The Black Baronet; or, The Chronicles Of Ballytrain eBook

The Black Baronet; or, The Chronicles Of Ballytrain by William Carleton

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PREFACE.

The incidents upon which this book is founded seem to be extraordinary and startling, but they are true; for, as Byron says, and as we all know, “Truth is strange—stranger than Fiction.” Mr. West, brother to the late member from Dublin, communicated them to me exactly as they occurred, and precisely as he communicated them, have I given them to the reader, at least, as far as I can depend upon my memory. With respect, however, to his facts, they related only to the family which is shadowed forth under the imaginary name of Gourlay; those connected with the aristocratic house of Cullamore, I had from another source, and they are equally authentic. The Lord Dunroe, son to the Earl of Cullamore, is not many years dead, and there are thousands still living, who can bear testimony to the life of profligacy and extravagance, which, to the very last day of his existence, he persisted in leading. That his father was obliged to get an act of Parliament passed to legitimize his children, is a fact also pretty well known to many.

At first, I had some notion of writing a distinct story upon each class of events, but, upon more mature consideration, I thought it better to construct such a one as would enable me to work them both up into the same narrative; thus contriving that the incidents of the one house should be connected with those of the other, and the interest of both deepened, not only by their connection, but their contrast. It is unnecessary to say, that the prototypes of the families who appear upon the stage in the novel, were, in point of fact, personally unknown to each other, unless, probably, by name, inasmuch as they resided in different and distant parts of the kingdom. They were, however, contemporaneous. Such circumstances, nevertheless, matter very little to the novelist, who can form for his characters whatsoever connections, whether matrimonial or otherwise, he may deem most proper; and of this, he must be considered himself as the sole, though probably not the best, judge. The name of Red Hall, the residence of Sir Thomas Gourlay, is purely fictitious, but not the description of it, which applies very accurately to a magnificent family mansion not a thousand miles from the thriving little town of Ballygawley. Since the first appearance, however, of the work, I have accidentally discovered, from James Frazer’s admirable. “Hand-book for Ireland,” the best and most correct work of the kind ever published, and the only one that can be relied upon, that there actually is a residence named Red Hall in my own native county of Tyrone. I mention this, lest the respectable family to whom it belongs might take offence at my having made it the ancestral property of such a man as Sir Thomas Gourlay, or the scene of his crimes and outrages. On this point, I beg to assure them that the coincidence of the name is purely accidental, and that, when I wrote the novel, I had not the slightest notion that

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such a place actually existed. Some of those coincidences are very odd and curious. For instance, it so happens that there is at this moment a man named Dunphy actually residing on Constitution Hill, and engaged in the very same line of life which I have assigned to one of my principal characters of that name in the novel, that of a huckster; yet of this circumstance I knew nothing. The titles of Cullamore and Dunroe are taken from two hills, one greater than the other, and not far asunder, in my native parish; and I have heard it said, by the people of that neighborhood, that Sir William Richardson, father to the late amiable Sir James Richardson Bunbury, when expecting at the period of the Union to receive a coronet instead of a baronetcy, had made his mind up to select either one or the other of them as the designation of his rank.

I think I need scarcely assure my readers that old Sam Roberts, the retired soldier, is drawn from life; and I may add, that I have scarcely done the fine old fellow and his fine old wife sufficient justice. They were two of the most amiable and striking originals I ever met. Both are now dead, but I remember Sam to have been for many years engaged in teaching the sword exercise in some of the leading schools in and about Dublin. He ultimately gave this up, however, having been appointed to some comfortable situation in the then Foundling Hospital, where his Beck died, and he, poor fellow, did not, I have heard, long survive her.

Owing to painful and peculiar circumstances, with which it would be impertinent to trouble the reader, there were originally only five hundred copies of this work published. The individual for whom it was originally written, but who had no more claim upon it than the Shah of Persia, misrepresented me, or rather calumniated me, so grossly to Messrs. Saunders & Otley, who published it, that he prevailed upon them to threaten me with criminal proceedings for having disposed of my own work, and I accordingly received an attorney's letter, affording me that very agreeable intimation. Of course they soon found they had been misled, and that it would have been not only an unparalleled outrage, but a matter attended with too much danger, and involving too severe a penalty to proceed in. Little I knew or suspected at the time, however, that the sinister and unscrupulous delusions which occasioned me and my family so much trouble, vexation, and embarrassment, were only the foreshadowings of that pitiable and melancholy malady which not long afterwards occasioned the unhappy man to be placed apart from society, which, it is to be feared, he is never likely to rejoin. I allude to those matters, not only to account for the limited number of the work that was printed, but to satisfy those London publishers to whom the individual in question so foully misrepresented me, that my conduct in every transaction I have had with booksellers has been straightforward, just, and honorable, and that

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I can publicly make this assertion, without the slightest apprehension of being contradicted. That the book was cushioned in this country, I am fully aware, and this is all I shall say upon that part of the subject. Indeed it was never properly published at all—never advertised—never reviewed, and, until now, lay nearly in as much obscurity as if it had been still in manuscript. A few copies of it got into circulating libraries, but, in point of fact, it was never placed before the public at all. What-ever be its merits, however, it is now in the hands of a gentleman who will do it justice, if it fails, the fault will not at least be his.

My object in writing the book was to exhibit, in contrast, three of the most powerful passions that can agitate the human heart—I mean love, ambition, and revenge. To contrive the successive incidents, by which the respective individuals on whose characters they were to operate should manifest their influence with adequate motives, and without departing from actual life and nature, as we observe them in action about us, was a task which required a very close study of the human mind when placed in peculiar circumstances. In this case the great struggle was between love and ambition. By ambition, I do not mean the ambition of the truly great man, who wishes to associate it with truth and virtue, and whose object is, in the first place, to gratify it by elevating his country and his kind; no, but that most hateful species of it which exists in the contrivance and working out of family arrangements and insane projects for the aggrandizement of our offspring, under circumstances where we must know that they cannot be accomplished without wrecking the happiness of those to whom they are proposed. Such a passion, in its darkest aspect—and in this I have drawn it—has nothing more in view than the cruel, selfish and undignified object of acquiring some poor and paltry title or distinction for a son or daughter, without reference either to inclination or will, and too frequently in opposition to both. It is like introducing a system of penal laws into domestic life, and establishing the tyranny of a moral despot among the affections of the heart. Sometimes, especially in the case of an only child, this ambition grows to a terrific size, and its miserable victim acts with all the unconscious violence of a monomaniac.

In Sir Thomas Gourlay, the reader will perceive that it became the great and engrossing object of his life, and that its violence was strong in proportion to that want of all moral restraint, which resulted from the creed of an infidel and sceptic. And I may say here, that it was my object to exhibit occasionally the gloomy agonies and hollow delusions of the latter, as the hard and melancholy system on which he based his cruel and unsparing ambition. His character was by far the most difficult to manage. Love has an object; and, in this case, in the person of Lucy Gourlay it had a reasonable and a noble one.

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Revenge has an object; and in the person of Anthony Corbet, or Dunphy, it also had, according to the unchristian maxims of life, an unusually strong argument on which to work and sustain itself. But, as for Sir Thomas Gourlay's mad ambition, I felt that, considering his sufficiently elevated state of life, I could only compensate for its want of all rational design, by making him scorn and reject the laws both civil and religious by which human society is regulated, and all this because he had blinded his eyes against the traces of Providence, rather than take his own heart to task for its ambition. Had he been a Christian, I do not think he could have acted as he did. He shaped his own creed, however, and consequently, his own destiny. In Lady Edward Gourlay, I have endeavored to draw such a character as only the true and obedient Christian can present; and in that of his daughter, a girl endowed with the highest principles, the best heart, and the purest sense of honor—a woman who would have been precisely such a character as Lady Gourlay was, had she lived longer and been subjected to the same trials. Throughout the whole work, however, I trust that I have succeeded in the purity and loftiness of the moral, which was to show the pernicious effects of infidelity and scepticism, striving to sustain and justify an insane ambition; or, in a word, I endeavored

"To vindicate the ways of God to man."

A literary friend of mine told me, a few days ago, that the poet Massinger had selected the same subject for his play of. "A New Way to pay Old Debts," the same in which Sir Giles Overreach is the prominent character. I ought to feel ashamed to say, as I did say, in reply to this, that I never read the play alluded to, nor a single line of Massinger's works; neither have I ever seen Sir Giles Overreach even upon the stage. If, then, there should appear any resemblance in the scope or conduct of the play or novel, or in the character of Sir Thomas Gourlay and Overreach, I cannot be charged either with theft or imitation, as I am utterly ignorant of the play and of the character of Sir Giles Overreach alluded to.

I fear I have dwelt much too long on this subject, and I shall therefore close it by a short anecdote.

