke, the lady under his wing, honoured wife of the chairman of his imagined that a sigh escaped him, and said in sympathy: 'Is the bad news from India confirmed?'

He feared it was not bright, and called to Philip for the latest.

'Nothing that you have not had already in the newspapers,' Philip replied, distinctly from afar, but very bluntly, as through a trumpet.

Miss Mattock was attentive. She had a look as good as handsome when she kindled.

The captain persevered to draw his cousin out.

'Your chief has his orders?'

'There's a rumour to that effect.'

'The fellow's training for diplomacy,' Con groaned.

Philip spoke to Miss Mattock: he was questioned and he answered, and answered dead as a newspaper telegraphic paragraph, presenting simply the corpse of the fact, and there an end. He was a rival of Arthur Adister for military brevity.

'Your nephew is quite the diplomatist,' said Mrs. Dyke, admiring Philip's head.

'Cousin, ma'am. Nephews I might drive to any market to make the most of them. Cousins pretend they're better than pigs, and diverge bounding from the road at the hint of the stick. You can't get them to grunt more than is exactly agreeable to them.'

'My belief is that if our cause is just our flag will triumph,' Miss Grace Barrow, Jane Mattock's fellow-worker and particular friend, observed to Dr. Forbery.

'You may be enjoying an original blessing that we in Ireland missed in the cradle,' said he.

She emphasised: 'I speak of the just cause; it must succeed.'

'The stainless flag'll be in the ascendant in the long run,' he assented.

'Is it the flag of Great Britain you're speaking of, Forbery?' the captain inquired.

'There's a harp or two in it,' he responded pacifically.

Mrs. Dyke was not pleased with the tone. 'And never will be out of it!' she thumped her interjection.

'Or where 's your music?' said the captain, twinkling for an adversary among the males, too distant or too dull to distinguish a note of challenge. 'You'd be having to mount your drum and fife in their places, ma'am.'

She saw no fear of the necessity.

'But the fife's a pretty instrument,' he suggested, and with a candour that seduced the unwary lady to think dubiously whether she quite liked the fife. Miss Barrow pronounced it cheerful.

'Oh, and martial!' he exclaimed, happy to have caught Rockney's deliberate gaze. 'The effect of it, I'm told in the provinces is astonishing for promoting enlistment. Hear it any morning in your London parks, at the head of a marching regiment of your giant foot-Guards. Three bangs of the drum, like the famous mountain, and the fife announces himself to be born, and they follow him, left leg and right leg and bearskin. And what if he's a small one and a trifle squeaky; so 's a prince when the attendant dignitaries receive him submissively and hear him informing the nation of his advent. It 's the idea that 's grand.'

'The idea is everything in military affairs,' a solemn dupe, a Mr. Rumford, partly bald, of benevolent aspect, and looking more copious than his flow, observed to the lady beside him. 'The flag is only an idea.'

She protested against the barbarism of war, and he agreed with her, but thought it must be: it had always been: he deplored the fatality. Nevertheless, he esteemed our soldiers, our sailors too. A city man himself and a man of peace, he cordially esteemed and hailed the victories of a military body whose idea was Duty instead of Ambition.

'One thing,' said Mrs. Dyke, evading the ambiguous fife, 'patriotic as I am, I hope, one thing I confess; I never have yet brought myself to venerate thoroughly our Royal Standard. I dare say it is because I do not understand it.'

A strong fraternal impulse moved Mr. Rumford to lean forward and show her the face of one who had long been harassed by the same incapacity to digest that one thing. He guessed it at once, without a doubt of the accuracy of the shot. Ever since he was a child the difficulty had haunted him; and as no one hitherto had even comprehended his dilemma, he beamed like a man preparing to embrace a recovered sister.

'The Unicorn!' he exclaimed.

'It is the Unicorn!' she sighed. 'The Lion is noble.'

'The Unicorn, if I may speak by my own feelings, certainly does not inspire attachment, that is to say, the sense of devotion, which we should always be led to see in national symbols,' Mr. Rumford resumed, and he looked humorously rueful while speaking with some earnestness; to show that he knew the subject to be of the minor sort, though it was not enough to trip and jar a loyal enthusiasm in the strictly meditative.

'The Saxon should carry his White Horse, I suppose,' Dr. Forbery said.

'But how do we account for the horn on his forehead?' Mr. Rumford sadly queried.

'Two would have been better for the harmony of the Unicorn's appearance,' Captain Con remarked, desirous to play a floundering fish, and tender to the known simple goodness of the ingenuous man. 'What do you say, Forbery? The poor brute had a fall on his pate and his horn grew of it, and it 's to prove that he has got something in his head, and is dangerous both fore and aft, which is not the case with other horses, who're usually wicked at the heels alone. That's it, be sure, or near it. And his horn's there to file the subject nation's grievances for the Lion to peruse at his leisure. And his colour's prophetic of the Horse to come, that rides over all.'

'Lion and Unicorn signify the conquest of the two hemispheres, Matter and Mind,' said Dr. Forbery. 'The Lion there's no mistake about. The Unicorn sets you thinking. So it's a splendid Standard, and means the more for not being perfectly intelligible at a glance.'

'But if the Lion, as they've whispered of late, Forbery, happens to be stuffed with straw or with what's worse, with sawdust, a fellow bearing a pointed horn at close quarters might do him mortal harm; and

it must be a situation trying to the patience of them both. The Lion seems to say "No prancing!" as if he knew his peril; and the Unicorn to threaten a playful dig at his flank, as if he understood where he's ticklish.'

Mr. Rumford drank some champagne and murmured with a shrug to the acquiescent lady beside him: 'Irishmen!' implying that the race could not be brought to treat serious themes as befitted the seriousness of the sentiments they stir in their bosoms. He was personally a little hurt, having unfolded a shy secret of his feelings, which were keenly patriotic in a phlegmatic frame, and he retired within himself, assuring the lady that he accepted our standard in its integrity; his objection was not really an objection; it was, he explained to her, a ridiculous desire to have a perfect comprehension of the idea in the symbol. But where there was no seriousness everything was made absurd. He could, he said, laugh as well as others on the proper occasion. As for the Lion being stuffed, he warned England's enemies for their own sakes not to be deluded by any such patent calumny. The strong can afford to be magnanimous and forbearing. Only let not that be mistaken for weakness. A wag of his tail would suffice.

The lady agreed. But women are volatile. She was the next moment laughing at something she had heard with the largest part of her ear, and she thought the worthy gentleman too simple, though she knew him for one who had amassed wealth. Captain Con and Dr. Forbery had driven the Unicorn to shelter, and were now baiting the Lion. The tremendous import of that wag of his tail among the nations was burlesqued by them, and it came into collision with Mr. Rumford's legendary forefinger threat. She excused herself for laughing:

'They are so preposterous!'

'Yes, yes, I can laugh,' said he, soberly performing the act: and Mr. Rumford covered the wound his delicate sensations had experienced under an apology for Captain Con, that would redound to the credit of his artfulness were it not notorious our sensations are the creatures and born doctors of art in discovering unguents for healing their bruises. 'O'Donnell has a shrewd head for business. He is sound at heart. There is not a drop of gout in his wine.'

The lady laughed again, as we do when we are fairly swung by the tide, and underneath her convulsion she quietly mused on the preference she would give to the simple English citizen for soundness.

'What can they be discussing down there?' Miss Mattock said to Philip, enviously as poor Londoners in November when they receive letters from the sapphire Riviera.

'I will venture to guess at nonsense,' he answered.

'Nothing political, then.'

'That scarcely follows; but a host at his own table may be trusted to shelve politics.'

'I should not object.'

'To controversy?'

'Temperately conducted.'

'One would go a long way to see the exhibition.'

'But why cannot men be temperate in their political arguments?'

'The questions raised are too close about the roots of us.'

'That sounds very pessimist.'

'More duels come from politics than from any other source.'

'I fear it is true. Then women might set you an example.'

'By avoiding it?'

'I think you have been out of England for some time.'

'I have been in America.'

'We are not exactly on the pattern of the Americans.' Philip hinted a bow. He praised the Republican people.

'Yes, but in our own way we are working out our own problems over here,' said she. 'We have infinitely more to contend with: old institutions, monstrous prejudices, and a slower-minded people, I dare say: much slower, I admit. We are not shining to advantage at present. Still, that is not the fault of English women.'

'Are they so spirited?'

Spirited was hardly the word Miss Mattock would have chosen to designate the spirit in them. She hummed a second or two, deliberating; it flashed through her during the pause that he had been guilty of irony, and she reddened: and remembering a foregoing strange sensation she reddened more. She had been in her girlhood a martyr to this malady of youth; it had tied her to the stake and enveloped her in flames for no accountable reason, causing her to suffer cruelly and feel humiliated. She knew the pangs of it in public, and in private as well. And she had not conquered it yet. She was angered to find herself such a merely physical victim of the rushing blood: which condition of her senses did not immediately restore her natural colour.

'They mean nobly,' she said, to fill an extending gap in the conversation under a blush; and conscious of an ultra-swollen phrase, she snatched at it nervously to correct it: 'They are becoming alive to the necessity for action.' But she was talking to a soldier! 'I mean, their heads are opening.' It sounded ludicrous. 'They are educating themselves differently.' Were they? 'They wish to take their part in the work of the world.' That was nearer the proper tone, though it had a ring of claptrap rhetoric hateful to her: she had read it and shrunk from it in reports of otherwise laudable meetings.

'Well, spirited, yes. I think they are. I believe they are. One has need to hope so.'

Philip offered a polite affirmative, evidently formal.

Not a sign had he shown of noticing her state of scarlet. His grave liquid eyes were unalterable. She might have been grateful, but the reflection that she had made a step to unlock the antechamber of her dearest deepest matters to an ordinary military officer, whose notions of women were probably those of his professional brethren, impelled her to transfer his polished decorousness to the burden of his masculine antagonism—plainly visible. She brought the dialogue to a close. Colonel Adister sidled an eye at a three-quarter view of her face. 'I fancy you're feeling the heat of the room,' he said.

Jane acknowledged a sensibility to some degree of warmth.

The colonel was her devoted squire on the instant for any practical service. His appeal to his aunt concerning one of the windows was answered by her appeal to Jane's countenance for a disposition to rise and leave the gentlemen. Captain Con, holding the door for the passage of his wife and her train of ladies, received the injunction:

'Ten,' from her, and remarked: 'Minutes,' as he shut it. The shortness of the period of grace proposed dejection to him on the one hand, and on the other a stimulated activity to squeeze it for its juices without any delay. Winding past Dr. Forbery to the vacated seat of the hostess he frowned forbiddingly.

'It's I, is it!' cried the doctor. Was it ever he that endangered the peace and placability of social gatherings! He sat down prepared rather for a bout with Captain Con than with their common opponents, notwithstanding that he had accurately read the mock thunder of his brows.

CHAPTER XIV

OF ROCKNEY

Battles have been won and the streams of History diverted to new channels in the space of ten minutes. Ladies have been won, a fresh posterity founded, and grand financial schemes devised, revolts arranged, a yoke shaken off, in less of mortal time. Excepting an inspired Epic song and an original Theory of the Heavens, almost anything noteworthy may be accomplished while old Father Scythe is taking a trot round a courtyard; and those reservations should allow the splendid conception to pass for the performance, when we bring to mind that the conception is the essential part of it, as a bard poorly known to fame was constantly urging. Captain Con had blown his Epic bubbles, not to speak of his projected tuneful narrative of the adventures of the great Cuchullin, and his Preaching of St. Patrick, and other national triumphs. He could own, however, that the world had a right to the inspection of the

Epic books before it awarded him his crown. The celestial Theory likewise would have to be worked out to the last figure by the illustrious astronomers to whom he modestly ranked himself second as a benefactor of his kind, revering him. So that, whatever we may think in our own hearts, Epic and Theory have to remain the exception. Battles indeed have been fought, but when you survey the field in preparation for them you are summoned to observe the preluding courtesies of civilised warfare in a manner becoming a chivalrous gentleman. It never was the merely flinging of your leg across a frontier, not even with the abrupt Napoleon. You have besides to drill your men; and you have often to rouse your foe with a ringing slap, if he's a sleepy one or shamming sleepiness. As here, for example: and that of itself devours more minutes than ten. Rockney and Mattock could be roused; but these English, slow to kindle, can't subside in a twinkling; they are for preaching on when they have once begun; betray the past engagement, and the ladies are chilled, and your wife puts you the pungent question: 'Did you avoid politics, Con?' in the awful solitude of domestic life after a party. Now, if only there had been freedom of discourse during the dinner hour, the ten disembarassed minutes allotted to close it would have afforded time sufficient for hearty finishing blows and a soothing word or so to dear old innocent Mr. Rumford, and perhaps a kindly clap of the shoulder to John Mattock, no bad fellow at bottom. Rockney too was no bad fellow in his way. He wanted no more than a beating and a thrashing. He was a journalist, a hard-headed rascal, none of your good old-fashioned order of regimental scribes who take their cue from their colonel, and march this way and that, right about face, with as little impediment of principles to hamper their twists and turns as the straw he tosses aloft at midnight to spy the drift of the wind to-morrow. Quite the contrary; Rockney was his own colonel; he pretended to think independently, and tried to be the statesman of a leading article, and showed his intention to stem the current of liberty, and was entirely deficient in sympathy with the oppressed, a fanatical advocate of force; he was an inveterate Saxon, good-hearted and in great need of a drubbing. Certain lines Rockney had written of late about Irish affairs recurred to Captain Con, and the political fires leaped in him; he sparkled and said: 'Let me beg you to pass the claret over to Mr. Rockney, Mr. Rumford; I warrant it for the circulating medium of amity, if he'll try it.'

"Tis the Comet Margaux,' said Dr. Forbery, topping anything Rockney might have had to say, and anything would have served. The latter clasped the decanter, poured and drank in silence.

"Tis the doctor's antidote, and best for being antedated,' Captain Con rapped his friend's knuckles.

'As long as you're contented with not dating in double numbers,' retorted the doctor, absolutely scattering the precious minutes to the winds, for he hated a provocation.

'There's a golden mean, is there!'

'There is; there's a way between magnums of good wine and gout, and it's generally discovered too late.'

'At the physician's door, then! where the golden mean is generally discovered to be his fee. I've heard of poor souls packed off by him without an obolus to cross the ferry. Stripped they were in all conscience.'

'You remind me of a fellow in Dublin who called on me for medical advice, and found he'd forgotten his purse. He offered to execute a deed to bequeath me his body, naked and not ashamed.'

'You'd a right to cut him up at once, Forbery. Any Jury 'd have pronounced him guilty of giving up the ghost before he called.'

'I let him go, body and all. I never saw him again.'

'The fellow was not a lunatic. As for your golden mean, there's a saying: Prevention is better than cure: and another that caps it: Drink deep or taste not.'

'That's the Pierian Spring.'

'And what is the wine on my table, sir?'

'Exhaustless if your verses come of it.'

'And pure, you may say of the verses and the fount.'

'And neither heady nor over-composed; with a blush like Diana confessing her love for the young shepherd: it's one of your own comparisons.'

'Oh!' Con could have roared his own comparisons out of hearing. He was angry with Forbery for his obstructive dulness and would not taste the sneaking compliment. What could Forbery mean by paying compliments and spoiling a game! The ten minutes were dancing away like harmless wood-nymphs

when the Satyr slumbers. His eyes ranged over his guests despondently, and fixed in desperation on Mr. Rumford, whom his magnanimous nature would have spared but for the sharp necessity to sacrifice him.

The wine in Rumford at any rate let loose his original nature, if it failed to unlock the animal in these other unexcitable Saxons.

'By the way, now I think of it, Mr. Rumford, the interpretation of your Royal Standard, which perplexes you so much, strikes me as easy if you 'll examine the powerfully different colours of the two beasts in it.'

Mr. Rumford protested that he had abandoned his inquiry: it was a piece of foolishness: he had no feeling in it whatever, none.

The man was a perfect snail's horn for coyness.

The circumstances did not permit of his being suffered to slip away: and his complexion showed that he might already be classed among the roast.

Your Lion:—Mr. Rumford, you should know, is discomposed, as a thoughtful patriot, by the inexplicable presence of the Unicorn in the Royal Standard, and would be glad to account for his one horn and the sickly appearance of the beast. I'm prepared to say he's there to represent the fair one half of the population.

Your Lion, my dear sir, may have nothing in his head, but his tawinness tells us he imbibes good sound stuff, worthy of the reputation of a noble brewery. Whereas your, Unicorn, true to the character of the numberless hosts he stands for, is manifestly a consumer of doctor's drugs. And there you have the symbolism of your country. Right or left of the shield, I forget which, and it is of no importance to the point—you have Grandgosier or Great Turk in all his majesty, mane and tail; and on the other hand, you behold, as the showman says, Dyspepsia. And the pair are intended to indicate that you may see yourselves complete by looking at them separately; and so your Royal Standard is your national mirror; and when you gaze on it fondly you're playing the part of a certain Mr. Narcissus, who got liker to the Lion than to the Unicorn in the act. Now will that satisfy you?'

'Quite as you please, quite as you please,' Mr. Rumford replied. 'One loves the banner of one's country—that is all.' He rubbed his hands. 'I for one am proud of it.'

'Far be it from me to blame you, my dear sir. Or there's the alternative of taking him to stand for your sole great festival holiday, and worshipping him as the personification of your Derbyshire race.'

A glittering look was in Captain Con's eye to catch Rockney if he would but rise to it.

That doughty Saxon had been half listening, half chatting to Mr. Mattock, and wore on his drawn eyelids and slightly drawn upper lip a look of lambent pugnacity awake to the challenge, indifferent to the antagonist, and disdainful of the occasion.

'We have too little of your enthusiasm for the flag,' Philip said to Mr. Rumford to soothe him, in a form of apology for his relative.

'Surely no! not in England?' said Mr. Rumford, tempted to open his heart, for he could be a bellicose gentleman by deputy of the flag. He recollected that the speaker was a cousin of Captain Con's, and withdrew into his wound for safety. 'Here and there, perhaps; not when we are roused; we want rousing, we greatly prefer to live at peace with the world, if the world will let us.'

'Not at any price?' Philip fancied his tone too quakerly.

'Indeed I am not one of that party!' said Mr. Rumford, beginning to glow; but he feared a snare, and his wound drew him in again.

'When are you ever at peace!' quoth his host, shocked by the inconsiderate punctuality of Mrs. Adister O'Donnell's household, for here was the coffee coming round, and Mattock and Rockney escaping without a scratch. 'There's hardly a day in the year when your scarlet mercenaries are not popping at niggers.'

Rockney had the flick on the cheek to his manhood now, it might be hoped.

'Our what?' asked Mr. Rumford, honestly unable to digest the opprobrious term.