Some months ago I chanced to read a work—I think by an American writer—called, as well as I can recollect, "The Reminiscences of a late Physician." I felt curious to read the book, simply because I thought that the man who could, after, "The Diary of a late Physician," come out with a production so named, must possess at the least either very great genius or the most astounding assurance. Well, I went on perusing the work, and found almost at once that it was what is called a catchpenny, and depended altogether, for its success, upon the fame and reputation of its predecessor of nearly the same name. I saw the trick at once, and bitterly regretted that I, in common I suppose with others, had been taken in and bit. Judge

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of my astonishment, however, when, as I proceeded to read the description of an American lunatic asylum, I found it to be *literatim et verbatim* taken—stolen—pirated—-sentence by sentence and page by page, from my own description of one in the third volume of the first edition of this book, and which I myself took from close observation, when, some years ago, accompanied by Dr. White, I was searching in the Grangegorman Lunatic Asylum and in Swift's for a case of madness arising from disappointment in love. I was then writing. "Jane Sinclair," and to the honor of the sex, I have to confess that in neither of those establishments, nor any others either in or about Dublin, could I find such a case. Here, however, in the Yankee's book, there were neither inverted commas, nor the slightest acknowledgment of the source from which the unprincipled felon had stolen it.

With respect to mad-houses, especially as they were conducted up until within the last thirty years, I must say with truth, that if every fact originating in craft, avarice, oppression, and the most unscrupulous ambition for family wealth and hereditary rank, were known, such a dark series of crime and cruelty would come to light as time public mind could scarcely conceive—nay, as would shock humanity itself. Nor has this secret system altogether departed from us. It is not long since the police offices developed some facts rather suspicious, and pretty plainly impressed with the stamp of the old practice. The Lunatic Commission is now at work, and I trust it will not confine its investigations merely to public institutions of that kind, but will, if it possess authority to do so, strictly and rigidly examine every private asylum for lunatics in the kingdom.

Of one other character, Ginty Cooper, I have a word to say. Any person acquainted with the brilliant and classical little capital of Cultra, lying on the confines of Monaghan and Cavan, will not fail to recognize the remains of grace and beatty, which once characterized that celebrated, and well-known individual.

With respect to the watch-house scene, and that in the police office, together with the delineation of the. "Old Charlies," as the guardians of the night were then called; to which I may add the portraits of the two magistrates; I can confidently refer to thousands now alive for their truth. Those matters took place long before our present admirable body of metropolitan police were established. At that period, the police magistracies were bestowed, in most cases, from principles by no means in opposition to the public good, and not, as now, upon gentlemen perfectly free from party bias, and well qualified for that difficult office by legal knowledge, honorable feeling, and a strong sense of public duty, impartial justice, and humanity.

W Carleton.

(Dublin, October 26, 1857.)

CHAPTER I. A Mail-coach by Night, and a Bit of Moonshine.

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It has been long observed, that every season sent by the Almighty has its own peculiar beauties; yet, although this is felt to be universally true—just as we know the sun shines, or that we cannot breathe without air—still we are all certain that even the same seasons have brief periods when these beauties are more sensibly felt, and diffuse a more vivid spirit of enjoyment through all our faculties. Who has not experienced the gentle and serene influence of a calm spring evening? and perhaps there is not in the whole circle of the seasons anything more delightful than the exquisite emotion with which a human heart, not hardened by vice, or contaminated by intercourse with the world, is softened into tenderness and a general love for the works of God, by the pure spirit which breathes of holiness, at the close of a fine evening in the month of March or April.

The season of spring is, in fact, the resurrection of nature to life and happiness. Who does not remember the delight with which, in early youth, when existence is a living poem, and all our emotions sanctify the spirit-like inspiration—the delight, we say, with which our eye rested upon a primrose or a daisy for the first time? And how many a long and anxious look have we ourselves given at the peak of Knockmany, morning after morning, that we might be able to announce, with an exulting heart, the gratifying and glorious fact, that the snow had disappeared from it—because we knew that then spring must have come! And that universal song of the lark, which fills the air with music; how can we forget the bounding joy with which our young heart drank it in as we danced in ecstacy across the fields? Spring, in fact, is the season dearest to the recollection of man, inasmuch as it is associated with all that is pure, and innocent, and beautiful, in the transient annals of his early life. There is always a mournful and pathetic spirit mingled with our remembrances of it, which resembles the sorrow that we feel for some beloved individual whom death withdrew from our affections at that period of existence when youth had nearly completed its allotted limits, and the promising manifestations of all that was virtuous and good were filling the parental hearts with the happy hopes which futurity held out to them. As the heart, we repeat, of such a parent goes back to brood over the beloved memory of the early lost, so do our recollections go back, with mingled love and sorrow, to the tender associations of spring, which may, indeed, be said to perish and pass away in its youth.

These reflections have been occasioned, first, by the fact that its memory and associations are inexpressibly dear to ourselves; and, secondly, because it is toward the close of this brief but beautiful period of the year that our chronicles date their commencement.

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One evening, in the last week of April, a coach called the “Fly” stopped to change horses at a small village in a certain part of Ireland, which, for the present, shall be nameless. The sun had just sunk behind the western hills; but those mild gleams which characterize his setting at the close of April, had communicated to the clouds that peculiarly soft and golden tint, on which the eye loves to rest, but from which its light was now gradually fading. When fresh horses had been put to, a stranger, who had previously seen two large trunks secured on the top, in a few minutes took his place beside the guard, and the coach proceeded.

“Guard,” he inquired, after they had gone a couple of miles from the village, “I am quite ignorant of the age of the moon. When shall we have moonlight?”

“Not till it’s far in the night, sir.”

“The coach passes through the town of Ballytrain, does it not?”

“It does, sir.”

“At what hour do we arrive there?”

“About half-past three in the morning sir.”

The stranger made no reply, but cast his eyes over the aspect of the surrounding country.

The night was calm, warm, and balmy. In the west, where the sun had gone down, there could still be noticed the faint traces of that subdued splendor with which he sets in spring. The stars were up, and the whole character of the sky and atmosphere was full of warmth, and softness, and hope. As the eye stretched across a country that seemed to be rich and well cultivated, it felt that dream-like charm of dim romance, which visible darkness throws over the face of nature, and which invests her groves, her lordly mansions, her rich campaigns, and her white farm-houses, with a beauty that resembles the imagery of some delicious dream, more than the realities of natural scenery.

On passing along, they could observe the careless-looking farmer driving home his cows to be milked and put up for the night; whilst, further on, they passed half-a-dozen cars returning home, some empty and some loaded, from a neighboring fair or market, their drivers in high conversation—a portion of them in friendship, some in enmity, and in general all equally disposed, in consequence of their previous libations, to either one or the other. Here they meet a solitary traveler, fatigued and careworn, carrying a bundle slung over his shoulder on the point of a stick, plodding his weary way to the next village. Anon they were passed by a couple of gentlemen-farmers or country squires, proceeding at a brisk trot upon their stout cobs or bits of half-blood, as the case

might be; and, by and by, a spanking gig shoots rapidly ahead of them, driven by a smart-looking servant in murrey-colored livery, who looks back with a sneer of contempt as he wheels round a corner, and leaves the plebeian vehicle far behind him.

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As for the stranger, he took little notice of those whom they met, be their rank of position in life what it might; his eye was seldom off the country on each side of him as they went along. It is true, when they passed a village or small market-town, he glanced into the houses as if anxious to ascertain the habits and comforts of the humbler classes. Sometimes he could catch a glimpse of them sitting around a basket of potatoes and salt, their miserable-looking faces lit by the dim light of a rush-candle into the ghastly paleness of spectres. Again, he could catch glimpses of greater happiness; and if, on the one hand, the symptoms of poverty and distress were visible, on the other there was the jovial comfort of the wealthy farmer's house, with the loud laughter of its contented inmates. Nor must we omit the songs which streamed across the fields, in the calm stillness of the hour, intimating that they who sang them were in possession, at all events, of light, if not of happy hearts.

As the night advanced, however, all these sounds began gradually to die away. Nature and labor required the refreshment of rest, and, as the coach proceeded at its steady pace, the varied evidences of waking life became few and far between. One after another the lights, both near and at a distance, disappeared. The roads became silent and solitary, and the villages, as they passed through them, were sunk in repose, unless, perhaps, where some sorrowing family were kept awake by the watchings that were necessary at the bed of sickness or death, as was evident by the melancholy steadiness of the lights, or the slow, cautious motion by which they glided from one apartment to another.

The moon had now been for some time up, and the coach had just crossed a bridge that was known to be exactly sixteen miles from the town of which the stranger had made inquiries.

"I think," said the latter, addressing the guard, "we are about sixteen miles from Ballytrain."

"You appear to know the neighborhood, sir," replied the guard.

"I have asked you a question, sir," replied the other, somewhat sternly, "and, instead of answering it, you ask me another."

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the guard, smiling, "it's the custom of the country. Yes, sir, we're exactly sixteen miles from Ballytrain—that bridge is the mark. It's a fine country, sir, from this to that—"

"Now, my good fellow," replied the stranger, "I ask it as a particular favor that you will not open your lips to me until we reach the town, unless I ask you a question. On that condition I will give you a half-a-crown when we get there."

The fellow put his hand to his lips, to hint that he was mute, and nodded, but spoke not a word, and the coach proceeded in silence.

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To those who have a temperament fraught with poetry or feeling, there can be little doubt that to pass, of a calm, delightful spring night, under a clear, starry sky, and a bright moon, through a country eminently picturesque and beautiful, must be one of those enjoyments which fill the heart with a memory that lasts forever. But when we suppose that a person, whose soul is tenderly alive to the influence of local affections, and, who, when absent, has brooded in sorrow over the memory of his native hills and valleys, his lakes and mountains—the rivers, where he hunted the otter and snared the trout, and who has never revisited them, even in his dreams, without such strong emotions as caused him to wake with his eyelashes steeped in tears—when such a person, full of enthusiastic affection and a strong imagination, returns to his native place after a long absence, under the peculiar circumstances which we are describing, we need not feel surprised that the heart of the stranger was filled with such a conflicting tumult of feelings and recollections as it is utterly impossible to portray.

From the moment the coach passed the bridge we have alluded to, every hill, and residence, and river, and lake, and meadow, was familiar to him, and he felt such an individual love and affection for them, as if they had been capable of welcoming and feeling the presence of the light-hearted boy, whom they had so often made happy.

In the gairish eye of day, the contemplation of this exquisite landscape would have been neither so affecting to the heart, nor so beautiful to the eye. He, the stranger, had not seen it for years, except in his dreams, and now he saw it in reality, invested with that ideal beauty in which fancy had adorned it in those visions of the night. The river, as it gleamed dimly, according as it was lit by the light of the moon, and the lake, as it shone with pale but visionary beauty, possessed an interest which the light of day would never have given them. The light, too, which lay on the sleeping groves, and made the solitary church spires, as they went along, visible, in dim, but distant beauty, and the clear outlines of his own mountains, unchanged and unchangeable—all, all crowded from the force of the recollections with which they were associated, upon his heart, and he laid himself back, and, for some minutes, wept tears that were at once both sweet and bitter.

In proportion as they advanced toward the town of Ballytrain, the stranger imagined that the moon shed a diviner radiance over the surrounding country; but this impression was occasioned by the fact that its aspect was becoming, every mile they proceeded, better and better known to him. At length they came to a long but gradual elevation in the road, and the stranger knew that, on reaching its eminence, he could command a distinct view of the magnificent valley on which his native parish lay. He begged of the coachman to stop for half a minute, and the latter

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did so. The scene was indeed unrivalled. All that constitutes a rich and cultivated country, with bold mountain scenery in the distance, lay stretched before him. To the right wound, in dim but silver-like beauty, a fine river, which was lost to the eye for a considerable distance in the wood of Gallagh. To the eye of the stranger, every scene and locality was distinct beyond belief, simply because they were lit up, not only by the pale light of the moon, but by the purer and stronger light of his own early affections and memories.

Now it was, indeed, that his eye caught in, at a glance, all those places and objects that had held their ground so strongly and firmly in his heart. The moon, though sinking, was brilliant, and the cloudless expanse of heaven seemed to reflect her light, whilst, at the same time, the shadows that projected from the trees, houses, and other elevated objects, were dark and distinct in proportion to the flood of mild effulgence which poured down upon them from the firmament. Let not our readers hesitate to believe us when we say, that the heart of the stranger felt touched with a kind of melancholy happiness as he passed through their very shadows—proceeding, as they did, from objects that he had looked upon as the friends of his youth, before life had opened to him the dark and blotted pages of suffering and sorrow. There, dimly shining to the right below him, was the transparent river in which he had taken many a truant plunge, and a little further on he could see without difficulty the white cascade tumbling down the precipice, and mark its dim scintillations, that looked, under the light of the moon, like masses of shivered ice, were it not that such a notion was contradicted by the soft dash and continuous murmur of its waters.

But where was the gray mill, and the large white dwelling of the miller? and that new-looking mansion on the elevation—it was not there in his time, nor several others that he saw around him; and, hold—what sacrilege is this? The coach is not upon the old road—not on that with every turn and winding of which the light foot of his boyhood was so familiar! What, too! the school-house down—its very foundations razed—its light-hearted pupils, some dead, others dispersed, its master in the dust, and its din, bustle, and monotonous murmur—all banished and gone, like the pageantry of a dream. Such, however, is life; and he who, on returning to his birthplace after an absence of many years, expects to find either the country or its inhabitants as he left them, will experience, in its most painful sense, the bitterness of disappointment. Let every such individual prepare himself for the consequences of death, change, and desolation.

At length the coach drove into Ballytrain, and, in a few minutes, the passengers found themselves opposite to the sign of the Mitre, which swung over the door of the principal inn of that remarkable town.

“Sir,” said the guard, addressing the stranger, “I think I have kept my word.”

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The latter, without making any reply, dropped five shillings into his hand; but, in the course of a few minutes—for the coach changed horses there—he desired him to call the waiter or landlord, or any one to whom he could intrust his trunks until morning.

“You are going to stop in the ‘Mithre,’ sir, of course,” said the guard, inquiringly.

The traveler nodded assent, and, having seen his luggage taken into the inn, and looking, for a moment, at the town, proceeded along the shadowy side of the main street, and, instead of seeking his bed, had, in a short time, altogether vanished, and in a manner that was certainly mysterious, nor did he make his appearance again until noon on the following day.

It may be as well to state here that he was a man of about thirty, somewhat above the middle size, and, although not clumsy, yet, on being closely scanned, he appeared beyond question to be very compact, closely knit, well-proportioned, and muscular. Of his dress, however, we must say, that it was somewhat difficult to define, or rather to infer from it whether he was a gentleman or not, or to what rank or station of life he belonged. His hair was black and curled; his features regular; and his mouth and nose particularly aristocratic; but that which constituted the most striking feature of his face was a pair of black eyes, which kindled or became mellow according to the emotions by which he happened to be influenced.

“My good lad,” said he to “Boots,” after his return, “Will you send me the landlord?”

“I can’t, sir,” replied the other, “he’s not at home.”

“Well, then, have the goodness to send me the waiter.”

“I will, sir,” replied the monkey, leaving the room with an evident feeling of confident alacrity.

Almost immediately a good-looking girl, with Irish features, brown hair, and pretty blue eyes, presented herself.

“Well, sir,” she said, in an interrogative tone.

“Why,” said the stranger, “I believe it is impossible to come at any member of this establishment; I wish to see the waiter.”

“I’m the waiter, sir,” she replied, with an unconscious face.

“The deuce you are!” he exclaimed; “however,” he added, recovering himself, “I cannot possibly wish for a better. It is very likely that I may stay with you for some time—-perhaps a few months. Will you see now that a room and bed are prepared for me, and that my trunks are put into my own apartment? Get a fire into my sitting-room and

bedchamber. Let my bed be well aired; and see that everything is done cleanly and comfortably, will you?"

"Sartinly, sir, an' I hope we won't lave you much to complain of. As for the sheets, wait till you try them. The wild myrtles of Drumgau, beyant the demesne 'isliout, is foulded in them; an' if the smell of them won't make you think yourself in Paradise, 'tisn't my fault."

The stranger, on looking at her somewhat more closely, saw that she was an exceedingly neat, tight, clean-looking young woman, fair and youthful.

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“Have you been long in the capacity of waiter, here.” he asked.

“No, sir,” she replied; “about six months.”

“Do you never keep male waiters in this establishment,” he inquired.

“Oh, yes, sir; Paudeen Gair and I generally act week about. This is my week, sir, an’ he’s at the plough.”

“And where have you been at service before you came here, my good girl?”

“In Sir Thomas Gourlay’s, sir.”

The stranger could not prevent himself from starting.

“In Sir Thomas Gourlay’s!” he exclaimed. “And pray in what capacity were you there?”

“I was own maid to Miss Gourlay, sir.”

“To Miss Gourlay! and how did you come to leave your situation with her?”

“When I find you have a right to ask, sir,” she replied, “I will tell you; but not till then.”

“I stand reproved, my good girl,” he said; “I have indeed no right to enter into such inquiries; but I trust I have for those that are more to the purpose. What have you for dinner?”

“Fish, flesh, and fowl, sir,” she replied, with a peculiar smile, “and a fine fat buck from the deer-park.”

“Well, now,” said he, “that really promises well—indeed it is more than I expected—you had no quarrel, I hope, at parting? I beg your pardon—a fat buck, you say. Come, I will have a slice of that.”

“Very well, sir,” she replied; “what else would you wish?”