'Paid soldiery, hirelings, executioners, whom you call volunteers, by a charming euphemism, and send abroad to do the work of war while you propound the doctrines of peace at home.'

Rockney's forehead was exquisitely eruptive, red and swelling. Mattock lurched on his chair. The wine was in them, and the captain commended the spicing of it, as Prospero his Ariel.

Who should intervene at this instant but the wretched Philip, pricked on the point of honour as a soldier! Are we inevitably to be thwarted by our own people?

'I suppose we all work for pay,' said he. 'It seems to me a cry of the streets to call us by hard names. The question is what we fight for.'

He spoke with a witless moderation that was most irritating, considering the latest news from the old country.

'You fight to subjugate, to enslave,' said Con, 'that's what you're doing, and at the same time your journals are venting their fine irony at the Austrians and the Russians and the Prussians for tearing Poland to strips with their bloody beaks.'

'We obey our orders, and leave you to settle the political business,' Philip replied.

Forbery declined the fray. Patrick was eagerly watchful and dumb. Rockney finished his coffee with a rap of the cup in the saucer, an appeal for the close of the sitting; and as Dr. Forbery responded to it by pushing back his chair, he did likewise, and the other made a movement.

The disappointed hero of a fight unfought had to give the signal for rising. Double the number of the ten minutes had elapsed. He sprang up, hearing Rockney say: 'Captain Con O'Donnell is a politician or nothing,' and as he was the most placable of men concerning his personality, he took it lightly, with half a groan that it had not come earlier, and said, 'He thinks and he feels, poor fellow!'

All hope of a general action was over.

'That shall pass for the epitaph of the living,' said Rockney.

It was too late to catch at a trifle to strain it to a tussle. Con was obliged to subjoin: 'Inscribe it on the dungeon-door of tyranny.' But the note was peaceful.

He expressed a wish that the fog had cleared for him to see the stars of heaven before he went to bed, informing Mr. Mattock that a long look in among them was often his prayer at night, and winter a holy season to him, for the reason of its showing them bigger and brighter.

'I can tell my wife with a conscience we've had a quiet evening, and you're a witness to it,' he said to Patrick. That consolation remained.

'You know the secret of your happiness,' Patrick answered.

'Know you one of the secrets of a young man's fortune in life, and give us a thrilling song at the piano, my son,' said Con: 'though we don't happen to have much choice of virgins for ye to-night. Irish or French. Irish are popular. They don't mind having us musically. And if we'd go on joking to the end we should content them, if only by justifying their opinion that we're born buffoons.'

His happy conscience enabled him to court his wife with assiduity and winsomeness, and the ladies were once more elated by seeing how chivalrously lover-like an Irish gentleman can be after years of wedlock.

Patrick was asked to sing. Miss Mattock accompanied him at the piano. Then he took her place on the music-stool, and she sang, and with an electrifying splendour of tone and style.

'But it's the very heart of an Italian you sing with!' he cried.

'It will surprise you perhaps to hear that I prefer German music,' said she.

'But where—who had the honour of boasting you his pupil?'

She mentioned a famous master. Patrick had heard of him in Paris. He begged for another song and she complied, accepting the one he selected as the favourite of his brother Philip's, though she said: 'That one?' with a superior air. It was a mellifluous love-song from a popular Opera somewhat out of date. 'Well, it's in Italian!' she summed up her impressions of the sickly words while scanning them for delivery. She had no great admiration of the sentimental Sicilian composer, she confessed, yet she sang as if possessed by him. Had she, Patrick thought, been bent upon charming Philip, she could not have thrown more fire into the notes. And when she had done, after thrilling the room, there was a gesture

in her dismissal of the leaves displaying critical loftiness. Patrick noticed it and said, with the thrill of her voice lingering in him: 'What is it you do like? I should so like to know.'

She was answering when Captain Con came up to the piano and remarked in an undertone to Patrick: 'How is it you hit on the song *Adiante Adister* used to sing?'

Miss Mattock glanced at Philip. He had applauded her mechanically, and it was not that circumstance which caused the second rush of scarlet over her face. This time she could track it definitely to its origin. A lover's favourite song is one that has been sung by his love. She detected herself now in the full apprehension of the fact before she had sung a bar: it had been a very dim fancy: and she denounced herself guilty of the knowledge that she was giving pain by singing the stuff fervidly, in the same breath that accused her of never feeling things at the right moment vividly. The reminiscences of those pale intuitions made them always affectingly vivid.

But what vanity in our emotional state in a great jarring world where we are excused for continuing to seek our individual happiness only if we ally it and subordinate it to the well being of our fellows! The interjection was her customary specific for the cure of these little tricks of her blood. Leaving her friend Miss Barrow at the piano, she took a chair in a corner and said; 'Now, Mr. O'Donnell, you will hear the music that moves me.'

'But it's not to be singing,' said Patrick. 'And how can you sing so gloriously what you don't care for? It puzzles me completely.'

She assured him she was no enigma: she hushed to him to hear.

He dropped his underlip, keeping on the conversation with his eyes until he was caught by the masterly playing of a sonata by the chief of the poets of sound.

He was caught by it, but he took the close of the introductory section, an *allegro con brio*, for the end, and she had to hush at him again, and could not resist smiling at her lullaby to the prattler. Patrick smiled in response. Exchanges of smiles upon an early acquaintance between two young people are peeps through the doorway of intimacy. She lost sight of the Jesuit. Under the influence of good music, too, a not unfavourable inclination towards the person sitting beside us and sharing that sweetness, will soften general prejudices—if he was Irish, he was boyishly Irish, not like his inscrutable brother; a better, or hopefuller edition of Captain Con; one with whom something could be done to steady him, direct him, improve him. He might be taught to appreciate Beethoven and work for his fellows. 'Now does not that touch you more deeply than the Italian?' said she, delicately mouthing: 'I, mio tradito amor!'

'Touch, I don't know,' he was honest enough to reply. 'It's you that haven't given it a fair chance I'd like to hear it again. There's a forest on fire in it.'

'There is,' she exclaimed. 'I have often felt it, but never seen it. You exactly describe it. How true!'

'But any music I could listen to all day and all the night,' said he.

'And be as proud of yourself the next morning?'

Patrick was rather at sea. What could she mean?

Mrs. Adister O'Donnell stepped over to them, with the object of installing Colonel Adister in Patrick's place.

The object was possibly perceived. Mrs. Adister was allowed no time to set the manoeuvre in motion.

'Mr. O'Donnell is a great enthusiast for music, and could listen to it all day and all night, he tells me,' said Miss Mattock. 'Would he not sicken of it in a week, Mrs. Adister?'

'But why should I?' cried Patrick. 'It's a gift of heaven.'

'And, like other gifts of heaven, to the idle it would turn to evil.'

'I can't believe it.'

'Work, and you will believe it.'

'But, Miss Mattock, I want to work; I'm empty-handed. It 's true I want to travel and see a bit of the world to help me in my work by and by. I'm ready to try anything I can do, though.'

'Has it ever struck you that you might try to help the poor?'

'Arthur is really anxious, and only doubts his ability,' said Mrs. Adister.

'The doubt throws a shadow on the wish,' said Miss Mattock. 'And can one picture Colonel Adister the secretary of a Laundry Institution, receiving directions from Grace and me! We should have to release him long before the six months' term, when we have resolved to incur the expense of a salaried secretary.'

Mrs. Adister turned her head to the colonel, who was then looking down the features of Mrs. Rockney.

Patrick said: 'I'm ready, for a year, Miss Mattock.'

She answered him, half jocosely: 'A whole year of free service? Reflect on what you are undertaking.'

'It's writing and accounts, no worse?'

'Writing and accounts all day, and music in the evening only now and then.'

'I can do it: I will, if you'll have me.'

'Do you hear Mr. O'Donnell, Mrs. Adister?'

Captain Con fluttered up to his wife, and heard the story from Miss Mattock.

He fancied he saw a thread of good luck for Philip in it. 'Our house could be Patrick's home capitally,' he suggested to his wife. She was not a whit less hospitable, only hinting that she thought the refusal of the post was due to Arthur.

'And if he accepts, imagine him on a stool, my dear madam; he couldn't sit it!'

Miss Mattock laughed. 'No, that is not to be thought of seriously. And with Mr. O'Donnell it would be probationary for the first fortnight or month. Does he know anything about steam?'

'The rudimentary idea,' said Patrick.

'That's good for a beginning,' said the captain; and he added: 'Miss Mattock, I'm proud if one of my family can be reckoned worthy of assisting in your noble work.'

She replied: 'I warn everybody that they shall be taken at their word if they volunteer their services.'

She was bidden to know by the captain that the word of an Irish gentleman was his bond. 'And not later than to-morrow evening I'll land him at your office. Besides, he'll find countrywomen of his among you, and there's that to enliven him. You say they work well, diligently, intelligently.'

She deliberated. 'Yes, on the whole; when they take to their work. Intelligently certainly compared with our English. We do not get the best of them in London. For that matter, we do not get the best of the English—not the women of the north. We have to put up with the rejected of other and better-paying departments of work. It breaks my heart sometimes to see how near they are to doing well, but for such a little want of ballast.'

'If they're Irish,' said Patrick, excited by the breaking of her heart, 'a whisper of cajolery in season is often the secret.'

Captain Con backed him for diplomacy. 'You'll learn he has a head, Miss Mattock.'

'I am myself naturally blunt, and prefer the straightforward method,' said she.

Patrick nodded. 'But where there's an obstruction in the road, it's permissible to turn a corner.'

'Take 'em in flank when you can't break their centre,' said Con.

'Well, you shall really try whether you can endure the work for a short time if you are in earnest,' Miss Mattock addressed the volunteer.

'But I am,' he said.

'We are too poor at present to refuse the smallest help.'

'And mine is about the smallest.'

'I did not mean that, Mr. O'Donnell.'

'But you'll have me?'

'Gladly.'

Captain Con applauded the final words between them. They had the genial ring, though she accepted the wrong young man for but a shadow of the right sort of engagement.

This being settled, by the sudden combination of enthusiastic Irish impulse and benevolent English scheming, she very considerably resigned herself to Mrs. Adister's lead and submitted herself to a further jolting in the unprogressive conversational coach with Colonel Adister, whose fault as a driver was not in avoiding beaten ways, but whipping wooden horses.

Evidently those two were little adapted to make the journey of life together, though they were remarkably fine likenesses of a pair in the dead midway of the journey, Captain Con reflected, and he could have jumped at the thought of Patrick's cleverness: it was the one bright thing of the evening. There was a clear gain in it somewhere. And if there was none, Jane Mattock was a good soul worth saving. Why not all the benefaction on our side, and a figo for rewards! Devotees or adventurers, he was ready in imagination to see his cousins play the part of either, as the cross-roads offered, the heavens appeared to decree. We turn to the right or the left, and this way we're voluntary drudges, and that way we're lucky dogs; it's all according to the turn, the fate of it. But never forget that old Ireland is weeping!

O never forget that old Ireland is weeping
The bitter salt tears of the mother bereft!

He hummed the spontaneous lines. He was accused of singing to himself, and a song was vigorously demanded of him by the ladies.

He shook his head. 'I can't,' he sighed. 'I was plucking the drowned body of a song out of the waters to give it decent burial. And if I sing I shall be charged with casting a firebrand at Mr. Rockney.'

Rockney assured him that he could listen to anything in verse.

'Observe the sneer:—for our verses are smoke,' said Con.

Miss Mattock pressed him to sing.

But he had saddened his mind about old Ireland: the Irish news weighed heavily on him, unrelieved by a tussle with Rockney. If he sang, it would be an Irish song, and he would break down in it, he said; and he hinted at an objection of his wife's to spirited Irish songs of the sort which carry the sons of Erin bounding over the fences of tyranny and the brook of tears. And perhaps Mr. Rockney might hear a tale in verse as hard to bear as he sometimes found Irish prose!—Miss Mattock perceived that his depression was genuine, not less than his desire to please her. 'Then it shall be on another occasion,' she said.

'Oh! on another occasion I'm the lark to the sky, my dear lady.'

Her carriage was announced. She gave Patrick a look, with a smile, for it was to be a curious experiment. He put on the proper gravity of a young man commissioned, without a dimple of a smile. Philip bowed to her stiffly, as we bow to a commanding officer who has insulted us and will hear of it. But for that, Con would have manoeuvred against his wife to send him downstairs at the lady's heels. The fellow was a perfect riddle, hard to read as the zebra lines on the skin of a wild jackass— if Providence intended any meaning when she traced them! and it's a moot point: as it is whether some of our poets have meaning and are not composers of zebra. 'No one knows but them above!' he said aloud, apparently to his wife.

'What can you be signifying?' she asked him. She had deputed Colonel Arthur to conduct Miss Mattock and Miss Barrow to their carriage, and she supposed the sentence might have a mysterious reference to the plan she had formed; therefore it might be a punishable offence. Her small round eyes were wide-open, her head was up and high.

She was easily appeased, too easily.

'The question of rain, madam,' he replied to her repetition of his words.

'I dare say that was what I had in my mind, hearing Mr. Mattock and Mr. Rockney agree to walk in company to their clubs.'

He proposed to them that they should delay the march on a visit to his cabin near the clouds. They were forced to decline his invitation to the gentle lion's mouth; as did Mr. Rumford, very briskly and thankfully. Mr. Rockney was taken away by Mr. and Mrs. Marbury Dyke. So the party separated, and the Englishmen were together, and the Irishmen together; and hardly a syllable relating to the Englishmen did the Irishmen say, beyond an allusion to an accident to John Mattock's yacht off the Irish west-coast last autumn; but the Irishmen were subjected to some remarks by the Englishmen, wherein their qualities as individuals and specimens of a race were critically and neatly packed. Common sense is necessarily critical in its collision with vapours, and the conscious possessors of an exclusive common sense are called on to deliver a summary verdict, nor is it an unjust one either, if the verdict be taken simply for an estimate of what is presented upon the plain surface of to-day. Irishmen are queer fellows, never satisfied, thirsting for a shindy. Some of them get along pretty well in America. The air of their Ireland intoxicates them. They require the strong hand: fair legislation, but no show of weakness. Once let them imagine you are afraid of them, and they see perfect independence in their grasp. And what would be the spectacle if they were to cut themselves loose from England? The big ship might be inconvenienced by the loss of the tender; the tender would fall adrift on the Atlantic, with pilot and captain at sword and pistol, the crew playing Donnybrook freely. Their cooler heads are shrewd enough to see the folly, but it catches the Irish fancy to rush to the extreme, and we have allowed it to be supposed that it frightens us. There is the capital blunder, fons et origo.

Their leaders now pretend to work upon the Great Scale; they demand everything on the spot upon their own interpretation of equity. Concessions, hazy speeches, and the puling nonsense of our present Government, have encouraged them so far and got us into the mess. Treat them as policemen treat highwaymen: give them the law: and the law must be tightened, like the hold on a rogue by his collar, if they kick at it. Rockney was for sharp measures in repression, fair legislation in due course.

'Fair legislation upon your own interpretation of fair,' said Mattock, whose party opposed Rockney's. 'As to repression, you would have missed that instructive scene this evening at Con O'Donnell's table, if you had done him the kindness to pick up his glove. It 's wisest to let them exhaust their energies upon one another. Hold off, and they're soon at work.'

'What kind of director of a City Company does he make?' said Rockney.

Mattock bethought him that, on the whole, strange to say, Con O'Donnell comported himself decorously as a director, generally speaking on the reasonable side, not without shrewdness: he seemed to be sobered by the money question.

'That wife of his is the salvation of him,' Rockney said, to account for the Captain's shrewdness. 'She manages him cleverly. He knows the length of his line. She's a woman of principle, and barring the marriage, good sense too. His wife keeps him quiet, or we should be hearing of him. Forbery 's a more dangerous man. There's no intentional mischief in Con O'Donnell; it's only effervescence. I saw his game, and declined to uncork him. He talks of a niece of his wife's: have you ever seen her?—married to some Servian or Roumanian prince.'

Mattock answered: 'Yes.'

'Is she such a beauty?'

Again Mattock answered: 'Yes,' after affecting thoughtfulness.

'They seem to marry oddly in that family.'

Mattock let fly a short laugh at the remark, which had the ring of some current phrase. 'They do,' he said.

Next morning Jane Mattock spoke to her brother of her recruit. He entirely trusted to her discretion; the idea of a young Irish secretary was rather comical, nevertheless. He had his joke about it, requesting to have a sight of the secretary's books at the expiry of the week, which was the length of time he granted this ardent volunteer for evaporating and vanishing.

'If it releases poor Grace for a week, it will be useful to us,' Jane said. 'Women are educated so shamefully that we have not yet found one we can rely on as a competent person. And Mr. O'Donnell—did you notice him? I told you I met him a day or two back—seems willing to be of use. It cannot hurt him to try. Grace has too much on her hands.'

'She has a dozen persons.'

'They are zealous when they are led.'

'Beware of letting them suspect that they are led.'

'They are anxious to help the poor if they can discover how.'

'Good men, I don't doubt,' said John Mattock. 'Any proposals from curates recently?'

'Not of late. Captain O'Donnell, the brother of our secretary, is handsomer, but we do not think him so trustworthy. Did you observe him at all?—he sat by me. He has a conspirator's head.'

'What is that?' her brother asked her.

'Only a notion of mine.'

She was directed to furnish a compendious report of the sayings, doings, and behaviour of the Irish secretary in the evening.

'If I find him there,' she said.

Her brother was of opinion that Mr. Patrick O'Donnell would be as good as his word, and might be expected to appear there while the novelty lasted.

CHAPTER XV

THE MATTOCK FAMILY

That evening's report of the demeanour of the young Irish secretary in harness was not so exhilarating as John Mattock had expected, and he inclined to think his sister guilty of casting her protecting veil over the youth. It appeared that Mr. O'Donnell had been studious of his duties, had spoken upon no other topic, had asked pertinent questions, shown no flippancy, indulged in no extravagances. He seemed, Jane said, eager to master details. A certain eagerness of her own in speaking of it sharpened her clear features as if they were cutting through derision. She stated it to propitiate her brother, as it might have done but for the veracious picture of Patrick in the word 'eager,' which pricked the scepticism of a practical man. He locked his mouth, looking at her with a twinkle she refused to notice. 'Determined to master details' he could have accepted. One may be determined to find a needle in a dust-heap; one does not with any stiffness of purpose go at a dust-heap eagerly. Hungry men have eaten husks; they have not betrayed eagerness for such dry stuff. Patrick's voracity after details exhibited a doubtfully genuine appetite, and John deferred his amusement until the termination of the week or month when his dear good Jane would visit the office to behold a vacated seat, or be assailed by the customary proposal. Irishmen were not likely to be far behind curates in besieging an heiress. For that matter, Jane was her own mistress and could very well take care of herself; he had confidence in her wisdom.