“To know, my dear, whether Sir Thomas is as severe upon her as—ahem!—anything at all you like—I’m not particular—only don’t forget a slice of the buck, out of the haunch, my dear; and, whisper, as you and I are likely to become better acquainted—all in a civil way, of course—here is a trifle of earnest, as a proof that, if you be attentive, I shall not be ungenerous.”

“I don’t know,” she replied, shaking her head, and hesitating; “you’re a sly-looking gentleman—and, if I thought that you had any—”

“Design, you would say,” he replied; “no—none, at any rate, that is improper; it is offered in a spirit of good-will and honor, and in such you may fairly accept of it. So,” he added, as he dropped the money into her hand, “Sir Thomas insisted that you should go? Hem!—hem!”

The girl started in her turn, and exclaimed, with a good deal of surprise:

“Sir Thomas insisted! How did you come to know that, sir? I tould you no such thing.”

“Certainly, my dear, you—a—a—hem—did you not say something to that effect? Perhaps, however,” he added, apprehensive lest he might have alarmed, or rather excited her suspicions—“perhaps I was mistaken. I only imagined, I suppose, that you said something to that effect; but it does not matter—I have no intimacy with the Gourlays, I assure you—I think that is what you call them—and none at all with Sir Thomas—is not that his name? Goodby now; I shall take a walk through the town—-how is this you name it? Ballytrain, I think—and return at five, when I trust you will have dinner ready.”

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He then put on his hat, and sauntered out, apparently to view the town and its environs, fully satisfied that, in consequence of his having left it when a boy, and of the changes which time and travel had wrought in his appearance, no living individual there could possibly recognize him.

CHAPTER II. The Town and its Inhabitants.

The town itself contained about six thousand inhabitants, had a church, a chapel, a meeting-house, and also a place of worship for those who belonged to the Methodist connection, It was nearly half a mile long, lay nearly due north and south, and ran up an elevation or slight hill, and down again on the other side, where it tapered away into a string of cabins. It is scarcely necessary to say that it contained a main street, three or four with less pretensions, together with a tribe of those vile alleys which consist of a double row of beggarly cabins, or huts, facing each other, and lying so closely, that a tall man might almost stand with a foot on the threshold of each, or if in the middle, that is half-way between them, he might, were he so inclined, and without moving to either side, shake hands with the inhabitants on his right and left. To the left, as you went up from the north, and nearly adjoining the cathedral church, which faced you, stood a bishop's palace, behind which lay a magnificent demesne. At that time, it is but just to say that the chimneys of this princely residence were never smokeless, nor its saloons silent and deserted as they are now, and have been for years. No, the din of industry was then incessant in and about the offices of that palace, and the song of many a light heart and happy spirit rang sweetly in the valleys, on the plains and hills, and over the meadows of that beautiful demesne, with its noble deer-park stretching up to the heathy hills behind it. Many a time, when a school-boy, have we mounted the demesne wall in question, and contemplated its meadows, waving under the sunny breeze, together with the long strings of happy mowers, the harmonious swing of whose scythes, associated with the cheerful noise of their whetting, caused the very heart within us to kindle with such a sense of pure and early enjoyment as does yet, and ever will, constitute a portion of our best and happiest recollections.

At the period of which we write it mattered little whether the prelate who possessed it resided at home or not. If he did not, his family generally did; but, at all events, during their absence, or during their residence, constant employment was given, every working-day in the year, to at least one hundred happy and contented poor from a neighboring and dependent village, every one of whom was of the Roman Catholic creed.

I have stood, not long ago, upon a beautiful elevation in that demesne, and, on looking around me, I saw nothing but a deserted and gloomy country. The happy village was gone—razed to the very foundations—the demesne was a solitude—the songs of the reapers and mowers had vanished, as it were, into the recesses of memory, and the

magnificent palace, dull and lonely, lay as if it were situated in some land of the dead, where human voice or footstep had not been heard for years.

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The stranger, who had gone out to view the town, found, during that survey, little of this absence of employment, and its consequent destitution, to disturb him. Many things, it is true, both in the town and suburbs, were liable to objection.

Abundance there was; but, in too many instances, he could see, at a glance, that it was accompanied by unclean and slovenly habits, and that the processes of husbandry and tillage were disfigured by old usages, that were not only painful to contemplate, but disgraceful to civilization.

The stranger was proceeding down the town, when he came in contact with a ragged, dissipated-looking young man, who had, however, about him the evidences of having seen better days. The latter touched his hat to him, and observed, “You seem to be examining our town, sir?”

“Pray, what is your name?” inquired the stranger, without seeming to notice the question.

“Why, for the present, sir,” he replied, “I beg to insinuate that I am rather under a cloud; and, if you have no objection, would prefer to remain anonymous, or to preserve my incognito, as they say, for some time longer.”

“Have you no alias, by which you may be known?”

“Unquestionably, an alias I have,” replied the other; “for as to passing through life, in the broad, anonymous sense, without some token to distinguish you by, the thing, to a man like me, is impossible. I am consequently known as Frank Fenton, a name I borrowed from a former friend of mine, an old school-fellow, who, while he lived, was, like myself, a bit of an original in his way. How do you like our town, sir,” he added, changing the subject.

“I have seen too little of it,” replied the stranger, “to judge. Is this your native town, Mr. Fenton,” he added.

“No, sir; not my native town,” replied Fenton; “but I have resided here from hand to mouth long enough to know almost every individual in the barony at large.”

During this dialogue, the stranger eyed Fenton, as he called himself, very closely; in fact, he watched every feature of his with a degree of curiosity and doubt that was exceedingly singular.

“Have you, sir, been here before.” asked Fenton; “or is this your first visit?”

“It is not my first visit,” replied the other; “but it is likely I shall reside here for some months.”

“For the benefit of your health, I presume,” asked modest Frank.

“My good friend,” replied the stranger, “I wish to make an observation. It is possible, I say, that I may remain here for some months; now, pray, attend, and mark me—-whenever you and I chance, on any future occasion, to meet, it is to be understood between us that you are to answer me in anything I ask, which you know, and I to answer you in nothing, unless I wish it.”

“Thank you, sir,” he replied, with a low and not ungraceful bow; “that’s a compliment all to the one side, like Clogher."*

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* The proverb is pretty general throughout Tyrone. The town of Clogher consists of only a single string of houses.

“Very well,” returned the stranger; “I have something to add, in order to make this arrangement more palatable to you.”

“Hold, sir,” replied the other; “before you proceed further, you must understand me. I shall pledge myself under no terms—and I care not what they may be—to answer any question that may throw light upon my own personal identity, or past history.”

“That will not be necessary,” replied the stranger.

“What do you mean, sir,” asked Fenton, starting; “do you mean to hint that you know me?”

“Nonsense,” said the other; “how could I know a man whom I never saw before? No; it is merely concerning the local history of Ballytrain and its inhabitants that I am speaking.”

There was a slight degree of dry irony, however, on his face, as he spoke.

“Well,” said the other, “in the mean time, I don’t see why I am to comply with a condition so dictatorially laid down by a person of whom I know nothing.”

“Why, the truth is,” said our strange friend, “that you are evidently a lively and intelligent fellow, not badly educated; I think—and, as it is likely that you have no very direct connection with the inhabitants of the town and surrounding country, I take it for granted that, in the way of mere amusement, you may be able to—”

“Hem! I see—to give you all the scandal of the place for miles about; that is what you would say? and so I can. But suppose a spark of the gentleman should—should—but come, hang it, that is gone, hopelessly gone. What is your wish?”

“In the first place, to see you better clothed. Excuse me—and, if I offend you, say so—-but it is not my wish to say anything that might occasion you pain. Are you given to liquor?”

“Much oftener than liquor is given to me, I assure you; it is my meat, drink, washing, and lodging—without it I must die. And, harkee, now; when I meet a man I like, and who, after all, has a touch of humanity and truth about him, to such a man, I say, I myself am all truth, at whatever cost; but to every other—to your knave, your hypocrite, or your trimmer, for instance, all falsehood—deep, downright, wanton falsehood. In fact, I would scorn to throw away truth upon them.

“You are badly dressed.”

“Ah! after all, how little is known of the human heart and character!” exclaimed Fenton. “The subject of dress and the associations connected with it have all been effaced from my mind and feelings for years. So long as we are capable of looking to our dress, there is always a sense of honor and self-respect left. Dress I never think of, unless as a mere animal protection against the elements.”

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“Well, then,” observed the other, surveying this unfortunate wretch with compassion, “whether all perception of honor and self-respect is lost in you I care not. Here are five pounds for you; that is to say—and pray understand me—I commit them absolutely to your own keeping—your own honor, your self-respect, or by whatever name you are pleased to call it. Purchase plain clothes, get better linen, a hat and shoes: when this is done, if you have strength of mind and resolution of character to do it, come to me at the head inn, where I stop, and I will only ask you, in return, to tell me anything you know or have heard about such subjects as may chance to occur to me at the moment.”

On receiving the money, the poor fellow fastened his eyes on it with such an expression of amazement as defies description. His physical strength and constitution, in consequence of the life he led, were nearly gone—a circumstance which did not escape the keen eye of the stranger, on whose face there was an evident expression of deep compassion. The unfortunate Frank Fenton trembled from head to foot, his face became deadly pale, and after surveying the notes for a time, he held them out to the other, exclaiming, as he extended his hand—

“No, no! have it, no! You are a decent fellow, and I will not impose upon you. Take back your money; I know myself too well to accept of it. I never could keep money, and I wouldn’t have a shilling of this in my possession at the expiration of forty-eight hours.”

“Even so,” replied the stranger, “it comes not back to me again. Drink it—eat it—spend it is you may; but I rely on your own honor, notwithstanding what you say, to apply it to a better purpose.”

“Well, now, let me see,” said Fenton, musing, and as if in a kind of soliloquy; “you are a good fellow, no doubt of it—that is, if you have no lurking, dishonest design in all this. Let me see. Why, now, it is a long time since I have had the enormous sum of five shillings in my possession, much less the amount of the national debt, which I presume must be pretty close upon five pounds; and in honest bank notes, too. One, two, three—ha!—eh! eh!—oh yes,” he proceeded, evidently struck with some discovery that astonished him. “Ay!” he exclaimed, looking keenly at a certain name that happened to be written upon one of the notes; “well, it is all right! Thank you, sir; I will keep the money.”

CHAPTER III. Pauden Gair’s Receipt how to make a Bad Dinner a Good One

—The Stranger finds Fenton as mysterious as Himself.

The stranger, on reaching the inn, had not long to wait for dinner, which, to his disappointment, was anything but what he had been taught to expect. The fair “waiter” had led his imagination a very ludicrous dance, indeed, having, as Shakspeare says,

kept the word of promise to his ear, but broken it to his hope, and, what was still worse, to his appetite. On sitting down, he found before him two excellent salt herrings to begin with; and on ringing the bell to inquire why he was provided with such a dainty, the male waiter himself, who had finished the field he had been ploughing, made his appearance, after a delay of about five minutes, very coolly wiping his mouth, for he had been at dinner.

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“Are you the waiter,” asked the stranger, sharply.

“No, sir, I’m not the waiter, myself; but I and Peggy Moylan is.”

“And why didn’t you come when I rang for you at first?”

“I was just finishin’ my dinner, sir,” replied the other, pulling a bone of a herring from between his teeth, then going over and deliberately throwing it into the fire.

The stranger was silent with astonishment, and, in truth, felt a stronger inclination to laugh than to scold him. This fellow, thought he, is clearly an original; I must draw him out a little.

“Why, sir,” he proceeded, “was I served with a pair of d—d salt herrings, as a part of my dinner?”

“Whist, sir,” replied the fellow, “don’t curse anything that God—blessed be his name—-has made; it’s not right, it’s sinful.”

“But why was I served with two salt herrings, I ask again?”

“Why wor you sarved with them?—Why, wasn’t it what we had ourselves?”

“Was I not promised venison?”

“Who promised it to you?”

“That female waiter of yours.”

“Peggy Moylan? Well, then, I tell you the fau’t wasn’t hers. We had a party o’ gintlemen out here last week, and the sorra drop of it they left behind them. Devil a drop of venison there is in the house now. You’re an Englishman, at any rate, sir, I think by your discourse?”

“Was I not promised part of a fat buck from the demesne adjoining, and where is it? I thought I was to have fish, flesh, and fowl.”

“Well, and haven’t you fish.” replied the fellow. “What do you call them!” he added, pointing to the herrings; “an’ as to a fat buck, faith, it isn’t part of one, but a whole one you have. What do you call that.” He lifted an old battered tin cover, and discovered a rabbit, gathered up as if it were in the act of starting for its burrow. “You see, Peggy, sir, always keeps her word; for it was a buck rabbit she meant. Well, now, there’s the fish and the flesh; and here,” he proceeded, uncovering another dish, “is the fowl.”

[Illustration: *Page* 329— A pair of enormous legs, with spurs on them]

On lifting the cover, a pair of enormous legs, with spurs on them an inch and a half long, were projected at full length toward the guest, as if the old cock—for such it was—were determined to defend himself to the last.

“Well,” said the stranger, “all I can say is, that I have got a very bad dinner.”

“Well, an’ what suppose? Sure it has been many a betther man’s case. However, you have one remedy; always ait the more of it—that’s the sure card; ever and always when you have a bad dinner, ait, I say, the more of it. I don’t, think, sir, beggin’ your pardon, that you’ve seen much of the world yet.”

“Why do you think so,” asked the other, who could with difficulty restrain his mirth at the fellow’s cool self-sufficiency and assurance.

“Because, sir, no man that has seen the world, and knows its ups and downs, would complain of sich a dinner as that. Do you wish for any liquor? But maybe you don’t. It’s not every one carries a full purse these times; so, at any rate, have the sense not to go beyant your manes, or whatsomever allowance you get.”

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“Allowance! what do you mean by allowance?”

“I mane,” he replied, “that there’s not such a crew of barefaced liars on the airth as you English travellers, as they call you. What do you think, but one of them had the imperance to tell me that he was allowed a guinea a-day to live on! Troth, I crossed mysolf, and bid him go about his business, an’ that I didn’t think the house or place was safe while he was in it—for it’s I that has the mortal hatred of a liar.”

“What liquor have you got in the house?”

“No—if there’s one thing on airth that I hate worse than another, it’s a man that shuffles—that won’t tell the truth, or give you a straight answer. We have plenty o’ liquor in the house—more than you’ll use, at any rate.”

“But what descriptions? How many kinds? for instance—”

“Kinds enough, for that matther—all sorts and sizes of liquor.”

“Have you any wine?”

“Wine! Well, now, let me speak to you as a friend; sure, ’t is n’t wine you’d be thinking of?”

“But, if I pay for it?”

“Pay for it—ay, and break yourself—go beyant your manes, as I said. No, no—I’ll give you no wine—it would be only aidin’ you in extravagance, an’ I wouldn’t have the sin of it to answer for. We have all enough, and too much to answer for, God knows.”

The last observation was made *sotto voce*, and with the serious manner of a man who uttered it under a deep sense of religious truth.

“Well,” replied the stranger, “since you won’t allow me wine, have you no cheaper liquor? I am not in the habit of dining without something stronger than water.”

“So much the worse for yourself. We have good porther.”

“Bring me a bottle of it, then.”

“It’s beautiful on draught.”

“But I prefer it in bottle.”

“I don’t doubt it. Lord help us! how few is it that knows what’s good for them! Will you give up your own will for wanst, and be guided by a wiser man? for health—an’ sure health’s before everything—for health, ever and always prefer draught porther.”

“Well, then, since it must be draught, I shall prefer draught ale.”

“Rank poison. Troth, somehow I feel a liking for you, an’ for that very reason, devil a drop of draught ale I’ll allow to cross your lips. Jist be guided by me, an’ you’ll find that your health an’ pocket will both be the betther for it. Troth, it’s fat and rosy I’ll have you in no time, all out, if you stop with us. Now ait your good dinner, and I’ll bring you the porther immediately.”

“What’s your name.” asked the stranger, “before you go.”

“I’ll tell you when I come back—wait till I bring you the portlier, first.”

In the course of about fifteen mortal, minutes, he returned with a quart of porter in his hand, exclaiming—

“Bad luck to them for pigs, they got into the garden, and I had to drive them out, and cut a lump of a bush to stop the gap wid; however, I think they won’t go back that way again. My name you want? Why, then, my name is Paudeen Gair—that is, Sharpe, sir; but, in troth, it is n’t Sharpe by name and Sharpe by nature wid me, although you’d get them that ’ud say otherwise.”

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“How long have you been here,” asked the other.

“I’ve been laborin’ for the master goin’ on fourteen years; but I’m only about twelve months attendin’ table.”

“How long has your fellow-servant—Peggy, I think, you call her—been here?”

“Not long.”

“Where had she been before, do you know.”

“Do I know, is it? Maybe ’tis you may say that.”

“What do you mean? I don’t understand you.”

“I know that well enough, and it is n’t my intention you should.”

“In what family was she at service.”

“Whisper;—in a bad family, wid *one* exception. God protect *her*, the darlin’. Amin! *A wurra yeelsh!* may the curse that’s hanging over him never fall upon her this day!”

A kind and complacent spirit beamed in the fine eyes of the stranger, as the waiter uttered these benevolent invocations; and, putting his hand in his pocket, he said,

“My good friend Paudeen, I am richer than you are disposed to give me credit for; I see you are a good-hearted fellow, and here’s a crown for you.”