He was besides of an unsuspecting and an unexacting temperament. The things he would strongly object to he did not specify to himself because he was untroubled by any forethought of them. Business, political, commercial and marine, left few vacancies in his mind other than for the pleasures he could command and enjoy. He surveyed his England with a ruddy countenance, and saw the country in the reflection. His England saw much of itself in him. Behind each there was more, behind the country a great deal more, than could be displayed by a glass. The salient features wore a resemblance. Prosperity and heartiness; a ready hand on, and over, a full purse; a recognised ability of the second-rate order; a stout hold of patent principles; inherited and embraced, to make the day secure and supply a somniferous pillow for the night; occasional fits of anxiety about affairs, followed by an illuminating conviction that the world is a changing one and our construction not of granite, nevertheless that a justifiable faith in the ship, joined to a constant study of the chart, will pull us through, as it has done before, despite all assaults and underminings of the common enemy and the particular; these, with the humorous indifference of familiarity and constitutional annoyances, excepting when they grew acute and called for drugs, and with friendliness to the race of man of both colours, in the belief that our Creator originally composed in black and white, together with a liking for matters on their present footing in slow motion, partly under his conductorship, were the prominent characteristics of the grandson of the founder of the house, who had built it from a spade.

The story of the building was notorious; popular books for the inciting of young Englishmen to dig to

fortune had a place for it among the chapters, where we read of the kind of man, and the means by which the country has executed its later giant strides of advancement. The first John Mattock was a representative of his time; he moved when the country was moving, and in the right direction, finding himself at the auspicious moment upon a line of rail. Elsewhere he would have moved, we may suppose, for the spade-like virtues bear their fruits; persistent and thrifty, solid and square, will fetch some sort of yield out of any soil; but he would not have gone far. The Lord, to whom an old man of a mind totally Hebrew ascribed the plenitude of material success, the Lord and he would have reared a garden in the desert; in proximity to an oasis, still on the sands, against obstacles. An accumulation of upwards of four hundred thousand pounds required, as the moral of the popular books does not sufficiently indicate, a moving country, an ardent sphere, to produce the sum: and since, where so much was done, we are bound to conceive others at work as well as he, it seems to follow that the exemplar outstripping them vastly must have profited by situation at the start, which is a lucky accident; and an accident is an indigestible lump in a moral tale, real though the story be. It was not mentioned in the popular books; nor did those worthy guides to the pursuit of wealth contain any reminder of old John Mattock's dependence upon the conjoint labour of his fellows to push him to his elevation. As little did they think of foretelling a day, generations hence, when the empty heirs of his fellows might prefer a modest claim (confused in statement) to compensation against the estate he bequeathed: for such prophecy as that would have hinted at a tenderness for the mass to the detriment of the individual, and such tenderness as that is an element of our religion, not the drift of our teaching.

He grumbled at the heavy taxation of his estate during life: yearly this oppressed old man paid thousands of pounds to the Government. It was poor encouragement to shoulder and elbow your way from a hovel to a mansion!

He paid the money, dying sour; a splendid example of energy on the road, a forbidding one at the terminus. And here the moral of the popular books turned aside from him to snatch at humanity for an instance of our frailness and dealt in portentous shadows:—we are, it should be known, not the great creatures we assume ourselves to be. Six months before his death he appeared in the garb of a navy, humbly soliciting employment at his own house-door. There he appealed to the white calves of his footmen for a day's work, upon the plea that he had never been a democrat.

The scene had been described with humanely-moralising pathos in the various books of stories of Men who have come to Fortune, and it had for a length of seasons an annual position in the foremost rank (on the line, facing the door) in our exhibition of the chosen artists, where, as our popular words should do, it struck the spectator's eye and his brain simultaneously with pugilistic force: a reference to the picture in the catalogue furnishing a recapitulation of the incident. 'I've worked a good bit in my time, gentlemen, and I baint done yet':—SEE PROFESSOR SUMMIT'S 'MEN WHO HAVE COME TO FORTUNE.' There is, we perceive at a glance, a contrast in the bowed master of the Mansion applying to his menials for a day's work at the rate of pay to able-bodied men:—which he is not, but the deception is not disingenuous. The contrast flashed with the rapid exchange of two prizefighters in a ring, very popularly. The fustian suit and string below the knee, on the one side, and the purple plush breeches and twinkling airy calves (fascinating his attention as he makes his humble request to his own, these domestic knights) to right and left of the doorway and in front, hit straight out of the canvas. And as quickly as you perceive the contrast you swallow the moral. The dreaded thing is down in a trice, to do what salutary work it may within you. That it passed into the blood of England's middle-class population, and set many heads philosophically shaking, and filled the sails of many a sermon, is known to those who lived in days when Art and the classes patronising our Native Art existed happily upon the terms of venerable School-Dame and studious pupils, before the sickly era displacing Exhibitions full of meaning for tricks of colour, monstrous atmospherical vagaries that teach nothing, strange experiments on the complexion of the human face divine—the feminine hyper-aethereally. Like the first John Mattock, it was formerly of, and yet by dint of sturdy energy, above the people. They learnt from it; they flocked to it thirsting and retired from it thoughtful, with some belief of having drunk of nature in art, as you will see the countless troops of urchins about the one cow of London, in the Great City's Green Park.

A bequest to the nation of the best of these pictures of Old John, by a very old Yorkshire collector, makes it milk for all time, a perpetual contrast, and a rebuke. Compared with the portrait of Jane Mattock in her fiery aureole of hair on the walls of the breakfast-room, it marks that fatal period of degeneracy for us, which our critics of Literature as well as Art are one voice in denouncing, when the complex overwhelms the simple, and excess of signification is attempted, instead of letting plain nature speak her uncorrupted tongue to the contemplative mind. Degeneracy is the critical history of the Arts. Jane's hair was of a reddish gold-inwoven cast that would, in her grandfather's epoch, have shone unambiguously as carrots. The girl of his day thus adorned by Nature, would have been shown wearing her ridiculous crown with some decent sulkiness; and we should not have had her so unsparingly crowned; the truth would have been told in a dexterous concealment—a rope of it wound up for a bed

of the tortoise-shell comb behind, and a pair of tight cornucopias at the temples. What does our modern artist do but flare it to right and left, lift it wavily over her forehead, revel in the oriental superabundance, and really seem to swear we shall admire it, against our traditions of the vegetable, as a poetical splendour. The head of the heiress is in a Jovian shower. Marigolds are in her hand. The whole square of canvas is like a meadow on the borders of June. It causes blinking.

Her brother also is presented: a fine portrait of him, with clipped red locks, in blue array, smiling, wearing the rose of briny breezes, a telescope under his left arm, his right forefinger on a map, a view of Spitzbergen through a cabin-window: for John had notions about the north-west passage, he had spent a winter in the ice, and if an amateur, was not the less a true sailor.

With his brass-buttoned blue coat, and his high coloured cheeks, and his convict hair—a layer of brickdust—and his air of princely wealth, and the icebergs and hummocks about him, he looks for adventure without a thought of his heroism—the country all over.

There he stands, a lover of the sea, and a scientific seaman and engineer to boot, practical in every line of his face, defying mankind to suspect that he cherishes a grain of romance. On the wall, just above his shoulder, is a sketch of a Viking putting the lighted brand to his ship in mid sea, and you are to understand that his time is come and so should a Viking die: further, if you will, the subject is a modern Viking, ready for the responsibilities of the title. Sketches of our ancient wooden walls and our iron and plated defences line the panellings. These degenerate artists do work hard for their money.

The portrait of John's father, dated a generation back, is just the man and little else, phantomly the man. His brown coat struggles out of the obscurity of the background, but it is chiefly background clothing him. His features are distinguishable and delicate: you would suppose him appearing to you under the beams of a common candle, or cottage coalfire —ferruginously opaque. The object of the artist (apart from the triumph of tone on the canvas) is to introduce him as an elegant and faded gentleman, rather retiring into darkness than emerging. He is the ghost of the painter's impasto. Yet this is Ezra Mattock, who multiplied the inheritance of the hundreds of thousands into millions, and died, after covering Europe, Asia, and the Americas with iron rails, one of the few Christians that can hold up their heads beside the banking Jew as magnates in the lists of gold. The portrait is clearly no frontispiece of his qualities. He married an accomplished and charitable lady, and she did not spoil the stock in refining it. His life passed quietly; his death shook the country: for though it had been known that he had been one of our potentates, how mightily he was one had not entered into the calculations of the public until the will of the late Ezra Mattock, cited in our prints, received comments from various newspaper articles. A chuckle of collateral satisfaction ran through the empire. All England and her dependencies felt the state of cousinship with the fruits of energy; and it was an agreeable sentiment, coming opportunely, as it did, at the tail of articles that had been discussing a curious manifestation of late—to-wit, the awakening energy of the foreigner—a prodigious apparition on our horizon. Others were energetic too! We were not, the sermon ran, to imagine we were without rivals in the field. We were possessed of certain positive advantages; we had coal, iron, and an industrious population, but we were, it was to be feared, by no means a thrifty race, and there was reason for doubt whether in the matter of industry we were quite up to the mark of our forefathers. No deterioration of the stock was apprehended, still the nation must be accused of a lack of vigilance. We must look round us, and accept the facts as they stood. So accustomed had we become to the predominance of our position that it was difficult at first to realise a position of rivalry that threatened our manufacturing interests in their hitherto undisputed lead in the world's markets. The tale of our exports for the last five years conveys at once its moral and its warning. Statistics were then cited.

As when the gloomy pedagogue has concluded his exhortation, statistics birched the land. They were started at our dinner-tables, and scourged the social converse. Not less than in the articles, they were perhaps livelier than in the preface; they were distressing nevertheless; they led invariably to the question of our decadence. Carthage was named; a great mercantile community absolutely obliterated! Senatorial men were led to propose in their thoughtfulest tones that we should turn our attention to Art. Why should we not learn to excel in Art? We excelled in Poetry. Our Poets were cited: not that there was a notion that poems would pay as an export but to show that if we excel in one of the Arts we may in others of them. The poetry was not cited, nor was it necessary, the object being to inflate the balloon of paradox with a light-flying gas, and prove a poem-producing people to be of their nature born artists; if they did but know it. The explosion of a particular trade points to your taking up another. Energy is adapted to flourish equally in every branch of labour.

It is the genius of the will, commanding all the crossroads. A country breeding hugely must prove its energy likewise in the departments of the mind, or it will ultimately be unable to feed its young—nay, to feast its aldermen! Let us be up and alive.—Such was the exhortation of a profound depression. Outside these dismal assemblies, in the streets, an ancient song of raven recurrence croaked of 'Old England a-going down the hill'; for there is a link of electricity between the street-boy and the leading article in

days when the Poles exchange salutations.

Mr. Ezra's legacy of his millions to son and daughter broke like a golden evening on the borders of the raincloud. Things could not be so bad when a plain untitled English gentleman bequeathed in the simplest manner possible such giant heaps, a very Pelion upon Ossa, of wealth to his children. The minds of the readers of journals were now directed to think of the hoarded treasures of this favoured country. They might approximately be counted, but even if counted they would be past conception, like the sidereal system. The contemplation of a million stupefies: consider the figures of millions and millions! Articles were written on Lombard Street, the world's gold-mine, our granary of energy, surpassing all actual and fabulous gold-mines ever spoken of: Aladdin's magician would find his purse contracting and squeaking in the comparison. Then, too, the store of jewels held by certain private families called for remark and an allusion to Sindbad the sailor, whose eyes were to dilate wider than they did in the valley of diamonds. Why, we could, if we pleased, lie by and pass two or three decades as jolly cricketers and scullers, and resume the race for wealth with the rest of mankind, hardly sensible of the holiday in our pockets though we were the last people to do it, we were the sole people that had the option. Our Fortunatus' cap was put to better purposes, but to have the cap, and not to be emasculated by the possession, might excuse a little reasonable pride in ourselves.

Thus did Optimism and Pessimism have their turn, like the two great parties in the State, and the subsiding see-saw restored a proper balance, much to the nation's comfort. Unhappily, it was remembered, there are spectators of its method of getting to an equipoise out of the agitation of extremes. The peep at our treasures to regain composure had, we fear, given the foreigner glimpses, and whetted the appetite of our masses. No sooner are we at peace than these are heard uttering low howls, and those are seen enviously glaring. The spectre, Panic, that ever dogs the optimistic feast, warns us of a sack under our beds, and robbers about to try a barely-bolted door. . . Then do we, who have so sweetly sung our senses to sleep, start up, in their grip, rush to the doctor and the blacksmith, rig alarms, proclaim ourselves intestinally torn, defenceless, a prey to foes within and without. It is discovered to be no worse than an alderman's dream, but the pessimist frenzy of the night has tossed a quieting sop to the Radical, and summoned the volunteers to a review. Laudatory articles upon the soldierly 'march past' of our volunteers permit of a spell of soft repose, deeper than prudent, at the end of it, India and Ireland consenting.

So much for a passing outline of John Bull—the shadow on the wall of John Mattock. The unostentatious millionaire's legacy to his two children affected Mr. Bull thrillingly, pretty nearly as it has here been dotted in lining. That is historical. Could he believe in the existence of a son of his, a master of millions, who had never sighed (and he had only to sigh) to die a peer, or a baronet, or simple Knight? The downright hard-nailed coffin fact was there; the wealthiest man in the country had flown away to Shadowland a common Mr.! You see the straight deduction from the circumstances:—we are, say what you will, a Republican people! Newspaper articles on the watch sympathetically for Mr. Bull's latest view of himself, preached on the theme of our peculiar Republicanism. Soon after he was observed fondling the Crown Insignia. His bards flung out their breezy columns, reverentially monarchial. The Republican was informed that they were despised as a blatant minority. A maudlin fit of worship of our nobility had hold of him next, and English aristocracy received the paeon. Lectures were addressed to democrats; our House of Lords was pledged solemnly in reams of print. We were told that 'blood' may always be betted on to win the race; blood that is blue will beat the red hollow. Who could pretend to despise the honour of admission to the ranks of the proudest peerage the world has known! Is not a great territorial aristocracy the strongest guarantee of national stability? The loudness of the interrogation, like the thunder of Jove, precluded thought of an answer.

Mr. Bull, though he is not of lucid memory, kept an eye on the owner of those millions. His bards were awake to his anxiety, and celebrated John Mattock's doings with a trump and flourish somewhat displeasing to a quietly-disposed commoner. John's entry into Parliament as a Liberal was taken for a sign of steersman who knew where the tide ran. But your Liberals are sometimes Radicals in their youth, and his choice of parties might not be so much sagacity as an instance of unripe lightheadedness. A young conservative millionaire is less disturbing. The very wealthy young peer is never wanton in his politics, which seems to admonish us that the heir of vast wealth should have it imposed on him to accept a peerage, and be locked up as it were. A coronet steadies the brain. You may let out your heels at the social laws, you are almost expected to do it, but you are to shake that young pate of yours restively under such a splendid encumbrance. Private reports of John, however, gave him credit for sound opinions: he was moderate, merely progressive. When it was added that the man had the habit of taking counsel with his sister, he was at once considered as fast and safe, not because of any public knowledge of the character of Jane Mattock. We pay this homage to the settled common sense of women. Distinctly does she discountenance leaps in the dark, wild driving, and the freaks of Radicalism.

John, as it happened, had not so grave a respect for the sex as for the individual Jane. He thought

women capable of acts of foolishness; his bright-faced sister he could thoroughly trust for prudent conduct. He gave her a good portion of his heart in confidence, and all of it in affection. There were matters which he excluded from confidence, even from intimate communication with himself. These he could not reveal; nor could she perfectly open her heart to him, for the same reason. They both had an established ideal of their personal qualities, not far above the positive, since they were neither of them pretentious, yet it was a trifle higher and fairer than the working pattern; and albeit they were sincere enough, quite sincere in their mutual intercourse, they had, by what each knew at times of the thumping organ within them, cause for doubting that they were as transparent as the other supposed; and they were separately aware of an inward smile at one another's partial deception; which did not thwart their honest power of working up to the respected ideal. The stroke of the deeper self-knowledge rarely shook them; they were able to live with full sensations in the animated picture they were to the eyes best loved by them. This in fact was their life. Anything beside it was a dream, and we do not speak of our dreams—not of every dream. Especially do we reserve our speech concerning the dream in which we had a revelation of the proud frame deprived of a guiding will, flung rudderless on the waves. Ah that abject! The dismantled ship has the grandeur of the tempest about it, but the soul swayed by passion is ignominiously bare-poled, detected, hooted by its old assumption. If instinct plays fantastical tricks when we are sleeping, let it be ever behind a curtain. We can be held guilty only if we court exposure. The ideal of English gentleman and gentlewoman is closely Roman in the self-repression it exacts, and that it should be but occasionally difficult to them shows an affinity with the type. Do you perchance, O continental observers of the race, call it hypocritical? It is their nature disciplined to the regimental step of civilisation. Socially these island men and women of a certain middle rank are veterans of an army, and some of the latest enrolled are the stoutest defenders of the flag.

Brother and sister preserved their little secrets of character apart. They could not be expected to unfold what they declined personally to examine. But they were not so successful with the lady governing the household, their widowed maternal aunt, Mrs. Lackstraw, a woman of decisive penetration, and an insubordinate recruit of the army aforesaid. To her they were without a mask; John was passion's slave, Jane the most romantic of Eve's daughters. She pointed to incidents of their youth; her vision was acutely retrospective. The wealth of her nephew and niece caused such a view of them to be, as she remarked, anxious past endurance. She had grounds for fearing that John, who might step to an alliance with any one of the proudest houses in the Kingdom, would marry a beggar-maid. As for Jane, she was the natural prey of a threadbare poet. Mrs. Lackstraw heard of Mr. Patrick O'Donnell, and demanded the right to inspect him. She doubted such perfect disinterestedness in any young man as that he should slave at account-keeping to that Laundry without a prospect of rich remuneration, and the tale of his going down to the city for a couple of hours each day to learn the art of keeping books was of very dubious import in a cousin of Captain Con O'Donnell. 'Let me see your prodigy,' she said, with the emphasis on each word. Patrick was presented at her table. She had steeled herself against an Irish tongue. He spoke little, appeared simple, professed no enthusiasm for the Laundry. And he paid no compliments to Jane: of the two he was more interested by the elder lady, whose farm and dairy in Surrey he heard her tell of with a shining glance, observing that he liked thick cream: there was a touch of home in it. The innocent sensuality in the candid avowal of his tastes inspired confidence. Mrs. Lackstraw fished for some account of his home. He was open to flow on the subject; he dashed a few sketches of mother and sisters, dowerless girls, fresh as trout in the stream, and of his own poor estate, and the peasantry, with whom he was on friendly terms. He was an absentee for his education. Sweet water, pure milk, potatoes and bread, were the things he coveted in plenty for his people and himself, he said, calling forth an echo from Mrs. Lackstraw, and an invitation to come down to her farm in the Spring. 'That is, Mr. O'Donnell, if you are still in London.'

'Oh, I'm bound apprentice for a year,' said he.

He was asked whether he did not find it tiresome work.

'A trifle so,' he confessed.

Then why did he pursue it, the question was put.

He was not alive for his own pleasure, and would like to feel he was doing a bit of good, was the answer.

Could one, Mrs. Lackstraw asked herself, have faith in this young Irishman? He possessed an estate. His brogue rather added to his air of truthfulness. His easy manners and the occasional streak of correct French in his dialogue cast a shadow on it. Yet he might be an ingenuous creature precisely because of the suspicion roused by his quaint unworldliness that he might be a terrible actor. Why not?—his heart was evidently much more interested in her pursuits than in her niece's. The juvenility of him was catching, if it was indeed the man, and not one of the actor's properties. Mrs. Lackstraw thought it

prudent to hint at the latter idea to Jane while she decided in her generosity to embrace the former. Oh! if all Irishmen shared his taste for sweet water, pure milk and wholesome bread, what a true Union we should have! She had always insisted on those three things as most to be desired on earth for the masses, and she reminded Jane of it as a curious fact. Jane acquiesced, having always considered it a curious fact that her aunt should combine the relish of a country life with the intensest social ambition — a passion so sensitive as to make the name her husband had inflicted on her a pain and a burden. The name of Mattock gave her horrors. She spoke of it openly to prove that Jane must marry a title and John become a peer. Never was there such a name to smell of the soil. She declared her incapacity to die happy until the two had buried Mattock. Her own one fatal step condemned her, owing to the opinion she held upon the sacredness of marriage, as Lackstraw on her tombstone, and to Lackstraw above the earthly martyr would go bearing the designation which marked her to be claimed by him. But for John and Jane the index of Providence pointed a brighter passage through life. They had only to conquer the weakness native to them—the dreadful tendency downward. They had, in the spiritual sense, frail hearts. The girl had been secretive about the early activity of hers, though her aunt knew of two or three adventures wanting in nothing save boldness to have put an end to her independence and her prospects:—hence this Laundry business! a clear sign of some internal disappointment. The boy, however, had betrayed himself in his mother's days, when it required all her influence and his father's authority, with proof positive of the woman's unworthiness, to rescue him from immediate disaster.

Mrs. Lackstraw's confidences on the theme of the family she watched over were extended to Patrick during their strolls among the ducks and fowls and pheasants at her farm. She dealt them out in exclamations, as much as telling him that now they knew him they trusted him, notwithstanding the unaccountable part he played as honorary secretary to that Laundry. The confidences, he was aware, were common property of the visitors one after another, but he had the knowledge of his being trusted as not every Irishman would have been. A service of six months to the secretaryship established his reputation as the strange bird of a queer species: not much less quiet, honest, methodical, than an Englishman, and still impulsive, Irish still; a very strange bird.

The disposition of the English to love the children of Erin, when not fretted by them, was shown in the treatment Patrick received from the Mattock family. It is a love resembling the affection of the stage-box for a set of favourite performers, and Patrick, a Celt who had schooled his wits to observe and meditate, understood his position with them as one of the gallant and amusing race, as well as the reason why he had won their private esteem. They are not willingly suspicious: it agitates their minds to be so; and they are most easily lulled by the flattery of seeing their special virtues grafted on an alien stock: for in this admiration of virtues that are so necessary to the stalwart growth of man, they become just sensible of a minor deficiency; the tree, if we jump out of it to examine its appearance, should not be all trunk. Six months of ungrudging unremunerated service, showing devotion to the good cause and perfect candour from first to last, was English, and a poetic touch beyond: so that John Mattock, if he had finished the sentence instead of lopping it with an interjection, would have said: 'These Irish fellows, when they're genuine and first rate!—are pretty well the pick of the land.' Perhaps his pause on the interjection expressed a doubt of our getting them genuine. Mr. O'Donnell was a sort of exceptional Irishman, not devoid of practical ability in a small way—he did his duties of secretary fairly well; apparently sincere—he had refrained from courting Jane; an odd creature enough, what with his mixture of impulsiveness and discretion; likeable, pleasant to entertain and talk to; not one of your lunatics concerning his country—he could listen to an Englishman's opinion on that head, listen composedly to Rockney, merely seeming to take notes; and Rockney was, as Captain Con termed him, Press Dragoon about Ireland, a trying doctor for a child of the patient.

On the whole, John Mattock could shake his hand heartily when he was leaving our shores. Patrick was released by Miss Grace Barrow's discovery at last of a lady capable of filling his place: a circumstance that he did not pretend to regret. He relinquished his post and stood aside with the air of a disciplined soldier. This was at the expiration of seven months and two weeks of service. Only after he had gone, upon her receiving his first letter from the Continent, did Jane distinguish in herself the warmth of friendliness she felt for him, and know that of all around her she, reproaching every one who had hinted a doubt, had been the most suspicious of his pure simplicity. It was the vice of her condition to be suspicious of the honesty of men. She thought of her looks as less attractive than they were; of her wealth she had reason to think that the scent transformed our sad sex into dogs under various disguises. Remembering her chill once on hearing Patrick in a green lane where they botanised among spring flowers call himself her Irish cousin, as if he had advanced a step and betrayed the hoof, she called him her Irish cousin now in good earnest. Her nation was retrospectively enthusiastic. The cordiality of her letter of reply to the wandering Patrick astonished him on the part of so cool a young lady; and Captain Con, when he heard Miss Mattock speak of Patrick to his wife, came to the conclusion that the leery lad had gone a far way toward doing the trick for himself, though Jane said his correspondence was full of the deeds of his brother in India. She quite sparkled in speaking of this boy.

She and the captain had an interchange of sparklings over absent Patrick, at a discovery made by Miss Colesworth, the lady replacing him, in a nook of the amateur secretary's official desk, under heaps of pamphlets and slips, French and English and Irish journals, not at all bearing upon the business of the Laundry. It was a blotting-pad stuffed with Patrick's jottings. Jane brought it to Con as to the proper keeper of the reliquary. He persuaded her to join him in examining it, and together they bent their heads, turning leaf by leaf, facing, laughing, pursuing the search for more, sometimes freely shouting.

Her inspection of the contents had previously been shy; she had just enough to tell her they were funny. Dozens of scraps, insides of torn envelopes, invitation-cards, ends of bills received from home, whatever was handy to him at the moment, had done service for the overflow of Mr. Secretary's private notes and reflections; the blotting-paper as well; though that was devoted chiefly to sketches of the human countenance, the same being almost entirely of the fair. Jane fancied she spied herself among the number. Con saw the likeness, but not considering it a complimentary one, he whisked over the leaf. Grace Barrow was unmistakable. Her dimpled cushion features, and very intent eyes gazing out of the knolls and dingles, were given without caricature. Miss Colesworth appeared on the last page, a half-length holding a big key, demure between curls. The key was explained by a cage on a stool, and a bird flying out. She had unlocked the cage for Patrick.

'He never seemed anxious to be released while he was at work,' said Jane, after she and the captain had spelt the symboling in turns.

'And never thirsted to fly till he flew, I warrant him,' said Con.

A repeated sketch of some beauty confused them both; neither of them could guess the proud owner of those lineaments. Con proclaimed it to be merely one of the lad's recollections, perhaps a French face. He thought he might have seen a face rather resembling it, but could not call to mind whose face it was.

'I dare say it's just a youngster's dream on a stool at a desk, as poets write sonnets in their youth to nobody, till they're pierced by somebody, and then there's a difference in their handwriting,' he said, vexed with Patrick for squandering his opportunity to leave a compliment to the heiress behind him.

Jane flipped the leaves back to the lady with stormy hair.

'But you'll have the whole book, and hand it to him when he returns; it 'll come best from you,' said Con. 'The man on horseback, out of uniform, 's brother Philip, of course. And man and horse are done to the life. Pray, take it, Miss Mattock. I should lose it to a certainty; I should; I can't be trusted. You'll take it!'

He pressed her so warmly to retain the bundle in her custody that she carried it away.

Strange to say the things she had laughed at had been the things which struck her feelings and sympathies. Patrick's notes here and there recalled conversations he had more listened to than taken part in between herself and Grace Barrow. Who could help laughing at his ideas about women! But if they were crude, they were shrewd—or so she thought them; and the jejuneness was, to her mind, chiefly in the dressing of them. Grace agreed with her, for Grace had as good a right to inspect the papers as she, and a glance had shown that there was nothing of peculiar personal import in his notes: he did not brood on himself.

Here was one which tickled the ladies and formed a text for discussion.

'Women must take the fate of market-fruit till they earn their own pennies, and then they 'll regulate the market. It is a tussle for money with them as with us, meaning power. They'd do it as little by oratory as they have done by millinery, for their oratory, just like their millinery, appeals to a sentiment, and to a weaker; and nothing solid comes of a sentiment. Power is built on work.'

To this was appended: 'The better for mankind in the developing process, ay, and a bad day for us, boys, when study masks the charming eyes in gig-lamps, and there is no pretty flying before us. Good-night to Cupid, I fear. May be I am not seeing far enough, and am asking for the devil to have the loveliest women as of old. Retro S. M.'

The youthful eye on their sex, the Irish voice, and the perceptible moral earnestness in the background, made up a quaint mixture.

CHAPTER XVI

OF THE GREAT MR. BULL AND THE CELTIC AND SAXON VIEW OF HIM: AND SOMETHING OF RICHARD ROCKNEY

Meanwhile India, our lubber giant, had ceased to kick a leg, and Ireland, our fever-invalid, wore the aspect of an opiate slumber. The volcano we couch on was quiet, the gritty morsel unabsorbed within us at an armistice with the gastric juices. Once more the personification of the country's prosperity had returned to the humming state of roundness. Trade whipped him merrily, and he spun.

A fuller sketch of the figure of this remarkable emanation of us and object of our worship, Bull, is required that we may breathe the atmosphere of a story dealing with such very different views of the idol, and learn to tolerate plain-speaking about him.

Fancy yourself delayed by stress of weather at an inn or an excursion, and snapped up by some gossip drone of the district, who hearing whither you are bound, recounts the history and nature of the place, to your ultimate advantage, though you groan for the outer downpour to abate.— Of Bull, then: our image, before the world: our lord and tyrant, ourself in short—the lower part of us. Coldly worshipped on the whole, he can create an enthusiasm when his roast-beef influence mounts up to peaceful skies and the domestic English world spins with him. What he does not like will then be the forbidding law of a most governable people, what he does like the consenting. If it is declared that argument will be inefficacious to move him, he is adored in the form of post. A hint of his willingness in any direction, causes a perilous rush of his devotees. Nor is there reason to suppose we have drawn the fanatical subserviency from the example of our subject India. We may deem it native; perhaps of its origin Aryan, but we have made it our own. Some have been so venturesome as to trace the lordliness of Bull to the protecting smiles of the good Neptune, whose arms are about him to encourage the development of a wanton eccentricity. Certain weeds of the human bosom are prompt to flourish where safeness would seem to be guaranteed. Men, for instance, of stoutly independent incomes are prone to the same sort of wilfulness as Bull's, the salve abject submission to it which we behold in his tidal bodies of supporters. Neptune has done something. One thinks he has done much, at a rumour of his inefficiency to do the utmost. Spy you insecurity?—a possibility of invasion? Then indeed the colossal creature, inaccessible to every argument, is open to any suggestion: the oak-like is a reed, the bull a deer. But as there is no attack on his shores, there is no proof that they are invulnerable. Neptune is appealed to and replies by mouth of the latest passenger across the Channel on a windy night:—Take heart, son John! They will have poor stomachs for blows who intrude upon you. The testification to the Sea-God's watchfulness restores his darling who is immediately as horny to argument as before. Neptune shall have his share of the honours.

Ideal of his country Bull has none—he hates the word; it smells of heresy, opposition to his image. It is an exercise of imagination to accept an ideal, and his digestive organs reject it, after the manner of the most beautiful likeness of him conjurable to the mind—that flowering stomach, the sea-anemone, which opens to anything and speedily casts out what it cannot consume. He is a positive shape, a practical corporation, and the best he can see is the mirror held up to him by his bards of the Press and his jester Frank Guffaw. There, begirt by laughing ocean-waves, manifestly blest, he glorifies his handsome roundness, like that other Foam-Born, whom the decorative Graces robed in vestments not so wonderful as printed sheets. Rounder at each inspection, he preaches to mankind from the text of a finger curved upon the pattern spectacles. Your Frenchmen are revolutionising, wagering on tentative politics; your Germans ploughing in philosophy, thumbing classics, composing music of a novel order: both are marching, evolutionising, learning how to kill. Ridiculous Germans! capricious Frenchmen! We want nothing new in musical composition and abstract speculation of an indecent mythology, or political contrivances and schemes of Government, and we do not want war. Peace is the Goddess we court for the hand of her daughter Plenty, and we have won that jolly girl, and you are welcome to the marriage-feast; but avaunt new-fangled theories and howlings: old tunes, tried systems, for us, my worthy friends.

Roundness admiring the growth of its globe may address majestic invitation to the leaner kine. It can exhibit to the world that Peace is a most desirable mother-in-law; and it is tempted to dream of capping the pinnacle of wisdom when it squats on a fundamental truth. Bull's perusal of the Horatian *carpe diem* is acute as that of the cattle in fat meads; he walks like lusty Autumn carrying his garner to drum on, for a sign of his diligent wisdom in seizing the day. He can read the page fronting him; and let it be of dining, drinking, toasting, he will vociferously confute the wiseacre bookworms who would have us believe there is no such thing as a present hour for man.

In sad fact, the member for England is often intoxicate. Often do we have him whirling his rotundity like a Mussulman dervish inflated by the spirit to agitate the shanks, until pangs of a commercial crisis

awaken him to perceive an infructuous past and an unsown future, without one bit of tracery on its black breast other than that which his apprehensions project. As for a present hour, it swims, it vanishes, thinner than the phantom banquets of recollection. What has he done for the growth of his globe of brains?—the lesser, but in our rightful posture the upper, and justly the directing globe, through whose directions we do, by feeding on the past to sow the future, create a sensible present composed of both— the present of the good using of our powers. What can he show in the Arts? What in Arms? His bards—O faithless! but they are men—his bards accuse him of sheer cattle-contentedness in the mead, of sterility of brain, drowsihood, mid-noddysm, downright carcase-dulness. They question him to deafen him of our defences, our intellectual eminence, our material achievements, our poetry, our science; they sneer at his trust in Neptune, doubt the scaly invulnerability of the God. They point over to the foreigner, the clean-stepping, braced, self-confident foreigner, good at arms, good at the arts, and eclipsing us in industriousness manual and mental, and some dare to say, in splendour of verse=our supreme accomplishment.

Then with one big fellow, the collapse of pursiness, he abandons his pedestal of universal critic; prostrate he falls to the foreigner; he is down, he is roaring; he is washing his hands of English performances, lends ear to foreign airs, patronises foreign actors, browses on reports from camps of foreign armies. He drops his head like a smitten ox to all great foreign names, moaning 'Shakespeare!' internally for a sustaining apostrophe. He well-nigh loves his poets, can almost understand what poetry means. If it does not pay, it brings him fame, respectfulness in times of reverse. Brains, he is reduced to apprehend, brains are the generators of the conquering energies. He is now for brains at all costs, he has gained a conception of them. He is ready to knock knighthood on the heads of men of brains—even literary brains. They shall be knights, an ornamental body. To make them peers, and a legislative, has not struck him, for he has not yet imagined them a stable body. They require petting, to persuade them to flourish and bring him esteem.

This is Mr. Bull, our image before the world, whose pranks are passed as though the vivid display of them had no bad effect on the nation. Doubtless the perpetual mirror, the slavish mirror, is to blame, but his nakedness does not shrink from the mirror, he likes it and he is proud of it. Beneath these exhibitions the sober strong spirit of the country, unfortunately not a prescient one, nor an attractively loveable, albeit of a righteous benevolence, labours on, doing the hourly duties for the sake of conscience, little for prospective security, little to win affection. Behold it as the donkey of a tipsy costermonger, obedient to go without the gift of expression. Its behaviour is honourable under a discerning heaven, and there is ever something pathetic in a toilsome speechlessness; but it is of dogged attitude in the face of men. Salt is in it to keep our fleshly grass from putrefaction; poets might proclaim its virtues. They will not; they are averse. The only voice it has is the Puritan bray, upon which one must philosophise asinically to unveil the charm. So the world is pleased to let it be obscured by the paunch of Bull. We have, however, isolated groups, individuals in all classes, by no means delighting in his representation of them. When such is felt to be the case among a sufficient number, his bards blow him away as a vapour; we hear that he is a piece of our English humour—we enjoy grotesques and never should agree to paint ourselves handsome: our subtle conceit insists on the reverse. Nevertheless, no sooner are the hours auspicious to fatness than Bull is back on us; he is our family goat, ancestral ghost, the genius of our comfortable sluggishness. And he is at times a mad Bull: a foaming, lashing, trampling, horn-driving, excessive, very parlous Bull. It is in his history that frenzies catch him, when to be yoked to him is to suffer frightful shakings, not to mention a shattering of our timbers. It is but in days of the rousing of the under-spirit of the country, days of storm imprudent to pray the advent of, that we are well rid of him for a while. In the interim he does mischief, serious mischief; he does worse than when, a juvenile, he paid the Danneget for peace. Englishmen of feeling do not relish him. For men with Irish and Cambrian blood in their veins the rubicund grotesque, with his unimpressionable front and his noisy benevolence of the pocket, his fits of horned ferocity and lapses of hardheartedness, is a shame and a loathing. You attach small importance to images and symbols; yet if they seem representative, and they sicken numbers of us, they are important. The hat we wear, though it is not a part of the head, stamps the character of our appearance and has a positive influence on our bearing. Symbolical decorations will stimulate the vacant-minded to act up to them, they encircle and solidify the mass; they are a sword of division between Celts and Saxons if they are abhorrent to one section. And the Celtic brotherhood are not invariably fools in their sensitiveness. They serve you on the field of Mars, and on other fields to which the world has given glory. These execrate him as the full-grown Golden Calf of heathenish worship. And they are so restive because they are so patriotic. Think a little upon the ideas of unpatriotic Celts regarding him. You have heard them. You tell us they are you: accurately, they affirm, succinctly they see you in his crescent outlines, tame bulk, spasms of alarm and foot on the weaker; his imperviousness to whatsoever does not confront the sensual eye of him with a cake or a fist, his religious veneration of his habitual indulgences, his peculiar forms of nightmare. They swear to his perfect personification of your moods, your Saxon moods, which their inconsiderate spleen would have us take for unmixedly Saxon. They are unjust, but many of them speak with a sense of the foot on their necks, and they are of a blood demanding a worshipworthy idea.