“No! consumin’ to the farden, till I know whether you’re able to afford it or not. It’s always them that has least of it, unfortunately, that’s readiest to give it. I have known many a foolish creature to do what you are doing, when, if the truth was known, they could badly spare it; but, at any rate, wait till I deserve it; for, upon my reputaytion, I won’t finger a testher of it sooner.”

He then withdrew, and left the other to finish his dinner as best he might.

For the next three or four days the stranger confined himself mostly to his room, unless about dusk, when he glided out very quietly, and disappeared rather like a spirit than anything else; for, in point of fact, no one could tell what had become of him, or where he could have concealed himself, during these brief but mysterious absences. Paudeen Gair and Peggy observed that he wrote at least three or four letters every day, and knew that he must have put them into the post-office with his own hands, inasmuch as no person connected with the inn had been employed for that purpose.

On the fourth day, after breakfast, and as Pat Sharpe—by which version of his name he was sometimes addressed—was about to take away the things, his guest entered into conversation with him as follows:

“Paudeen, my good friend, can you tell me where the wild, ragged fellow, called Fenton, could be found?”

“I can, sir. Fenton? Begorra, you’d hardly know him if you seen him; he’s as smooth as a new pin—has a plain, daicent suit o’ clothes on him. It’s whispered about among us this long time, that, if he had his rights, he’d be entitled to a great property; and some people say now that he has come into a part of it.”

“And pray, what else do they say of him?”

“Wiry, then, I heard Father M’Mahon himself say that he had great learnin’, an’ must a’ had fine broughten-up, an’ could, act the real gintleman whenever he wished.”

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“Is it known who he is, or whether he is a native of this neighborhood?”

“No, sir; he doesn’t belong to this neighborhood; an’ the truth is, that nobody here that ever I heard of knows anything at all, barrin’ guesswork, about the unfortunate poor creature. If ever he was a gintleman,” exclaimed the kind-hearted waiter, “he’s surely to be pitied, when one sees the state he’s brought to.”

“Well, Paudeen, will you fetch him to me, if you know where he is? Say I wish to see him.”

“What name, if you plaise,” asked the waiter, with assumed indifference; for the truth was, that the whole establishment felt a very natural curiosity to know who the stranger was.

“Never mind the name, Paudeen, but say as I desire you.”

Paudeen had no sooner disappeared than the anonymous gentleman went to one of his trunks, and, pulling out a very small miniature, surveyed it for nearly half a minute; he then looked into the fire, and seemed absorbed in long and deep reflection. At length, after once more gazing closely and earnestly at it, he broke involuntarily into the following soliloquy:

“I know,” he exclaimed, “that resemblances are often deceitful, and not to be depended upon. In this case, however, there is scarcely a trace that could constitute any particular peculiarity—a peculiarity which, if it existed, would strengthen—I know not whether to say—my suspicions or my hopes. The early disappearance of that poor boy, without the existence of a single vestige by which he could be traced, resembles one of those mysteries that are found only in romances. The general opinion is, that he has been made away with, and is long dead; yet of late, a different impression has gone abroad, although we know not exactly how it has originated.”

He then paced, with a countenance of gloom, uncertainty, and deep anxiety, through the room, and after a little time, proceeded:

“I shall, at all events, enter into conversation with this person, after which I will make inquiries concerning the gentry and nobility of the neighborhood when I think I shall be able to observe whether he will pass the Gourlay family over, or betray any consciousness of a particular knowledge of their past or present circumstances. ’Tis true, he may overreach me; but if he does, I cannot help it. Yet, after all,” he proceeded, “if he should prove to be the person I seek, everything may go well; I certainly observed faint traces of an honorable feeling about him when I gave him the money, which, notwithstanding his indigence and dissipation, he for a time refused to take.”

He then resumed his seat, and seemed once more buried in thought and abstraction.

Our friend Paudeen was not long in finding the unfortunate object of the stranger's contemplation and interest. On meeting him, he perceived that he was slightly affected with liquor, as indeed was the case generally whenever he could procure it.

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“Misther Fenton,” said Paudeen, “there’s a daicent person in our house that wishes to see you.”

“Who do you call a decent person, you bog-trotting Ganymede.” replied the other.

“Why, a daicent tradesman, I think, from—thin sorra one of me knows whether I ought to say from Dublin or London.”

“What trade, Ganymede?”

“Troth, that’s more than I can tell; but I know that he wants you, for he sent me to bring you to him.”

“Well, Ganymede, I shall see your tradesman,” he replied. “Come, I shall go to him.”

On reaching the inn, Paudeen, in order to discharge the commission intrusted to him fully, ushered Fenton upstairs, and into the stranger’s sitting-room. “What’s this,” exclaimed Fenton. “Why, you have brought me to the wrong room, you blundering villain. I thought you were conducting me to some worthy tradesman. You have mistaken the room, you blockhead; this is a gentleman. How do you do, sir? I hope you will excuse this intrusion; it is quite unintentional on my part; yet I am glad to see you.”

“There is no mistake at all in it,” replied the other, laughing. “That will do, Paudeen,” he added, “thank you.”

“Faix,” said Paudeen to himself, when descending the stairs, “I’m afeard that’s no tradesman—whatever he is. He took on him a look like a lord when that unfortunate Fenton went into the room. Troth, I’m fairly puzzled, at any rate!”

“Take a seat, Mr. Fenton,” said the stranger, handing him a chair, and addressing him in terms of respect.

“Thank, you, sir,” replied the other, putting, at the same time, a certain degree of restraint upon his maimer, for he felt conscious of being slightly influenced by liquor.

“Well,” continued the stranger, “I am glad to see that you have improved your appearance.”

“Ay, certainly, sir, as far as four pounds—or, I should rather say, three pounds went, I did something for the outer man.”

“Why not the five?” asked the other. “I wished you to make yourself as comfortable as possible, and did not imagine you could have done it for less.”

“No, sir, not properly, according to the standard of a gentleman; but I assure you, that, if I were in a state of utter and absolute starvation, I would not part with one of the notes you so generously gave me, scarcely to save my life.”

“No!” exclaimed the stranger, with a good deal of surprise. “And pray, why not, may I ask?”

“Simply,” said Fenton, “because I have taken a fancy for it beyond its value. I shall retain it as pocket-money. Like the Vicar of Wakefield’s daughters, I shall always keep it about me; and then, like them also, I will never want money.”

“That is a strange whim,” observed the other, “and rather an unaccountable one, besides.”

“Not in the slightest degree,” replied Fenton, “if you knew as much as I do; but, at all events, just imagine that I am both capricious and eccentric; so don’t be surprised at anything I say or do.”

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“Neither shall I,” replied “the anonymous” “However, to come to other matters, pray what kind of a town is this of Ballytrain?”

“It is by no means a bad town,” replied Fenton, “as towns and times go. It has a market-house, a gaol, a church, as you have seen—a Roman Catholic chapel, and a place of worship for the Presbyterian and Methodist. It has, besides, that characteristic locality, either of English legislation or Irish crimes—or, perhaps, of both—a gallows-green. It has a public pump, that has been permitted to run dry, and public stocks for limbs like those of your humble servant, that are permitted to stand (the stocks I mean) as a libel upon the inoffensive morals of the town.”

“How are commercial matters in it?”

“Tolerable. Our shopkeepers are all very fair as shopkeepers. But, talking of that, perhaps you are not aware of a singular custom which even I—for I am not a native of this place—have seen in it?”

“What may it have been.” asked the stranger.

“Why, it was this: Of a fair or market-day,” he proceeded, “there lived a certain shopkeeper here, who is some time dead—and I mention this to show you how the laws were respected in this country; this shopkeeper, sir, of a fair or market-day had a post that ran from his counter to the ceiling; to this post was attached a single handcuff, and it always happened that, when any person was caught in the act of committing a theft in his shop, one arm of the offender was stretched up to this handcuff, into which the wrist was locked; and, as the handcuff was movable, so that it might be raised up or down, according to the height of the culprit, it was generally fastened so that the latter was forced to stand upon the top of his toes so long as was agreeable to the shopkeeper of whom I speak.”

“You do not mean to say,” replied his companion, who, by the way, had witnessed the circumstances ten times for Fenton’s once, “that such an outrage upon the right of the subject, and such a contempt for the administration of law and justice, could actually occur in a Christian and civilized country?”

“I state to you a fact, sir,” replied Fen-ton, “which I have witnessed with my own eyes; but we have still stranger and worse usages in this locality.”

“What description of gentry and landed proprietors have you in the neighborhood?”