And they dislike Bull's bellow of disrespect for their religion, much bruited in the meadows during his periods of Arcadia. They dislike it, cannot forget the sound: it hangs on the afflicted drum of the ear when they are in another land, perhaps when the old devotion to their priest has expired. For this, as well as for material reasons, they hug the hatred they packed up among their bundles of necessaries and relics, in the flight from home, and they instruct their children to keep it burning. They transmit the sentiment of the loathing of Bull, as assuredly they would be incapable of doing, even with the will, were a splendid fire-eyed motherly Britannia the figure sitting in the minds of men for our image—a palpitating figure, alive to change, penetrable to thought, and not a stolid concrete of our traditional old yeoman characteristic. Verily he lives for the present, all for the present, will be taught in sorrow that there is no life for him but of past and future: his delusion of the existence of a present hour for man will not outlast the season of his eating and drinking abundantly in security. He will perceive that it was no more than the spark shot out from the clash of those two meeting forces; and penitently will he gaze back on that misleading spark—the spectral planet it bids wink to his unreceptive stars—acknowledging him the bare machine for those two to drive, no instrument of enjoyment. He lives by reading rearward and seeing vanward. He has no actual life save in power of imagination. He has to learn this fact, the great lesson of all men. Furthermore there may be a future closed to him if he has thrown too extreme a task of repairing on that bare machine of his. The sight of a broken-down plough is mournful, but the one thing to do with it is to remove it from the field.

Among the patriotic of stout English substance, who blew in the trumpet of the country, and were not bards of Bull to celebrate his firmness and vindicate his shiftings, Richard Rockney takes front rank. A journalist altogether given up to his craft, considering the audience he had gained, he was a man of forethought besides being a trenchant writer, and he was profoundly, not less than eminently, the lover of Great Britain. He had a manner of utterance quite in the tone of the familiar of the antechamber for proof of his knowing himself to be this person. He did not so much write articles upon the health of his mistress as deliver Orphic sentences. He was in one her physician, her spiritual director, her man-at-arms. Public allusions to her were greeted with his emphatic assent in a measured pitch of the voice, or an instantaneous flourish of the rapier; and the flourish was no vain show. He meant hard steel to defend the pill he had prescribed for her constitutional state, and the monition for her soul's welfare. Nor did he pretend to special privileges in assuming his militant stand, but simply that he had studied her case, was intimate with her resources, and loved her hotly, not to say inspiredly. Love her as well, you had his cordial hand; as wisely, then all his weapons to back you. There were occasions when distinguished officials and Parliamentary speakers received the impetus of Rockney's approval and not hesitatingly he stepped behind them to bestow it. The act, in whatever fashion it may have been esteemed by the objects propelled, was a sign of his willingness to let the shadow of any man adopting his course obscure him, and of the simplicity of his attachment. If a bitter experience showed that frequently, indeed generally, they travelled scarce a tottering stagger farther than they were precipitated, the wretched consolation afforded by a side glance at a more enlightened passion, solitary in its depth, was Rockney's. Others perchance might equal his love, none the wisdom of it; actually none the vigilant circumspection, the shaping forethought. That clear knowledge of the right thing for the country was grasped but by fits by others. Enough to profit them this way and yonder as one best can! You know the newspaper Press is a mighty engine. Still he had no delight in shuffling a puppetry; he would have preferred automatic figures. His calls for them resounded through the wilderness of the wooden.

Any solid conviction of a capable head of a certainty impressed upon the world, and thus his changes of view were not attributed to a fluctuating devotion; they passed out of the range of criticism upon inconsistency, notwithstanding that the commencement of his journalistic career smelt of sources entirely opposed to the conclusions upon which it broadened. One secret of the belief in his love of his country was the readiness of Rockney's pen to support our nobler patriotic impulses, his relish of the bluff besides. His eye was on our commerce, on our courts of Law, on our streets and alleys, our army and navy, our colonies, the vaster than the island England, and still he would be busy picking up needles and threads in the island. Deeds of valour were noted by him, lapses of cowardice: how one man stood against a host for law or humanity, how crowds looked on at the beating of a woman, how a good fight was maintained in some sly ring between two of equal brawn: and manufacturers were warned of the consequences of their iniquities, Government was lashed for sleeping upon shaky ordinances, colonists were gibbeted for the maltreating of natives: the ring and fervour of the notes on daily events told of Rockney's hand upon the national heart—with a faint, an enforced, reluctant indication of our not being the men we were.

But after all, the main secret was his art of writing round English, instead of laborious Latinised periods: and the secret of the art was his meaning what he said. It was the personal throb. The fire of a mind was translucent in Press columns where our public had been accustomed to the rhetoric of primed scribes. He did away with the Biscay billow of the leading article—Bull's favourite prose—bardic construction of sentences that roll to the antithetical climax, whose foamy top is offered and gulped as

equivalent to an idea. Writing of such a kind as Rockney's was new to a land where the political opinions of Joint Stock Companies had rattled Jovian thunders obedient to the nod of Bull. Though not alone in working the change, he was the foremost. And he was not devoid of style. Fervidness is the core of style. He was a tough opponent for his betters in education, struck forcibly, dexterously, was always alert for debate. An encounter between Swift and Johnson, were it imaginable, would present us probably the most prodigious Gigantomachy in literary polemics. It is not imaginable among comparative pygmies. But Rockney's combat with his fellow-politicians of the Press partook of the Swiftian against the Johnsonian in form. He was a steam ram that drove straight at the bulky broadside of the enemy.

Premiers of parties might be Captains of the State for Rockney: Rockney was the premier's pilot, or woe to him. Woe to the country as well, if Rockney's directions for steering were unheeded. He was a man of forethought, the lover of Great Britain: he shouted his directions in the voice of the lover of his mistress, urged to rebuke, sometimes to command, the captain by the prophetic intimations of a holier alliance, a more illumined prescience. Reefs here, shallows there, yonder a foul course: this is the way for you! The refusal of the captain to go this way caused Rockney sincerely to discredit the sobriety of his intellect. It was a drunken captain. Or how if a traitorous? We point out the danger to him, and if he will run the country on to it, we proclaim him guilty either of inebriety or of treason—the alternatives are named: one or the other has him. Simple unfitness can scarcely be conceived of a captain having our common senses and a warranted pilot at his elbow.

Had not Rockney been given to a high expression of opinion, plain in fervour, he would often have been exposed bare to hostile shafts. Style cast her aegis over him. He wore an armour in which he could walk, run and leap—a natural style. The ardour of his temperament suffused the directness of his intelligence to produce it, and the two qualities made his weakness and strength. Feeling the nerve of strength, the weakness was masked to him, while his opponents were equally insensible to the weakness under the force of his blows. Thus there was nothing to teach him, or reveal him, except Time, whose trick is to turn corners of unanticipated sharpness, and leave the directly seeing and ardent to dash at walls.

How rigidly should the man of forethought govern himself, question himself! how constantly wrestle with himself! And if he be a writer ebullient by the hour, how snappishly suspect himself, that he may feel in conscience worthy of a hearing and have perpetually a conscience in his charge! For on what is his forethought founded? Does he try the ring of it with our changed conditions? But a man of forethought who has to be one of our geysers ebullient by the hour must live days of fever. His apprehensions distemper his blood; the scrawl of them on the dark of the undeveloped dazzles his brain. He sees in time little else; his very sincereness twists him awry. Such a man has the stuff of the born journalist, and journalism is the food of the age. Ask him, however, midway in his running, what he thinks of quick breathing: he will answer that to be a shepherd on the downs is to be more a man. As to the gobbling age, it really thinks better of him than he of it.

After a term of prolonged preachification he is compelled to lash that he may less despise the age. He has to do it for his own sake. O gobbling age! swallowing all, digesting nought, us too you have swallowed, O insensate mechanism! and we will let you know you have a stomach. Furiously we disagree with you. We are in you to lead you or work you pangs!

Rockney could not be a mild sermoniser commenting on events. Rather no journalism at all for him! He thought the office of the ordinary daily preacher cowlike. His gadfly stung him to warn, dictate, prognosticate; he was the oracle and martyr of superior vision: and as in affairs of business and the weighing of men he was of singularly cool sagacity, hard on the downright, open to the humours of the distinct discrimination of things in their roughness, the knowledge of the firmly-based materialism of his nature caused him, thoroughly to trust to his voice when he delivered it in ardour—circumstance coming to be of daily recurrence. Great love creates forethoughtfulness, without which incessant journalism is a gabble. He was sure of his love, but who gave ear to his prescience? Few: the echo of the country now and then, the Government not often. And, dear me! those jog-trot sermonisers, mere commentators upon events, manage somehow to keep up the sale of their journals: advertisements do not flow and ebb with them as under the influence of a capricious moon. Ah, what a public! Serve it honourably, you are in peril of collapsing: show it nothing but the likeness of its dull animal face, you are steadily inflated. These reflections within us! Might not one almost say that the retreat for the prophet is the wilderness, far from the hustled editor's desk; and annual should be the uplifting of his voice instead of diurnal, if only to spare his blood the distemper? A fund of gout was in Rockney's, and he had begun to churn it. Between gouty blood and luminous brain the strife had set in which does not conduce to unwavering sobriety of mind, though ideas remain closely consecutive and the utterance resonant.

Never had he been an adulator of Bull. His defects as well as his advantages as a politician preserved

to him this virtue. Insisting on a future, he could not do homage to the belying simulacrum of the present. In the season of prosperity Rockney lashed the old fellow with the crisis he was breeding for us; and when prostration ensued no English tongue was loftier in preaching dignity and the means of recovery. Our monumental image of the Misuse of Peace he pointed out unceasingly as at a despot constructed by freemen out of the meanest in their natures to mock the gift of liberty. His articles of foregone years were an extraordinary record of events or conditions foreseen: seductive in the review of them by a writer who has to be still foreseeing: nevertheless, that none of them were bardic of Bull, and that our sound man would have acted wisely in heeding some of the prescriptions, constituted their essential merit, consolatory to think of, though painful. The country has gone the wrong road, but it may yet cross over to the right one, when it perceives that we were prophetic.

Compared with the bolts discharged at Bull by Rockney's artillery, Captain Con O'Donnell's were popgun-pellets. Only Rockney fired to chasten, Con O'Donnell for a diversion, to appease an animus. The revolutionist in English journalism was too devoutly patriotic to belabour even a pantomime mask that was taken as representative of us for the disdainful fun of it. Behind the plethoric lamp, now blown with the fleshpots, now gasping puffs of panic, he saw the well-minded valorous people, issue of glorious grandsires; a nation under a monstrous defacement, stupefied by the contemplation of the mask: his vision was of the great of old, the possibly great in the graver strife ahead, respecters of life, despisers of death, the real English whereas an alienated Celtic satirist, through his vivid fancy and his disesteem, saw the country incarnate in Bull, at most a roguish screw-kneed clown to be whipped out of him. Celt and Saxon are much inmixed with us, but the prevalence of Saxon blood is evinced by the public disregard of any Celtic conception of the honourable and the loveable; so that the Celt anxious to admire is rebutted, and the hatred of a Celt, quick as he is to catch at images, has a figure of hugeous animalism supplied to his malign contempt. Rockney's historic England, and the living heroic England to slip from that dull hide in a time of trial, whether of war or social suffering, he cannot see, nor a people hardening to Spartan lineaments in the fire, iron men to meet disaster, worshippers of a discerned God of Laws, and just men too, thinking to do justice; he has Bull on the eye, the alternately braggart and poltroon, sweating in labour that he may gorge the fruits, graceless to a scoffer. And this is the creature to whose tail he is tied! Hereditary hatred is approved by critical disgust. Some spirited brilliancy, some persistent generosity (other than the guzzle's flash of it), might soften him; something sweeter than the slow animal well-meaningness his placable brethren point his attention to. It is not seen, and though he can understand the perils of a severance, he prefers to rub the rawness of his wound and be ready to pitch his cap in the air for it, out of sheer bloodloathing of a connection that offers him nothing to admire, nothing to hug to his heart. Both below and above the blind mass of discontent in his island, the repressed sentiment of admiration-or passion of fealty and thirst to give himself to a visible brighter—is an element of the division: meditative young Patrick O'Donnell early in his reflections had noted that:—and it is partly a result of our daily habit of tossing the straw to the monetary world and doting on ourselves in the mirror, until our habitual doings are viewed in a bemused complacency by us, and the scum- surface of the country is flashed about as its vital being. A man of forethought using the Press to spur Parliament to fitly represent the people, and writing on his daily topics with strenuous original vigour, even though, like Rockney, he sets the teeth of the Celt gnashing at him, goes a step nearer to the bourne of pacification than Press and Parliament reflecting the popular opinion that law must be passed to temper Ireland's eruptiveness; for that man can be admired, and the Celt, in combating him, will like an able and gallant enemy better than a grudgingly just, lumbering, dull, politic friend. The material points in a division are always the stronger, but the sentimental are here very strong. Pass the laws; they may put an extinguisher on the Irish Vesuvian; yet to be loved you must be a little perceptibly admirable. You may be so self-satisfied as to dispense with an ideal: your yoke-fellow is not; it is his particular form of strength to require one for his proper blooming, and he does bloom beautifully in the rays he courts.

Ah then, seek to be loved, and banish Bull. Believe in a future and banish that gross obscuration of you. Decline to let that old-yeoman- turned alderman stand any longer for the national man. Speaking to the brain of the country, one is sure of the power of a resolute sign from it to dismiss the brainless. Banish him your revels and your debates, prohibit him your Christmas, lend no ear either to his panics or his testiness, especially none to his rages; do not report him at all, and he will soon subside into his domestic, varied by pothouse, privacy. The brain should lead, if there be a brain. Once free of him, you will know that for half a century you have appeared bottom upward to mankind. And you have wondered at the absence of love for you under so astounding a presentation. Even in a Bull, beneficent as he can dream of being, when his notions are in a similar state of inversion, should be sheepish in hope for love.

He too, whom you call the Welshman, and deride for his delight in songful gatherings, harps to wild Wales, his Cambrian highlands, and not to England. You have not yet, though he is orderly and serviceable, allured his imagination to the idea of England. Despite the passion for his mountains and the boon of your raising of the interdict (within a hundred years) upon his pastors to harangue him in

his native tongue, he gladly ships himself across the waters traversed by his Prince Madoc of tradition, and becomes contentedly a transatlantic citizen, a member of strange sects—he so inveterate in faithfulness to the hoar and the legendary!—Anything rather than Anglican. The Cymry bear you no hatred; their affection likewise is undefined. But there is reason to think that America has caught the imagination of the Cambrian Celt: names of Welshmen are numerous in the small army of the States of the Union; and where men take soldier-service they are usually fixed, they and their children. Here is one, not very deeply injured within a century, of ardent temperament, given to be songful and loving; he leaves you and forgets you. Be certain that the material grounds of division are not all. To pronounce it his childishness provokes the retort upon your presented shape. He cannot admire it. Gaelic Scots wind the same note of repulsion.

And your poets are in a like predicament. Your poets are the most persuasive of springs to a lively general patriotism. They are in the Celtic dilemma of standing at variance with Bull; they return him his hearty antipathy, are unable to be epical or lyrical of him, are condemned to expend their genius upon the abstract, the quaint, the picturesque. Nature they read spiritually or sensually, always shrinking apart from him. They swell to a resemblance of their patron if they stoop to woo his purse. He has, on hearing how that poets bring praise to nations, as in fact he can now understand his Shakespeare to have done, been seen to thump the midriff and rally them for their shyness of it, telling them he doubts them true poets while they abstain from singing him to the world-him, and the things refreshing the centre of him. Ineffectual is that encouragement. Were he in the fire, melting to the iron man, the backbone of him, it would be different. At his pleasures he is anti-hymnic, repellent to song. He has perceived the virtues of Peace, without the brother eye for the need of virtuousness to make good use of them and inspire the poet. His own enrolled unrhythmical bardic troops (humorous mercenaries when Celts) do his trumpeting best, and offend not the Pierides.

This interlude, or rather inter-drone, repulsive to write, can hardly be excluded from a theme dramatising Celtic views, and treating of a blood, to which the idea of country must shine resplendently if we would have it running at full tide through the arteries. Preserve your worship, if the object fills your optics. Better worship that than nothing, as it is better for flames to be blown out than not to ascend, otherwise it will wreak circular mischief instead of illumining. You are requested simply to recollect that there is another beside you who sees the object obliquely, and then you will not be surprised by his irreverence. What if, in the end, you were conducted to a like point of view? Self-worship, it has been said, is preferable to no trimming of the faculty, but worship does not necessarily cease with the extinction of this of the voraciously carnal. An ideal of country, of Great Britain, is conceivable that will be to the taste of Celt and Saxon in common, to wave as a standard over their fraternal marching. Let Bull boo his drumliest at such talk: it is, I protest, the thing we want and can have. He is the obstruction, not the country; and against him, not against the country, the shots are aimed which seem so malignant. Him the gay manipulators propitiate who look at him through Literature and the Press, and across the pulpit-cushions, like airy Macheath at Society, as carrion to batten on. May plumpness be their portion, and they never hanged for it! But the flattering, tickling, pleasantly pinching of Bull is one of those offices which the simple starveling piper regards with afresh access of appetite for the well-picked bone of his virtue. That ghastly apparition of the fleshly present is revealed to him as a dead whale, having the harpoon of the inevitable slayer of the merely fleshly in his oils. To humour him, and be his piper for his gifts, is to descend to a carnival deep underneath. While he reigns, thinks this poor starveling, Rome burns, or the explosive powders are being secretly laid. He and his thousand Macheaths are dancing the country the giddy pace, and there will, the wretch dreads, be many a crater of scoria in the island, before he stretches his inanimate length, his parasites upon him. The theme is chosen and must be treated as a piper involved in his virtue conceives it: that is, realistically; not with Bull's notion of the realism of the butcher's shop and the pendent legs of mutton and blocks of beef painted raw and glaring in their streaks, but with the realism of the active brain and heart conjoined. The reasons for the division of Celt and Saxon, what they think and say of one another, often without knowing that they are divided, and the wherefore of our abusing of ourselves, brave England, our England of the ancient fortitude and the future incarnation, can afford to hear. Why not in a tale? It is he, your all for animal pleasure in the holiday he devours and cannot enjoy, whose example teaches you to shun the plaguey tale that carries fright: and so you find him sour at business and sick of his relaxings, hating both because he harnesses himself in turn bestially to each, growling at the smallest admixture of them, when, if he would but chirp a little over his work, and allow his pleasures to inspire a dose of thoughtfulness, he would be happier, and—who knows?-become a brighter fellow, one to be rescued from the pole-axe.

Now the rain is over, your carriage is at the door, the country smiles and the wet highway waves a beckoning hand. We have worn through a cloud with cloudy discourses, but we are in a land of shifting weathers, 'coelum crebris imbris ac nebulis foedum,' not every chapter can be sunshine.

CHAPTER XVII

CROSSING THE RUBICON

Rough weather on the Irish sea discharged a pallid file of passengers from the boat at Holyhead just as the morning sun struck wave and mountain with one of the sudden sparkling changes which our South-welters have in their folds to tell us after a tumultuous night that we have only been worried by Puck. The scene of frayed waters all rosy-golden, and golden-banded heathery height, with the tinted sand, breaking to flights of blue, was resplendent for those of our recent sea-farers who could lift an eye to enjoy it. Freshness, illumination, then salt air, vivid distances, were a bath for every sense of life. You could believe the breast of the mountain to be heaving, the billows to be kissing fingers to him, the rollers shattered up the cliff to have run to extinction to scale him. He seemed in his clear-edged mass King of this brave new boundless world built in a minute out of the wreck of the old.

An hour back the vessel was labouring through rueful chasms under darkness, and then did the tricky Southwest administer grisly slaps to right and left, whizzing spray across the starboard beam, and drenching the locks of a young lady who sat cloaked and hooded in frieze to teach her wilfulness a lesson, because she would keep her place on deck from beginning to end of the voyage. Her faith in the capacity of Irish frieze to turn a deluge of the deeps driven by an Atlantic gale was shaken by the time she sighted harbour, especially when she shed showers by flapping a batlike wing of the cloak, and had a slight shudder to find herself trickling within.

'Dear! and I'm wet to the skin,' she confided the fact to herself vocally.

'You would not be advised,' a gentleman beside her said after a delicate pause to let her impulsive naturalism of utterance fly by unwounded.

'And aren't you the same and worse? And not liking it either, I fear, Sir!' she replied, for despite a manful smile his complexion was tell-tale. 'But there 's no harm in salt. But you should have gone down to the cabin with Father Boyle and you would have been sure of not catching cold. But, Oh! the beautiful . . . look at it! And it's my first view of England. Well, then, I'll say it's a beautiful country.'

Her companion looked up at the lighted sky, and down at the pools in tarpaulin at his feet. He repressed a disposition to shudder, and with the anticipated ecstasy of soon jumping out of wet clothes into dry, he said: 'I should like to be on the top of that hill now.'

The young lady's eyes flew to the top.

'They say he looks on Ireland; I love him; and his name is Caer Gybi; and it was one of our Saints gave him the name, I 've read in books. I'll be there before noon.'

'You want to have a last gaze over to Erin?'

'No, it's to walk and feel the breeze. But I do, though.'

'Won't you require a little rest?'

'Sure and I've had it sitting here all night!' said she.

He laughed: the reason for the variation of exercise was conclusive.

Father Boyle came climbing up the ladder, uncertain of his legs; he rolled and snatched and tottered on his way to them, and accepted the gentleman's help of an arm, saying: 'Thank ye, thank ye, and good morning, Mr. Colesworth. And my poor child! what sort of a night has it been above, Kathleen?'

He said it rather twinkling, and she retorted:

'What sort of a night has it been below, Father Boyle?' Her twinkle was livelier than his, compassionate in archness.

'Purgatory past is good for contemplation, my dear. 'Tis past, and there's the comfort! You did well to be out of that herring-barrel, Mr. Colesworth. I hadn't the courage, or I would have burst from it to take a ducking with felicity. I haven't thrown up my soul; that's the most I can say. I thought myself nigh on it once or twice. And an amazing kind steward it was, or I'd have counted the man for some one else. Surely 'tis a glorious morning?'

Mr. Colesworth responded heartily in praise of the morning. He was beginning to fancy that he felt the warmth of spring sunshine on his back. He flung up his head and sniffed the air, and was very like a

horse fretful for the canter; so like as to give Miss Kathleen an idea of the comparison. She could have rallied him; her laughing eyes showed the readiness, but she forbore, she drank the scene. Her face, with the threaded locks about forehead and cheeks, and the dark, the blue, the rosy red of her lips, her eyes, her hair, was just such a south-western sky as April drove above her, the same in colour and quickness; and much of her spirit was the same, enough to stand for a resemblance. But who describes the spirit? No one at the gates of the field of youth. When Time goes reaping he will gather us a sheaf, out of which the picture springs.

'There's our last lurch, glory to the breakwater!' exclaimed Father Boyle, as the boat pitched finally outside the harbour fence, where a soft calm swell received them with the greeting of civilised sea-nymphs. 'The captain'll have a quieter passage across. You may spy him on the pier. We'll be meeting him on the landing.'

'If he's not in bed, from watching the stars all night,' said Miss Kathleen.

'He must have had a fifty-lynx power of sight for that, my dear.'

'They did appear, though, and wonderfully bright,' she said. 'I saw them come out and go in. It's not all cloud when the high wind blows.'

'You talk like a song, Kathleen.'

'Couldn't I rattle a throat if I were at home, Father!'

'Ah! we're in the enemy's country now.'

Miss Kathleen said she would go below to get the handbags from the stewardess.

Mr. Colesworth's brows had a little darkened over the Rev. Gentleman's last remark. He took two or three impatient steps up and down with his head bent. 'Pardon me; I hoped we had come to a better understanding,' he said. 'Is it quite fair to the country and to Miss O'Donnell to impress on her before she knows us that England is the enemy?'

'Habit, Mr. Colesworth, habit! we've got accustomed to the perspective and speak accordingly. There's a breach visible.'

'I thought you agreed with me that good efforts are being made on our side to mend the breach.'

'Sir, you have a noble minority at work, no doubt; and I take you for one of the noblest, as not objecting to stand next to alone.'

'I really thought, judging from our conversation at Mrs. O'Donnell's that evening, that you were going to hold out a hand and lead your flock to the right sort of fellowship with us.'

'To submission to the laws, Mr. Colesworth; 'tis my duty to do it as pastor and citizen.'

'No, to more than that, sir. You spoke with friendly warmth.'

'The atmosphere was genial, if you remember the whisky and the fumes of our tobacco at one o'clock!'

'I shall recollect the evening with the utmost pleasure. You were kind enough to instruct me in a good many things I shall be sure to profit by. I wish I could have spent more time in Ireland. As it is, I like Irishmen so well that if the whole land were in revolt I should never call it the enemy's country.'

'Excellently spoken, Mr. Colesworth,' said the priest. 'We 'll hope your writings may do service to mend the breach. For there is one, as you know, and more 's the pity; there's one, and it's wide and deep. As my friend Captain Con O'Donnell says, it's plain to the naked eye as a pair of particularly fat laundry drawers hung out to dry and ballooned in extension—if mayhap you've ever seen the sight of them in that state:— just held together by a narrow neck of thread or button, and stretching away like a corpulent frog in the act of swimming on the wind. His comparison touches the sentiment of disunion, sir.'

Mr. Colesworth had not ever seen such a pair of laundry drawers inflated to symbolise the breach between Ireland and England; nor probably, if he had, would the sentiment of national disunion have struck his mind: it was difficult to him in the description. He considered his Rev. friend to be something of a slippery fish, while Father Boyle's opinion of him likewise referred him to an elemental substance, of slow movement-earth, in short: for he continued to look argumentative after all had been said.

Or perhaps he threw a coveting eye on sweet Miss Kathleen and had his own idea of mending a stitch of the breach in a quite domestic way. If so, the Holy Father would have a word to say, let alone Kathleen. The maids of his Church do not espouse her foes. For the men it is another matter: that is as the case may be. Temporarily we are in cordial intercourse, Mr. Colesworth.

Miss Kathleen returned to deck carrying her bags. The gentleman had to descend, and subsequently an amiable dissension arose on the part of the young lady and Mr. Colesworth. She, however, yielded one of her bags, and he, though doubly laden, was happy. All very transparent to pastoral observation, but why should they not be left to their chirruping youthfulness? The captain was not in view, and Father Boyle wanted to go to bed for refreshment, and Kathleen was an airy gossamer, with a boy running after it, not by any means likely to catch it, or to keep it if he did. Proceed and trip along, you young ones!

At the hotel they heard that Captain Con O'Donnell was a snug sleeper upstairs. This, the captain himself very soon informed them, had not been the kernel of the truth. He had fancied they would not cross the Channel on so rattlesome a night, or Kathleen would have had an Irish kiss to greet her landing in England. But the cousinly salute was little delayed, news of the family in Ireland and England was exchanged, and then Mr. Colesworth and the captain bowed to an introduction; and the captain, at mention of his name, immediately cried out that Mr. Colesworth might perchance be a relative of the highly intelligent admirable lady who had undertaken the secretaryship, and by her vast ability got the entire management, of Miss Mattock's benevolent institution, and was conducting it with such success that it was fast becoming a grief to the generous heart of the foundress of the same to find it not only self-paying, but on the road to a fortune, inasmuch as it was already an article in the decrees of fashion among the nobility and gentry of both sexes in the metropolis to have their linen and laces washed at the Mattock laundry.

Mr. Colesworth said he was the brother of the lady in question, he had also the pleasure of an acquaintance with Miss Mattock. He was vehemently congratulated on the relationship, which bore witness, the captain added, to a certain hereditary share of brains greatly to be envied: brother of Miss Colesworth, a title of distinction in itself! He was congratulated not less cordially for his being so fortunate as to know Miss Mattock, one of a million.

Captain Con retained the hand of Father Boyle and squeezed it during his eulogies, at the same time dispensing nods and winks and sunny sparkles upon Kathleen. Mr. Colesworth went upstairs to his room not unflattered. The flattery enveloped him in the pleasant sense of a somehow now established companionship for the day with a pleasant person from whom he did not wish to separate.

'You made the gentleman's acquaintance, my dear . . . ?' said Con.

Kathleen answered: 'He made friends with our Patrick on the Continent, I think it was in Germany, and came to us to study the old country, bearing a letter from Patrick. He means to be one of their writers on the newspapers. He studies everything; he has written books. He called on us coming and called on us going and we came over together,' said Miss Kathleen. 'But tell me: our Philip?'

'Books!' Con exclaimed. 'It's hard to discover a man in these days who hasn't written books. Oh! Philip! Ease your heart about Philip. They're nursing him, round. He was invalided at the right moment for him, no fear. I gave him his chance of the last vacant seat up to the last hour, and now the die is cast and this time I'm off to it. Poor Philip—yes, yes! we're sorry to see him flat all his length, we love him; he's a gallant soldier; alive to his duty; and that bludgeon sun of India knocked him down, and that fall from his horse finished the business, and there he lies. But he'll get up, and he might have accepted the seat and spared me my probation: he's not married, I am, I have a wife, and Master Philip divides me against my domestic self, he does. But let that be: I serve duty too. Not a word to our friend up yonder. It's a secret with a time-fuse warranted to explode safe enough when the minutes are up, and make a powerful row when it does. It is all right over there, Father Boyle, I suppose?'

'A walk over! a pure ceremonial,' said the priest, and he yawned frightfully.

'You're for a nap to recompose you, my dear friend,' remarked the captain.

'But you haven't confided anything of it to Mrs. Adister?'

'Not a syllable; no. That's to come. There's my contest! I had urgent business in Ireland, and she 's a good woman, always willing to let me go. I count on her kindness, there 's no mightier compliment to one's wife. She'll know it when it's history. She's fond of history. Ay, she hates fiction, and so I'm proud to tell her I offer her none. She likes a trifling surprise too, and there she has it. Oh! we can whip up the business to a nice little bowl of froth-flummery. But it's when the Parliamentary voting is on comes the connubial pull. She's a good woman, a dear good soul, but she's a savage patriot; and Philip might

have saved his kinsman if he had liked. He had only to say the word: I could have done all the business for him, and no contest to follow by my fireside. He's on his couch—Mars convalescent: a more dreadful attraction to the ladies than in his crimson plumes! If the fellow doesn't let slip his opportunity! with his points of honour and being an Irish Bayard. Why Bayard in the nineteenth century's a Bedlamite, Irish or no. So I tell him. There he is; you'll see him, Kathleen: and one of them as big an heiress as any in England. Philip's no fool, you'll find.'

'Then he's coming all right, is he?' said Kathleen.

'He 's a soldier, and a good one, but he 's nothing more, and as for patriotic inflammation, doesn't know the sensation.'

'Oh! but he's coming round, and you'll go and stroke down mother with that,' Kathleen cried. 'Her heart's been heavy, with Patrick wandering and Philip on his back. I'll soon be dressed for breakfast.'

Away she went.

'She's got an appetite, and looks like a strapped bit of steel after the night's tumbling,' said the captain, seeing her trip aloft. 'I'm young as that too, or not far off it. Stay, I'll order breakfast for four in a quiet corner where we can converse—which, by the way, won't be possible in the presence of that gaping oyster of a fellow, who looks as if he were waiting the return of the tide.'

Father Boyle interposed his hand.

'Not for . . .' he tried to add 'four.' The attempt at a formation of the word produced a cavernous yawn a volume of the distressful deep to the beholder.

'Of course,' Captain Con assented. He proposed bed and a sedative therein, declaring that his experience overnight could pronounce it good, and that it should be hot. So he led his tired old friend to the bedroom, asked dozens of questions, flurried a withdrawal of them, suggested the answers, talked of his Rubicon, praised his wife, delivered a moan on her behalf, and after assisting to half disrobe the scarce animate figure, which lent itself like an artist's lay-model to the operation, departed on his mission of the sedative.

At the breakfast for three he was able to tell Kathleen that the worthy Father was warm, and on his way to complete restoration.

'Full fathom five the Father lies, in the ocean of sleep, by this time,' said Con. 'And 'tis a curious fact that every man in that condition seems enviable to men on their legs. And similarly with death; we'd rather not, because of a qualm, but the picture of the finish of the leap across is a taking one. These chops are done as if Nature had mellowed their juiciness.'

'They are so nice,' Kathleen said.

'You deserve them, if ever girl in this world!'

'I sat on deck all night, and Mr. Colesworth would keep me company.'

'He could hardly do less, having the chance. But that notwithstanding, I'm under an obligation to your cavalier. And how did you find Ireland, sir? You've made acquaintance with my cousin, young Mr. Patrick O'Donnell, I rejoice to hear.'

'Yes, through his hearing or seeing my name and suspecting I had a sister,' said Mr. Colesworth, who was no longer in the resemblance of a gaping oyster on the borders of the ebb. 'The country is not disturbed.'

'So the doctor thinks his patient is doing favourably! And you cottoned to Patrick? And I don't wonder. Where was it?'

'We met in Trieste. He was about to start by one of the Austrian boats for the East.'

'Not disturbed! no! with a rotten potato inside it paralysing digestion!' exclaimed Con. 'Now Patrick had been having a peep at Vienna, hadn't he?'

'He had; he was fresh from Vienna when I met him. As to Ireland, the harvest was only middling good last year.'

'And that's the bit of luck we depend on. A cloud too much, and it's drowned! Had he seen, do you know, anybody in Vienna?—you were not long together at Trieste?'

Mr. Colesworth had sufficient quickness to perceive that the two questions could be answered as one, and saying: 'He was disappointed,' revealed that he and Patrick had been long enough together to come to terms of intimacy.

'To be sure, he gave you a letter of introduction to his family!' said Con. 'And permit me to add, that Patrick's choice of a friend is mine on trust. The lady he was for seeing, Mr. Colesworth, was just then embarking on an adventure of a romantic character, particularly well suited to her nature, and the end of it was a trifle sanguinary, and she suffered a disappointment also, though not perhaps on that account.'

'I heard of it in England last year,' said Mr. Colesworth. 'Did she come through it safely?'

'Without any personal disfigurement: and is in England now, under her father's roof, meditating fresh adventures.'

Kathleen cried: 'Ye 're talking of the lady who was Miss Adister—I can guess—Ah!' She humped her shoulders and sent a shudder up her neck.

'But she's a grand creature, Mr. Colesworth, and you ought to know her,' said Con. 'That is, if you'd like to have an idea of a young Catherine or a Semiramis minus an army and a country. There's nothing she's not capable of aiming at. And there's pretty well nothing and nobody she wouldn't make use of. She has great notions of the power of the British Press and the British purse—each in turn as a key to the other. Now for an egg, Kathleen.'

'I think I'll eat an egg,' Kathleen replied.

'Bless the honey heart of the girl! Life's in you, my dear, and calls for fuel. I'm glad to see that Mr. Colesworth too can take a sight at the Sea-God after a night of him. It augurs magnificently for a future career. And let me tell you that the Pen demands it of us. The first of the requisites is a stout stomach—before a furnished head! I'd not pass a man to be anything of a writer who couldn't step ashore from a tempest and consume his Titan breakfast.'

'We are qualifying for the literary craft, Miss O'Donnell,' said Mr. Colesworth.

'It's for a walk in the wind up Caer Gybi, and along the coast I mean to go,' said Kathleen.

'This morning?' the captain asked her.

She saw his dilemma in his doubtful look.

'When I've done. While you're discussing matters with Father Boyle. I—know you're burning to. Sure it's yourself knows as well as anybody, Captain Con, that I can walk a day long and take care of my steps. I've walked the better half of Donegal alone, and this morning I'll have a protector.'

Captain Con eyed the protector, approved of him, disapproved of himself, thought of Kathleen as a daughter of Erin—a privileged and inviolate order of woman in the minds of his countrymen—and wriggling internally over a remainder scruple said: 'Mr. Colesworth mayhap has to write a bit in the morning.'

'I'm unattached at present,' the latter said. 'I am neither a correspondent nor a reporter, and if I were, the event would be wanting.'

'That remark, sir, shows you to be eminently a stranger to the official duties,' observed the captain. 'Journalism is a maw, and the journalist has to cram it, and like anything else which perpetually distends for matter, it must be filled, for you can't leave it gaping, so when nature and circumstance won't combine to produce the stuff, we have recourse to the creative arts. 'Tis the necessity of the profession.'

'The profession will not impose that necessity upon me,' remarked the young practitioner.

'Outside the wheels of the machine, sir, we indulge our hallucination of immunity. I've been one in the whirr of them, relating what I hadn't quite heard, and capitulating what I didn't think at all, in spite of the cry of my conscience—a poor infant below the waters, casting up ejaculatory bubbles of protestation. And if it is my reproach that I left it to the perils of drowning, it's my pride that I continued to transmit air enough to carry on the struggle. Not every journalist can say as much. The Press is the voice of the mass, and our private opinion is detected as a discord by the mighty beast, and won't be endured by him.'

'It's better not to think of him quite as a beast,' said Mr. Colesworth.

'Infinitely better: and I like your "guile," sir: But wait and tell me what you think of him after tossing him his meat for a certain number of years. There's Rockney. Do you know Rockney? He's the biggest single gun they've got, and he's mad for this country, but ask him about the public, you'll hear the menagerie-keeper's opinion of the brute that mauled his loins.'