“Hum! as to that, there are some good, more bad, and many indifferent, among them. Their great fault in general is, that they are incapable of sympathizing, as they ought, with their dependents. The pride of class, and the influence of creed besides, are too frequently impediments, not only to the progress of their own independence, but to the

improvement of their tenantry. Then, many of them employ servile, plausible, and unprincipled agents, who, provided they wring the rent, by every species of severity and oppression, out of the people, are considered by their employers valuable and honest servants, faithfully devoted to their interests; whilst the fact on the other side is, that the unfortunate tenantry are every day so rapidly retrograding from prosperity, that most of the neglected and oppressed who possess means to leave the country emigrate to America."

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“Why, Fenton, I did not think that you looked so deeply into the state and condition of the country. Have you no good specimens of character in or about the town itself?”

“Unquestionably, sir. Look out now from this window,” he proceeded, and he went to it as he spoke, accompanied by the stranger; “do you see,” he added, “that unostentatious shop, with the name of James Trimble over the door?”

“Certainly,” replied the other, “I see it most distinctly.”

“Well, sir, in that shop lives a man who is ten times a greater benefactor to this town and neighborhood than is the honorable and right reverend the lordly prelate, whose silent and untenanted palace stands immediately behind us. In every position in which you find him, this admirable but unassuming man is always the friend of the poor. When an industrious family, who find that they cannot wring independence, by hard and honest labor, out of the farms or other little tenements which they hold, have resolved to seek it in a more prosperous country, America, the first man to whom they apply, if deficient in means to accomplish their purpose, is James Trimble. In him they find a friend, if he knows, as he usually does, that they have passed through life with a character of worth and hereditary integrity. If they want a portion of their outfit, and possess not means to procure it, in kind-hearted James Trimble they are certain to find a friend, who will supply their necessities upon the strength of their bare promise to repay him. Honor,—-then—honor, sir, I say again, to the unexampled faith, truth, and high principle of the industrious Irish peasant, who, in no instance, even although the broad Atlantic has been placed between them, has been known to defraud James Trimble of a single shilling. In all parochial and public meetings—in every position where his influence can be used—he is uniformly the friend of the poor, whilst his high but unassuming sense of honor, his successful industry, and his firm, unshrinking independence, make him equally appreciated and respected by the rich and poor. In fact, it is such men as this who are the most unostentatious but practical benefactors to the lower and middle classes.”

He had proceeded thus far, when a carriage-and-four came dashing up the street, and stopped at the very shop which belonged to the subject of Fenton’s eulogium. Both went to the window at the same moment, and looked out.

“Pray, whose carriage is that.” asked the stranger, fastening his eyes, with a look of intense scrutiny, upon Fenton’s face.

“That, sir,” he replied, “is the carriage of Sir Thomas Gourlay.”

As he spoke, the door of it was opened, and a lady of surpassing elegance and beauty stepped out of it, and entered the shop of the benevolent James Trimble.

“Pray, who is that charming girl?” asked the stranger again.

To this interrogatory, however, he received no reply. Poor Fenton tottered over to a chair, became pale as death, and trembled with such violence that he was incapable, for the time, of uttering a single word.

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“Do you know, or have you ever known, this family?” asked the other.

After a pause of more than a minute, during which the emotion subsided, he replied:

“I have already said that I could not—” he paused. “I am not well,” said he; “I am quite feeble—in fact, not in a condition to answer anything. Do not, therefore, ask me—for the present, at least.”

Fifteen or twenty minutes had elapsed before he succeeded in mastering this singular attack. At length he rose, and placing his chair somewhat further back from the window, continued to look out in silence, not so much from love of silence, as apparently from inability to speak. The stranger, in the mean time, eyed him keenly; and as he examined his features from time to time, it might be observed that an expression of satisfaction, if not almost of certainty, settled upon his own countenance. In a quarter of an hour, the sound of the carriage-wheels was heard on its return, and Fenton, who seemed to dread also a return of his illness, said:

“For heaven’s sake, sir, be good enough to raise the window and let in air. Thank you, sir.”

The carriage, on this occasion, was proceeding more slowly than before—in fact, owing to a slight acclivity in that part of the street, the horses were leisurely walking past the inn window at the moment the stranger raised it. The noise of the ascending sash reached Miss Gourlay (for it was she), who, on looking up, crimsoned deeply, and, with one long taper finger on her lips, as if to intimate caution and silence, bowed to the stranger. The latter, who had presence of mind enough to observe the hint, did not bow in return, and consequently declined to appropriate the compliment to himself. Fenton now surveyed his companion with an appearance of as much interest and curiosity as the other had bestowed on him. He felt, however, as if his physical powers were wholly prostrated.

“I am very weak,” said he, bitterly, “and near the close of my brief and unhappy day. I have, however, one cure—get me drink—drink, I say; that is what will revive me. Sir, my life, for the last fourteen years, has been a battle against thought; and without drink I should be a madman—a madman! oh, God!”

The other remonstrated with him in vain; but he was inexorable, and began to get fierce and frantic. At length, it occurred to him, that perhaps the influence of liquor might render this strange individual more communicative, and that by this means he might succeed in relieving himself of his doubts—for he still had doubts touching Fenton’s identity. In this, however, he was disappointed, as a circumstance occurred which prevented him from then gratifying Fenton’s wish, or winning him into confidence.

CHAPTER IV. An Anonymous Letter

—Lucy Gourlay avows a previous Attachment.

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Whilst Fenton was thus sketching for the stranger a few of the public characters of Ballytrain, a scene, which we must interrupt them to describe, was taking place in the coffee-room of the “Mitre.” As everything, however, has an origin, it is necessary, before we raise the curtain, which, for the present, excludes us from that scene, to enable the reader to become acquainted with the cause of it. That morning, after breakfast, Sir Thomas Gourlay went to his study, where, as usual, he began to read his letters and endorse them—for he happened to be one of those orderly and exact men who cannot bear to see even a trifle out of its place. Having despatched three or four, he took up one—the last—and on opening it read, much to his astonishment and dismay, as follows;

“Sir Thomas Gourlay,—There is an adventurer in disguise near you. Beware of your daughter, and watch her well, otherwise she may give you the slip. I write this, that you may prevent her from throwing herself away upon an impostor and profligate. I am a friend to her, but none to you; and it is on her account, as well as for the sake of another, that you are now warned.”

On perusing this uncomfortable document, his whole frame became moved with a most vehement fit of indignation. He rose from his seat, and began to traverse the floor with lengthy and solemn strides, as a man usually does who knows not exactly on whom to vent his rage. There hung a large mirror before him, and, as he approached it from time to time, he could not help being struck by the repulsive expression of his own features. He was a tall, weighty man, of large bones and muscles; his complexion was sallow, on a black ground; his face firm, but angular; and his forehead, which was low, projected a good deal over a pair of black eyes, in one of which there was a fearful squint. His eyebrows, which met, were black, fierce-looking, and bushy, and, when agitated, as now, with passion, they presented, taken in connection with his hard, irascible lips, short irregular teeth and whole complexion, an expression singularly stern and malignant.

On looking at his own image, he could not help feeling the conviction, that the visage which presented itself to him was not such a one as was calculated to diminish the unpopularity which accompanied him wherever he went, and the obloquy which hung over his name.

Sir Thomas Gourlay, however, although an exceedingly forbidding and ugly man, was neither a fool nor novice in the ways of the world. No man could look upon his plotting forehead, and sunken eyes closely placed, without feeling at once that he was naturally cunning and circumventive. Nor was this all; along with being deep and designing, he was also subject to sudden bursts of passion, which, although usual in such a temperament, did not suddenly pass away. On the contrary, they were sometimes at once so tempestuous and abiding, that he had been rendered ill by their

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fury, and forced to take to his bed for days together. On the present occasion, a considerable portion of his indignation was caused by the fact, that he knew not the individual against whom to direct it. His daughter, as a daughter, had been to him an object of perfect indifference, from the day of her birth up to that moment; that is to say, he was utterly devoid of all personal love and tenderness for her, whilst, at the same time, he experienced, in its full force, a cold, conventional ambition, which, although without honor, principle, or affection, yet occasioned him to devote all his efforts and energies to her proper establishment in the world. In her early youth, for instance, she had suffered much from delicate health, so much, indeed, that she was more than once on the very verge of death; yet, on no occasion, was he ever known to manifest the slightest parental sorrow for her illness. Society, however, is filled with such fathers, and with too many mothers of a like stamp. So far, however, as Lucy Gourlay was concerned, this proud, unprincipled spirit of the world supplied to her, to a certain extent at least, the possession of that which affection ought to have given. Her education was attended to with the most solicitous anxiety—not in order to furnish her mind with that healthy description of knowledge which strengthens principle and elevates the heart, but that she might become a perfect mistress of all the necessary and fashionable accomplishments, and shine, at a future day, an object of attraction on that account. A long and expensive array of masters, mistresses, and finishers, from almost every climate and country of Europe, were engaged in her education, and the consequence was, that few young persons of her age and sex were more highly accomplished. If his daughter's head ached, her father never suffered that circumstance to disturb the cold, stern tenor of his ambitious way; but, at the same time, two or three of the most eminent physicians were sent for, as a matter of course, and then there were nothing but consultations until she recovered. Had she died, Sir Thomas Gourlay would not have shed one tear, but he would have had all the pomp and ceremony due to her station in life solemnly paraded at her funeral, and it is very likely that one or other of our eminent countrymen, Hogan or M'Dowall, had they then existed, would have been engaged to erect her a monument.