'Rockney,' said Mr. Colesworth, 'has the tone of a man disappointed of the dictatorship.'

'Then you do know Rockney!' shouted Captain Con. 'That's the man in a neat bit of drawing. He's a grand piece of ordnance. But wait for him too, and tell me by and by. If it isn't a woman, you'll find, that primes him, ay, and points him, and what's more, discharges him, I'm not Irish born. Poor fellow! I pity him. He had a sweet Irish lady for his wife, and lost her last year, and has been raging astray politically ever since. I suppose it's hardly the poor creature's fault. None the less, you know, we have to fight him. And now he 's nibbling at a bait—it 's fun: the lady I mentioned, with a turn for adventure and enterprise: it's rare fun: he 's nibbling, he'll be hooked. You must make her acquaintance, Mr. Colesworth, and hold your own against her, if you can. She's a niece of my wife's and I'll introduce you. I shall find her in London, or at our lodgings at a Surrey farm we've taken to nurse my cousin Captain Philip O'Donnell invalided from Indian awful climate!— on my return, when I hope to renew the acquaintance. She has beauty, she has brains. Resist her, and you 'll make a decent stand against Lucifer. And supposing she rolls you up and pitches you over, her noticing you is a pretty compliment to your pen. That 'll be consoling.'

Mr. Colesworth fancied, he said, that he was proof against feminine blandishments in the direction of his writings.

He spoke as one indicating a thread to suggest a cable. The captain applauded the fancy as a pleasing delusion of the young sprigs of Journalism.

Upon this, Mr. Colesworth, with all respect for French intelligence, denied the conclusiveness of French generalisations, which ascribed to women universal occult dominion, and traced all great affairs to small intrigues.

The captain's eyes twinkled on him, thinking how readily he would back smart Miss Kathleen to do the trick, if need were.

He said to her before she started: 'Don't forget he may be a clever fellow with that pen of his, and useful to our party.'

'I'll not forget,' said she.

For the good of his party, then, Captain Con permitted her to take the walk up Caer Gybi alone with Mr. Colesworth: a memorable walk in the recollections of the scribe, because of the wonderful likeness of the young lady to the breezy weather and the sparkles over the deep, the cloud that frowned, the cloud that glowed, the green of the earth greening out from under wings of shadow, the mountain ranges holding hands about an immensity of space. It was one of our giant days to his emotions, and particularly memorable to him through the circumstance that it insisted on a record in verse, and he was unused to the fetters of metre: and although the verse was never seen by man, his attempt at it confused his ideas of his expressive powers. Oddly too, while scourging the lines with criticism, he had a fondness for them: they stamped a radiant day in his mind, beyond the resources of rhetoric to have done it equally.

This was the day of Captain Con's crossing the Rubicon between the secret of his happiness and a Parliamentary career.

CHAPTER XVIII

CAPTAIN CON'S LETTER

Women may be able to tell you why the nursing of a military invalid awakens tenderer anxieties in their bosoms than those called forth by the drab civilian. If we are under sentence of death we are all of us pathetic of course; but stretched upon the debateable couch of sickness we are not so touching as the coloured coat: it has the distinction belonging to colour. It smites a deeper nerve, or more than one;

and this, too, where there is no imaginary subjection to the charms of military glory, in minds to which the game of war is lurid as the plumes of the arch-slayer.

Jane Mattock assisting Mrs. Adister O'Donnell to restore Captain Philip was very singularly affected, like a person shut off on a sudden from her former theories and feelings. Theoretically she despised the soldier's work as much as she shrank abhorrently from bloodshed. She regarded him and his trappings as an ensign of our old barbarism, and could peruse platitudes upon that theme with enthusiasm. The soldier personally, she was accustomed to consider an inferior intelligence: a sort of schoolboy when young, and schoolmaster when mature a visibly limited creature, not a member of our broader world. Without dismissing any of these views she found them put aside for the reception of others of an opposite character; and in her soul she would have ascribed it to her cares of nursing that she had become thoughtful, doubtful, hopeful, even prayerful, surcharged with zeal, to help to save a good sword for the country. If in a world still barbarous we must have soldiers, here was one whom it would be grievous to lose. He had fallen for the country; and there was a moving story of how he had fallen. She inclined to think more highly of him for having courted exposure on a miserable frontier war where but a poor sheaf of glory could be gathered. And he seemed to estimate his professional duties apart from an aim at the laurels. A conception of the possibility of a man's being both a soldier and morally a hero edged its way into her understanding. It stood edgeways within, desirous of avoiding a challenge to show every feature.

The cares of nursing were Jane's almost undividedly, except for the aid she had from her friend Grace Barrow and from Miss Colesworth. Mrs. Adister O'Donnell was a nurse in name only. 'She'll be seen by Philip like as if she were a nightmare apparition of his undertaker's wraith,' Captain Con said to Jane, when recommending his cousin to her charitable nature, after he had taken lodgings at a farmhouse near Mrs. Lackstraw's model farm Woodside on the hills. 'Barring the dress,' as he added, some such impression of her frigid mournfulness might have struck a recumbent invalid. Jane acknowledged it, and at first induced her aunt to join her in the daily walk of half a mile to sit with him. Mrs. Lackstraw was a very busy lady at her farm; she was often summoned to London by her intuition of John's wish to have her presiding at table for the entertainment of his numerous guests; she confessed that she supervised the art of nursing better than she practised it, and supervision can be done at a distance if the subordinate is properly attentive to the rules we lay down, as Jane appeared to be. So Jane was left to him. She loved the country; Springtide in the country set her singing; her walk to her patient at Lappett's farm and homeward was an ethereal rapture for a heart rocking easy in fulness. There was nothing to trouble it, no hint of wild winds and heavy seas, not even the familiar insinuation from the vigilant monitress, her aunt, to bid her be on her guard, beware of what it is that great heiresses are courted for, steel her heart against serpent speeches, see well to have the woman's precious word No at the sentinel's post, and alert there. Mrs. Lackstraw, the most vigilant and plain-spoken of her sex, had forborne to utter the usual warnings which were to preserve Miss Mattock for her future Earl or Duke and the reason why she forbore was a double one; a soldier and Papist could never be thought perilous to a young woman scorning the sons of Mars and slaves of sacerdotalism. The picture of Jane bestowing her hand on a Roman Catholic in military uniform, refused to be raised before the mind. Charitableness, humaneness, the fact that she was an admirable nurse and liked to exercise her natural gift, perfectly accounted for Jane's trips to Lappett's farm, and the jellies and fresh dairy dainties and neat little dishes she was constantly despatching to the place. A suggestion of possible danger might prove more dangerous than silence, by rendering it attractive. Besides, Jane talked of poor Captain Philip as Patrick O'Donnell's brother, whom she was bound to serve in return for Patrick's many services to her; and of how unlike Patrick he was. Mrs. Lackstraw had been apprehensive about her fancy for Patrick. Therefore if Captain Philip was unlike him, and strictly a Catholic, according to report, the suspicion of danger dispersed, and she was allowed to enjoy the pleasures of the metropolis as frequently as she chose. The nursing of a man of Letters, or of the neighbour to him, a beggar in rags, would not have been so tolerated. Thus we perceive that wits actively awake inside the ring-fence of prepossessions they have erected may lull themselves with their wakefulness. Who would have thought!—is the cry when the strongest bulwark of the fence is broken through.

Jane least of any would have thought what was coming to pass. The pale square-browed young officer, so little Irish and winning in his brevity of speech, did and said nothing to alarm her or strike the smallest light. Grace Barrow noticed certain little changes of mood in Jane she could scarcely have had a distinct suspicion at the time. After a recent observation of him, on an evening stroll from Lappett's to Woodside, she pronounced him interesting, but hard. 'He has an interesting head . . . I should not like to offend him.' They agreed as to his unlikeness to fluid Patrick; both eulogistic of the absent brother; and Jane, who could be playful in privacy with friends, clapped a brogue on her tongue to discourse of Patrick and apostrophise him: 'Oh! Pat, Pat, my dear cousin Pat! why are you so long away from your desponding Jane? I 'll take to poetry and write songs, if you don't come home soon. You've put seas between us, and are behaving to me as an enemy. I know you 'll bring home a foreign Princess to break the heart of your faithful. But I'll always praise you for a dear boy, Pat, and wish you

happy, and beg the good gentleman your brother to give me a diploma as nurse to your first-born. There now!

She finished smiling brightly, and Grace was a trifle astonished, for her friend's humour was not as a rule dramatic.

'You really have caught a twang of it from your friend Captain Con; only you don't rattle the eighteenth letter of the alphabet in the middle of words.'

'I've tried, and can't persuade my tongue to do it "first off," as boys say, and my invalid has no brogue whatever to keep me in practice,' Jane replied. 'One wonders what he thinks of as he lies there by the window. He doesn't confide it to his hospital nurse.'

'Yes, he would treat her courteously, just in that military style,' said Grace, realising the hospital attendance.

'It's the style I like best:—no perpetual personal thankings and allusions to the trouble he gives!' Jane exclaimed. 'He shows perfect good sense, and I like that in all things, as you know. A red-haired young woman chooses to wait on him and bring him flowers—he's brother to Patrick in his love of wild flowers, at all events!—and he takes it naturally and simply. These officers bear illness well. I suppose it's the drill.'

'Still I think it a horrid profession, dear.'

Grace felt obliged to insist on that: and her 'I think,' though it was not stressed, tickled Jane's dormant ear to some drowsy wakefulness.

'I think too much honour is paid to it, certainly. But soldiers, of all men, one would expect to be overwhelmed by a feeling of weakness. He has never complained; not once. I doubt if he would have complained if Mrs. Adister had been waiting on him all the while, or not a soul. I can imagine him lying on the battle-field night after night quietly, resolving not to groan.'

'Too great a power of self-repression sometimes argues the want of any emotional nature,' said Grace.

Jane shook her head. She knew a story of him contradicting that.

The story had not recurred to her since she had undertaken her service. It coloured the remainder of an evening walk home through the beechwoods and over the common with Grace, and her walk across the same tracks early in the morning, after Grace had gone to London. Miss Colesworth was coming to her next week, with her brother if he had arrived in England. Jane remembered having once been curious about this adventurous man of Letters who lived by the work of his pen. She remembered comparing him to one who was compelled to swim perpetually without a ship to give him rest or land in view. He had made a little money by a book, and was expending it on travels—rather imprudently, she fancied Emma Colesworth to be thinking. He talked well, but for the present she was happier in her prospect of nearly a week of loneliness. The day was one of sunshine, windless, odorous: one of the rare placid days of April when the pettish month assumes a matronly air of summer and wears it till the end of the day. The beech twigs were strongly embrowned, the larches shot up green spires by the borders of woods and on mounds within, deep ditchbanks unrolled profuse tangles of new blades, and sharp eyes might light on a late white violet overlooked by the children; primroses ran along the banks. Jane had a maxim that flowers should be spared to live their life, especially flowers of the wilds; she had reared herself on our poets; hence Mrs. Lackstraw's dread of the arrival of one of the minstrel order: and the girl, who could deliberately cut a bouquet from the garden, if requested, would refuse to pluck a wildflower. But now they cried out to her to be plucked in hosts, they claimed the sacrifice, and it seemed to her no violation of her sentiment to gather handfuls making a bunch that would have done honour to the procession of the children's May-day—a day she excused for the slaughter because her idol and prophet among the poets, wild nature's interpreter, was that day on the side of the children. How like a bath of freshness would the thick faintly-fragrant mass shine to her patient! Only to look at it was medicine! She believed, in her lively healthfulness, that the look would give him a spring to health, and she hurried forward to have them in water—the next sacred obligation to the leaving of them untouched.

She had reared herself on our poets. If much brooding on them will sometimes create a sentimentalism of the sentiment they inspire, that also, after our manner of developing, leads to finer civilisation; and as her very delicate feelings were not always tyrants over her clear and accurate judgement, they rather tended to stamp her character than lead her into foolishness. Blunt of speech, quick in sensibility, imaginative, yet idealistic, she had the complex character of diverse brain and nerve, and was often a problem to the chief person interested in it. She thought so decisively, felt so

shrinkingly; spoke so flatly, brooded so softly! Such natures, in the painful effort to reconcile apparent antagonism and read themselves, forget that they are not full grown. Longer than others are they young: but meanwhile they are of an age when we are driven abroad to seek and shape our destinies.

Passing through the garden-gate of Lappett's farm she made her way to the south-western face of the house to beg a bowl of water of the farmer's wife, and had the sweet surprise of seeing her patient lying under swallows' eaves on a chair her brother had been commissioned to send from London for coming uses. He was near the farm-wife's kitchen, but to windward of the cooking-reek, pleasantly warmed, sufficiently shaded, and alone, with open letter on the rug covering his legs. He whistled to Jane's dog Wayland, a retriever, having Newfoundland relationships, of smithy redness and ruggedness; it was the whistle that startled her to turn and see him as she was in the act of handing Mrs. Lappett her primroses.

'Out? I feared it would be a week. Is it quite prudent?' Jane said, toning down her delight.

He answered with the half-smile that refers these questions to the settled fact. Air had always brought him round; now he could feel he was embarked for recovery: and he told her how the farmer and one of his men had lent a shoulder to present him to his old and surest physician— rather like a crippled ghost. M. Adister was upstairs in bed with one of her headaches. Captain Con, then, was attending her, Jane supposed: She spoke of him as the most devoted of husbands.

A slight hardening of Philip's brows, well-known to her by this time, caused her to interrogate his eyes. They were fixed on her in his manner of gazing with strong directness. She read the contrary opinion, and some hieroglyphic matter besides.

'We all respect him for his single-hearted care of her,' she said. 'I have a great liking for him. His tirades about the Saxon tyrant are not worth mentioning, they mean nothing. He would be one of the first to rush to the standard if there were danger; I know he would. He is truly chivalrous, I am sure.'

Philip's broad look at her had not swerved. The bowl of primroses placed beside him on a chair by the farmer's dame diverted it for a moment.

'You gathered them?' he said.

Jane drank his look at the flowers.

'Yes, on my way,' she replied. 'We can none of us live for ever; and fresh water every day will keep them alive a good long time. They had it from the clouds yesterday. Do they not seem a bath of country happiness!' Evidently they did their service in pleasing him.

Seeing his fingers grope on the rug, she handed him his open letters.

He selected the second, passing under his inspection, and asked her to read it.

She took the letter, wondering a little that it should be in Captain Con's handwriting.

'I am to read it through?' she said, after a run over some lines.

He nodded. She thought it a sign of his friendliness in sharing family secrets with her, and read:

'MY DEAR PHILIP,—Not a word of these contents, which will be delivered seasonably to the lady chiefly concerned, by the proper person. She hears this morning I 'm off on a hasty visit to Ireland, as I have been preparing her of late to expect I must, and yours the blame, if any, though I will be the last to fling it at you. I meet Father B. and pretty Kitty before I cross. Judging by the wind this morning, the passage will furnish good schooling for a spell of the hustings. But if I am in the nature of things unable to command the waves, trust me for holding a mob in leash; and they are tolerably alike. My spirits are up. Now the die is cast. My election to the vacancy must be reckoned beforehand. I promise you a sounding report from the Kincora Herald. They will not say of me after that (and read only the speeches reported in the local paper) "what is the man but an Irish adventurer!" He is a lover of his country, Philip O'Donnell, and one of millions, we will hope. And that stigmatic title of long standing, more than anything earthly, drove him to the step-to the ruin of his domestic felicity perhaps. But we are past sighing.

'Think you, when he crossed the tide, Caius Julius Caesar sighed?

'No, nor thought of his life, nor his wife, but of the thing to be done. Laugh, my boy! I know what I am about when I set my mind on a powerful example. As the chameleon gets his colour, we get our character from the objects we contemplate . . .'

Jane glanced over the edge of the letter sheet rosily at Philip.

His dryness in hitting the laughable point diverted her, and her mind became suffused with a series of pictures of the chameleon captain planted in view of the Roman to become a copy of him, so that she did not peruse the terminating lines with her wakefullest attention:

'The liege lady of my heart will be the earliest to hail her hero triumphant, or cherish him beaten—which is not in the prospect. Let Ireland be true to Ireland. We will talk of the consolidation of the Union by and by. You are for that, you say, when certain things are done; and you are where I leave you, on the highway, though seeming to go at a funeral pace to certain ceremonies leading to the union of the two countries in the solidest fashion, to their mutual benefit, after a shining example. Con sleeps with a corner of the eye open, and you are not the only soldier who is a strategist, and a tactician too, aware of when it is best to be out of the way. Now adieu and pax vobiscum. Reap the rich harvest of your fall to earth. I leave you in the charge of the kindest of nurses, next to the wife of my bosom the best of women. Appreciate her, sir, or perish in my esteem. She is one whom not to love is to be guilty of an offence deserving capital punishment, and a bastinado to season the culprit for his execution. Have I not often informed her myself that a flower from her hand means more than treasures from the hands of others. Expect me absent for a week. The harangues will not be closely reported. I stand by the truth, which is my love of the land of my birth. A wife must come second to that if she would be first in her husband's consideration. Hurrah me on, Philip, now it is action, and let me fancy I hear you shouting it.'

The drop of the letter to the signature fluttered affectionately on a number of cordial adjectives, like the airy bird to his home in the corn.

CHAPTER XIX

MARS CONVALESCENT

Jane's face was clear as the sky when she handed the letter back to Philip. In doing so, it struck her that the prolonged directness of his look was peculiar: she attributed it to some effect of the fresh Spring atmosphere on a weakened frame. She was guessing at his reasons for showing her the letter, and they appeared possibly serious.

'An election to Parliament! Perhaps Mrs. Adister should have a hint of it, to soften the shock I fear it may be: but we must wait till her headache has passed,' she said.

'You read to the end?' said Philip.

'Yes, Captain Con always amuses me, and I am bound to confess I have no positive disrelish of his compliments. But this may prove a desperate step. The secret of his happiness is in extreme jeopardy. Nothing would stop him, I suppose?'

Philip signified that it was too late. He was moreover of opinion, and stated it in his briefest, that it would be advisable to leave the unfolding of the present secret to the captain.

Jane wondered why the letter had been shown. Her patient might be annoyed and needing sympathy?

'After all,' she said, 'Captain Con may turn out to be a very good sort of member of Parliament in his way.'

Philip's eyebrows lifted, and he let fall a breath, eloquent of his thoughts.

'My brother says he is a serviceable director of the Company they are associated in.'

'He finds himself among reasonable men, and he is a chameleon.'

'Parliament may steady him.'

'It is too much of a platform for Con's head.'

'Yes, there is more of poet than politician,' said she. 'That is a danger. But he calls himself our friend; I think he really has a liking for John and me.'

'For you he has a real love,' said Philip.

'Well, then, he may listen to us at times; he may be trusted not to wound us. I am unmitigatedly for the one country—no divisions. We want all our strength in these days of monstrous armies directed by banditti Councils. England is the nation of the Christian example to nations. Oh! surely it is her aim. At least she strives to be that. I think it, and I see the many faults we have.'

Her patient's eyelids were down.

She proposed to send her name up to Mrs. Adister.

On her return from the poor lady racked with headache and lying little conscious of her husband's powder-barrel under the bed, Jane found her patient being worried by his official nurse, a farm-labourer's wife, a bundle of a woman, whose lumbering assiduities he fenced with reiterated humorous negatives to every one of her propositions, until she prefaced the last two or three of the list with a 'Deary me!' addressed consolatorily to herself. She went through the same forms each day, at the usual hours of the day, and Jane, though she would have felt the apathetic doltishness of the woman less, felt how hard it must be for him to bear.

'Your sister will be with you soon,' she said. 'I am glad, and yet I hope you will not allow her to put me aside altogether?'

'You shall do as you wish,' said Philip.

'Is she like Patrick? Her name is Kathleen, I know.'

'She is a raw Irish girl, of good Irish training, but Irish.'

'I hope she will be pleased with England. Like Patrick in face, I mean.'

'We think her a good-looking girl.'

'Does she play? sing?'

'Some of our ballads.'

'She will delight my brother. John loves Irish ballads.'

A silence of long duration fell between them. She fancied he would like to sleep, and gently rose to slip away, that she might consult with Mrs. Lappett about putting up some tentcover. He asked her if she was going. 'Not home,' she said. His hand moved, but stopped. It seemed to have meant to detain her. She looked at a white fleece that came across the sun, desiring to conjure it to stay and shadow him. It sailed by. She raised her parasol.

His eyelids were shut, and she thought him asleep. Meditating on her unanswered question of Miss Kathleen's likeness to Patrick, Jane imagined a possibly greater likeness to her patient, and that he did not speak of his family's exclamations on the subject because of Kathleen's being so good-looking a girl. For if good-looking, a sister must resemble these handsome features here, quiescent to inspection in their marble outlines as a corse. So might he lie on the battle-field, with no one to watch over him!

While she watched, sitting close beside him to shield his head from the sunbeams, her heart began to throb before she well knew the secret of it. She had sight of a tear that grew big under the lashes of each of his eyelids, and rolled heavily. Her own eyes overflowed.

The fit of weeping was momentary, April's, a novelty with her. She accused her silly visions of having softened her. A hasty smoothing to right and left removed the traces; they were unseen; and when she ventured to look at him again there was no sign of fresh drops falling. His eyelids kept shut.

The arrival of her diurnal basket of provisions offered a refreshing intervention of the commonplace. Bright air had sharpened his appetite: he said he had been sure it would, and anticipated cheating the doctor of a part of the sentence which condemned him to lie on his back up to the middle of June, a log. Jane was hungry too, and they feasted together gaily, talking of Kathleen on her journey, her strange impressions and her way of proclaiming them, and of Patrick and where he might be now; ultimately of Captain Con and Mrs. Adister.

'He has broken faith with her,' Philip said sternly. 'She will have the right to tell him so. He never can be anything but a comic politician. Still he was bound to consult his wife previous to stepping before the public. He knows that he married a fortune.'

'A good fortune,' said Jane.

Philip acquiesced. 'She is an excellent woman, a model of uprightness; she has done him all the good in the world, and here is he deceiving her, lying—there is no other word: and one lie leads to another. When he married a fortune he was a successful adventurer. The compact was understood. His duty as a man of honour is to be true to his bond and serve the lady. Falseness to his position won't wash him clean of the title.'

Jane pleaded for Captain Con. 'He is chivalrously attentive to her.'

'You have read his letter,' Philip replied.

He crushed her charitable apologies with references to the letter.

'We are not certain that Mrs. Adister will object,' said she.

'Do you see her reading a speech of her husband's?' he remarked.
Presently with something like a moan:

'And I am her guest!'

'Oh! pray, do not think Mrs. Adister will ever allow you to feel the lightest shadow . . . ' said Jane.

'No; that makes it worse.'

Had this been the burden of his thoughts when those two solitary tears forced their passage?

Hardly: not even in his physical weakness would he consent to weep for such a cause.

'I forgot to mention that Mrs. Adister has a letter from her husband telling her he has been called over to Ireland on urgent business,' she said.

Philip answered: 'He is punctilious.'

'I wish indeed he had been more candid,' Jane assented to the sarcasm.

'In Ireland he is agreeably surprised by the flattering proposal of a vacant seat, and not having an instant to debate on it, assumes the consent of the heavenliest wife in Christendom.'

Philip delivered the speech with a partial imitation of Captain Con addressing his wife on his return as the elected among the pure Irish party. The effort wearied him.

She supposed he was regretting his cousin's public prominence in the ranks of the malcontents. 'He will listen to you,' she said, while she smiled at his unwonted display of mimicry.

'A bad mentor for him. Antics are harmless, though they get us laughed at,' said Philip.

'You may restrain him from excesses.'

'Were I in that position, you would consider me guilty of greater than any poor Con is likely to commit.'

'Surely you are not for disunion?'

'The reverse. I am for union on juster terms, that will hold it fast.'

'But what are the terms?'

He must have desired to paint himself as black to her as possible. He stated the terms, which were hardly less than the affrighting ones blown across the Irish sea by that fierce party. He held them to be just, simply sensible terms. True, he spoke of the granting them as a sure method to rally all Ireland to an ardent love of the British flag. But he praised names of Irish leaders whom she had heard Mr. Rockney denounce for disloyal insolence: he could find excuses for them and their dupes— poor creatures, verily! And his utterances had a shocking emphasis. Then she was not wrong in her idea of the conspirator's head, her first impression of him!

She could not quit the theme: doing that would have been to be indifferent: something urged her to it.

'Are they really your opinions?'

He seemed relieved by declaring that they were.

'Patrick is quite free of them,' said she.

'We will hope that the Irish fever will spare Patrick. He was at a Jesuit college in France when he was wax. Now he's taking the world.'

'With so little of the Jesuit in him!'

'Little of the worst: a good deal of the best.'

'What is the best?'

'Their training to study. They train you to concentrate the brain upon the object of study. And they train you to accept service: they fit you for absolute service: they shape you for your duties in the world; and so long as they don't smelt a man's private conscience, they are model masters. Happily Patrick has held his own. Not the Jesuits would have a chance of keeping a grasp on Patrick! He'll always be a natural boy and a thoughtful man.'

Jane's features implied a gentle shudder.

'I shake a scarlet cloak to you?' said Philip.

She was directed by his words to think of the scarlet coat. 'I reflect a little on the substance of things as well,' she said. 'Would not Patrick's counsels have an influence?'

'Hitherto our Patrick has never presumed to counsel his elder brother.'

'But an officer wearing . . .'

'The uniform! That would have to be stripped off. There'd be an end to any professional career.'

'You would not regret it?'

'No sorrow is like a soldier's bidding farewell to flag and comrades. Happily politics and I have no business together. If the country favours me with active service I'm satisfied for myself. You asked me for my opinions: I was bound to give them. Generally I let them rest.'

Could she have had the temerity? Jane marvelled at herself.

She doubted that the weighty pair of tears had dropped for the country. Captain Con would have shed them over Erin, and many of them. Captain Philip's tone was too plain and positive: he would be a most practical unhistrionic rebel.

'You would countenance a revolt?' she said, striking at that extreme to elicit the favourable answer her tones angled for. And it was instantly:

'Not in arms.' He tried an explanation by likening the dissension to a wrangle in a civilised family over an unjust division of property.

And here, as he was marking the case with some nicety and difficulty, an itinerant barrel-organ crashed its tragic tale of music put to torture at the gate. It yelled of London to Jane, throttled the spirits of the woods, threw a smoke over the country sky, befouled the pure air she loved.

The instrument was one of the number which are packed to suit all English tastes and may be taken for a rough sample of the jumble of them, where a danceless quadrille-tune succeeds a suicidal Operatic melody and is followed by the weariful hymn, whose last drawl pert polka kicks aside. Thus does the poor Savoyard compel a rich people to pay for their wealth. Not without pathos in the abstract perhaps do the wretched machines pursue their revolutions of their factory life, as incapable of conceiving as of bestowing pleasure: a bald cry for pennies through the barest pretence to be agreeable but Jane found it hard to be tolerant of them out of London, and this one affecting her invalid and Mrs. Adister must be dismissed. Wayland was growling; he had to be held by the collar. He spied an objectionable animal. A jerky monkey was attached to the organ; and his coat was red, his kepi was blue; his tailor had rigged him as a military gentleman. Jane called to the farm-wife. Philip assured her he was not annoyed. Jane observed him listening, and by degrees she distinguished a maundering of the Italian song she had one day sung to Patrick in his brother's presence.

'I remember your singing that the week before I went to India,' said Philip, and her scarlet blush flooded her face.

'Can you endure the noise?' she asked him.

'Con would say it shrieks "murder." But I used to like it once.'

Mrs. Lappett came answering to the call. Her children were seen up the garden setting to one another with squared aprons, responsive to a livelier measure.

'Bless me, miss, we think it so cheerful!' cried Mrs. Lappett, and glanced at her young ones harmonious and out of mischief.

'Very well,' said Jane, always considerate for children. She had forgotten the racked Mrs. Adister.

Now the hymn of Puritanical gloom—the peacemaker with Providence performing devotional exercises in black bile. The leaps of the children were dashed. A sallow two or three minutes composed their motions, and then they jumped again to the step for lively legs. The similarity to the regimental band heading soldiers on the march from Church might have struck Philip.

'I wonder when I shall see Patrick!' he said, quickened in spite of himself by the sham sounds of music to desire changes and surprises.

Jane was wondering whether he could be a man still to brood tearfully over his old love.

She echoed him. 'And I! Soon, I hope.'

The appearance of Mrs. Adister with features which were the acutest critical summary of the discord caused toll to be paid instantly, and they beheld a flashing of white teeth and heard Italian accents. The monkey saluted militarily, but with painful suggestions of his foregone drilling in the ceremony.

'We are safe nowhere from these intrusions,' Mrs. Adister said; 'not on these hills!—and it must be a trial for the wretched men to climb them, that thing on their backs.'

'They are as accustomed to it as mountain smugglers bearing packs of contraband,' said Philip.

'Con would have argued him out of hearing before he ground a second note,' she resumed. 'I have no idea when Con returns from his unexpected visit to Ireland.'

'Within a fortnight, madam.'

'Let me believe it! You have heard from him? But you are in the air! exposed! My head makes me stupid. It is now five o'clock. The air begins to chill. Con will never forgive me if you catch a cold, and I would not incur his blame.'

The eyes of Jane and Philip shot an exchange.

'Anything you command, madam,' said Philip.

He looked up and breathed his heaven of fresh air. Jane pitied, she could not interpose to thwart his act of resignation. The farmer, home for tea, and a footman, took him between them, crutched, while Mrs. Adister said to Jane: 'The doctor's orders are positive:—if he is to be a man once more, he must rest his back and not use his legs for months. He was near to being a permanent cripple from that fall. My brother Edward had one like it in his youth. Soldiers are desperate creatures.'

'I think Mr. Adister had his fall when hunting, was it not?' said Jane.

'Hunting, my dear.'

That was rather different from a fall on duty before the enemy, incurred by severe exhaustion after sunstroke! . . .

Jane took her leave of Philip beside his couch of imprisonment in his room, promising to return in the early morning. He embraced her old dog Wayland tenderly. Hard men have sometimes a warm affection for dogs.

Walking homeward she likewise gave Wayland a hug. She called him 'dear old fellow,' and questioned him of his fondness for her, warning him not to be faithless ever to the mistress who loved him. Was not her old Wayland as good a protector as the footman Mrs. Adister pressed her to have at her heels? That he was!

Captain Con's behaviour grieved her. And it certainly revived an ancient accusation against his countrymen. If he cared for her so much, why had he not placed confidence in her and commissioned her to speak of his election to his wife? Irishmen will never be quite sincere!—But why had his cousin exposed him to one whom he greatly esteemed? However angry he might be with Con O'Donnell in his disapproval of the captain's conduct, it was not very considerate to show the poor man to her in his natural colours. Those words: 'The consolidation of the Union!' sprang up. She had a dim remembrance

of words ensuing: 'ceremonies going at a funeral pace . . . on the highway to the solidest kind of union:—Yes, he wrote: 'I leave you to . . . ' And Captain Philip showed her the letter:

She perceived motives beginning to stir. He must have had his intention: and now as to his character!—Jane was of the order of young women possessing active minds instead of figured paste-board fronts, who see what there is to be seen about them and know what may be known instead of decorously waiting for the astonishment of revelations. As soon as she had asked herself the nature of the design of so honourable a man as Captain Philip in showing her his cousin's letter, her blood spun round and round, waving the reply as a torch; and the question of his character confirmed it.

But could he be imagined seeking to put her on her guard? There may be modesty in men well aware of their personal attractions: they can credit individual women with powers of resistance. He was not vain to the degree which stupefies the sense of there being weight or wisdom in others. And he was honour's own. By these lights of his character she read the act. His intention was . . . and even while she saw it accurately, the moment of keen perception was overclouded by her innate distrust of her claim to feminine charms. For why should he wish her to understand that he was no fortune-hunter and treated heiresses with greater reserve than ordinary women! How could it matter to him?

She saw the tears roll. Tears of men sink plummet-deep; they find their level. The tears of such a man have more of blood than of water in them.—What was she doing when they fell? She was shading his head from the sun. What, then, if those tears came of the repressed desire to thank her with some little warmth? He was honour's own, and warmhearted Patrick talked of him as a friend whose heart was, his friend's. Thrilling to kindness, and, poor soul! helpless to escape it, he felt, perhaps that he had never thanked her, and could not. He lay there, weak and tongue-tied: hence those two bright volumes of his condition of weakness.

So the pursuit of the mystery ended, as it had commenced, in confusion, but of a milder sort and partially transparent at one or two of the gates she had touched. A mind capable of seeing was twisted by a nature that would not allow of open eyes; yet the laden emotions of her nature brought her round by another channel to the stage neighbouring sight, where facts, dimly recognised for such—as they may be in truth, are accepted under their disguises, because disguise of them is needed by the bashful spirit which accuses itself of audaciousness in presuming to speculate. Had she asked herself the reason of her extended speculation, her foot would not have stopped more abruptly on the edge of a torrent than she on that strange road of vapours and flying lights. She did not; she sang, she sent her voice through the woods and took the splendid ring of it for an assurance of her peculiarly unshackled state. She loved this liberty. Of the men who had 'done her the honour,' not one had moved her to regret the refusal. She lived in the hope of simply doing good, and could only give her hand to a man able to direct and help her; one who would bear to be matched with her brother. Who was he? Not discoverable; not likely to be.

Therefore she had her freedom, an absolutely unflushed freedom, happier than poor Grace Barrow's. Rumour spoke of Emma Colesworth having a wing clipped. How is it that sensible women can be so susceptible? For, thought Jane, the moment a woman is what is called in love, she can give her heart no longer to the innocent things about her; she is cut away from Nature: that pure well-water is tasteless to her. To me it is wine!

The drinking of the pure well-water as wine is among the fatal signs of fire in the cup, showing Nature at work rather to enchain the victim than bid her daughter go. Jane of course meant the poet's 'Nature.' She did not reflect that the strong glow of poetic imagination is wanted to hallow a passionate devotion to the inanimate for this evokes the spiritual; and passionateness of any kind in narrower brains should be a proclamation to us of sanguine freshets not coming from a spiritual source. But the heart betraying deluded her. She fancied she had not ever been so wedded to Nature as on that walk through the bursting beechwoods, that sweet lonely walk, perfect in loneliness, where even a thought of a presence was thrust away as a desecration and images of souls in thought were shadowy.

Her lust of freedom gave her the towering holiday. She took the delirium in her own pure fashion, in a love of the bankside flowers and the downy edges of the young beech-buds fresh on the sprays. And it was no unreal love, though too intent and forcible to win the spirit from the object. She paid for this indulgence of her mood by losing the spirit entirely. At night she was a spent rocket. What had gone she could not tell: her very soul she almost feared. Her glorious walk through the wood seemed burnt out. She struck a light to try her poet on the shelf of the elect of earth by her bed, and she read, and read flatness. Not his the fault! She revered him too deeply to lay it on him. Whose was it? She had a vision of the gulfs of bondage.

Could it be possible that human persons were subject to the spells of persons with tastes, aims, practices, pursuits alien to theirs? It was a riddle taxing her to solve it for the resistance to a monstrous iniquity of injustice, degrading her conception of our humanity. She attacked it in the abstract, as a

volunteer champion of our offended race. And Oh! it could not be. The battle was won without a blow.

Thereupon came glimpses of the gulfs of bondage, delicious, rose- enfolded, foreign; they were chapters of soft romance, appearing interminable, an endless mystery, an insatiable thirst for the mystery. She heard crashes of the opera-melody, and despising it even more than the wretched engine of the harshness, she was led by it, tyrannically led a captive, like the organ-monkey, until perforce she usurped the note, sounded the cloying tune through her frame, passed into the vulgar sugariness, lost herself.

And saying to herself: This is what moves them! she was moved. One thrill of appreciation drew her on the tide, and once drawn from shore she became submerged. Why am I not beautiful, was her thought. Those voluptuous modulations of melting airs are the natural clothing of beautiful women. Beautiful women may believe themselves beloved. They are privileged to believe, they are born with the faith.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A whisper of cajolery in season is often the secret
Ah! we're in the enemy's country now
Beautiful women may believe themselves beloved
Could peruse platitudes upon that theme with enthusiasm
Foamy top is offered and gulped as equivalent to an idea
Hard men have sometimes a warm affection for dogs
He was not alive for his own pleasure
Hug the hatred they packed up among their bundles
I baint done yet
Irishmen will never be quite sincere
Loudness of the interrogation precluded thought of an answer
Love the children of Erin, when not fretted by them
Loves his poets, can almost understand what poetry means
May lull themselves with their wakefulness
Never forget that old Ireland is weeping
Not every chapter can be sunshine
Not likely to be far behind curates in besieging an heiress
Not the great creatures we assume ourselves to be
Nursing of a military invalid awakens tenderer anxieties
Paying compliments and spoiling a game!
Secret of the art was his meaning what he said
Suggestion of possible danger might more dangerous than silence
Tears of men sink plummet-deep
Tears of such a man have more of blood than of water in them
They laugh, but they laugh extinguishingly
Time, whose trick is to turn corners of unanticipated sharpness
Twisted by a nature that would not allow of open eyes
With death; we'd rather not, because of a qualm
Woman's precious word No at the sentinel's post, and alert
Would like to feel he was doing a bit of good

[The End]

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