And yet the feeling which he experienced, and which regulated his life, was, after all, but a poor pitiful parody upon true ambition. The latter is a great and glorious principle, because, where it exists, it never fails to expand the heart, and to prompt it to the performance of all those actions that elevate our condition and dignify our nature. Had he experienced anything like such a feeling as this, or even the beautiful instincts of parental affection, he would not have neglected, as he did, the inculcation of all those virtues and principles which render education valuable, and prevent it from degenerating into an empty parade of mere accomplishments.

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It is true, Sir Thomas Gourlay enjoyed the reputation of being an admirable father, and, indeed, from mere worldly principle he was so, and we presume gave himself credit for being so. In the mean time, our readers are to learn that earth scarcely contained a man who possessed a greedier or more rapacious spirit; and, if ever the demon of envy, especially with respect to the possession of wealth and property, tortured the soul of a human being, it did that of our baronet. His whole spirit, in fact, was dark, mean, and intensely selfish; and for this reason, it was a fearful thing for any one to stand in his way when in the execution of his sordid projects, much less to attempt his defeat in their attainment. Reckless and unscrupulous, he left no means unattempted, however odious and wicked, to crush those who offended him, or such as stood in the way of his love of wealth and ambition.

For some minutes after the perusal of the anonymous letter, one would have imagined that the image which met his gaze, from time to time, in the looking-glass, was that of his worst and deadliest enemy, so fierce and menacing were the glances which he cast on it as he paced the floor. At length he took up the document, and, having read it again, exclaimed:

“Perhaps, after all, I’m angry to no purpose; certainly to no purpose, in one sense, I am, inasmuch as I know not who this anonymous person is. But stay, let me be cautious—is there such a person? May this communication not be a false one—written to mislead or provoke me? Lucy knows that I am determined she shall marry Lord Dunroe, and I am not aware that she entertains any peculiar objection to him. In the mean time, I will have some conversation with her, in order to ascertain what her present and immediate feeling on the subject is. It is right that I should see my way in this.”

He accordingly rang the bell, when a well-powdered footman, in rich livery, entered.

“Let Miss Gourlay understand that I wish to see her.”

This he uttered in a loud, sharp tone of voice, for it was in such he uniformly addressed his dependents.

The lackey bowed and withdrew, and, in the course of a few minutes, his daughter entered the study, and stood before him. At the first glance, she saw that something had discomposed him, and felt a kind of instinctive impression that it was more or less connected with herself.

Seldom, indeed, was such a contrast between man and woman ever witnessed, as that which presented itself on this occasion. There stood the large, ungainly, almost misshapen father, with a countenance distorted, by the consequences of ill-suppressed passion, into a deeper deformity—a deformity that was rendered ludicrously hideous, by a squint that gave, as we have said, to one of his eyes, as he looked at her, the almost

literal expression of a dagger. Before him, on the other hand, stood a girl, whose stature was above the middle height, with a form that

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breathed of elegance, ease, and that exquisite grace which marks every look, and word, and motion of the high-minded and accomplished lady. Indeed, one would imagine that her appearance would have soothed and tranquillized the anger of any parent capable of feeling that glowing and prideful tenderness, with which such an exquisitely beautiful creature was calculated to fill a parent's heart. Lucy Gourlay was a dark beauty—a brunette so richly tinted, that the glow of her cheek was only surpassed by the flashing brilliancy of her large, dark eyes, that seemed, in those glorious manifestations, to kindle with inspiration. Her forehead was eminently intellectual, and her general temperament—Celtic by the mother's side—was remarkable for those fascinating transitions of spirit which passed over her countenance like the gloom and sunshine of the early summer. Nothing could be more delightful, nor, at the same time, more dangerous, than to watch that countenance whilst moving under the influence of melancholy, and to observe how quickly the depths of feeling, or the impulses of tenderness, threw their delicious shadows into its expression—unless, indeed, to watch the same face when lit up by humor, and animated into radiance by mirth. Such is a faint outline of Lucy Gourlay, who, whether in shadow or whether in light, was equally captivating and irresistible.

On entering the room, her father, incapable of appreciating even the natural graced and beauty of her person, looked at her with a gaze of sternness and inquiry for some moments, but seemed at a loss in what terms to address her. She, however, spoke first, simply saying:

"Has anything discomposed you, papa?"

"I have been discomposed, Miss Gourlay"—for he seldom addressed her as Lucy—"and I wish to have some serious conversation with you. Pray be seated."

Lucy sat.

"I trust, Miss Gourlay," he proceeded, in a style partly interrogatory and partly didactic—-"I trust you are perfectly sensible that a child like you owes full and unlimited obedience to her parents."

"So long, at least, sir, as her parents exact no duties from her that are either unreasonable or unjust, or calculated to destroy her own happiness. With these limitations, I reply in the affirmative."

"A girl like you, Miss Gourlay, has no right to make exceptions. Your want of experience, which is only another name for your ignorance of life, renders you incompetent to form an estimate of what constitutes, or may constitute, your happiness."

“Happiness!—in what sense, sir?”

“In any sense, madam.”

“Madam!” she replied, with much feeling. “Dear papa—if you will allow me to call you so—why address me in a tone of such coldness, if not of severity? All I ask of you is, that, when you do honor me by an interview, you will remember that I am your daughter, and not speak to me as you would to an utter stranger.”

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“The tone which I may assume toward you, Miss Gourlay, must be regulated by your own obedience.”

“But in what have I ever failed in obedience to you, my dear papa?”

“Perhaps you compliment your obedience prematurely, Lucy—it has never yet been seriously tested.”

Her beautiful face crimsoned at this assertion; for she well knew that many a severe imposition had been placed upon her during girlhood, and that, had she been any other girl than she was, her very youth would have been forced into opposition to commands that originated in whim, caprice, and selfishness. Even when countenanced, however, by the authority of her other parent, and absolutely urged against compliance with injunctions that were often cruel and oppressive, she preferred, at any risk, to accommodate herself to them rather than become the cause of estrangement or ill-feeling between him and her mother, or her mother’s friends. Such a charge as this, then, was not only ungenerous, but, as he must have well known, utterly unfounded.

“I do not wish, sir,” she replied, “to make any allusion to the past, unless simply to say, that, if severe and trying instances of obedience have been exacted from me, under very peculiar circumstances, I trust I have not been found wanting in my duty to you.”

“That obedience, Miss Gourlay, which is reluctantly given, had better been forgotten.”

“You have forced me to remember it in my own defence, papa; but I am not conscious that it was reluctant.”

“You contradict me, madam.”

“No, sir; I only take the liberty of setting you right. My obedience, if you recollect, was cheerful; for I did not wish to occasion ill-will between you and mamma—my dear mamma.”

“I believe you considered that you had only one parent, Miss Gourlay?”

“That loved me, sir, you would add. But, papa, why should there be such a dialogue as this between you and your daughter—your orphan daughter, and your only child? It is not natural, Something, I see, has discomposed your temper; I am ignorant of it.”

“I made you aware, some time ago, that the Earl of Cullamore and I had entered into a matrimonial arrangement between you and his son, Lord Dunroe.”

A deadly paleness settled upon her countenance at these words—a paleness the more obvious, as it contrasted so strongly with the previous rich hue of her complexion, which had been already heightened by the wanton harshness of her father’s manner. The

baronet's eyes, or rather his eye, was fixed upon her with a severity which this incident rapidly increased.

"You grow pale, Miss Gourlay; and there seems to be something in this allusion to Lord Dunroe that is painful to you. How is this, madam? I do not understand it."

"I am, indeed, pale, and I feel that I am; for what is there that could drive the hue of modesty from the cheek of a daughter, sooner than the fact of her own father purposing to unite her to a profligate? You seldom jest, papa; but I hope you do so now."

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“I am not disposed to make a jest of your happiness, Miss Gourlay.”

“Nor of my misery, papa. You surely cannot but know—nay, you cannot but feel—that a marriage between me and Lord Dunroe is impossible. His profligacy is so gross, that his very name is indelicate in the mouth of a modest woman. And is this the man to whom you would unite your only child and daughter? But I trust you still jest, sir. As a man, and a gentleman, much less as a parent, you would not think seriously of making such a proposal to me?”

“All very fine sentiment—very fine stuff and nonsense, madam; the young man is a little wild—somewhat lavish in expenditure—and for the present not very select in the company he keeps; but he is no fool, as they say, and we all know how marriage reforms a man, and thoroughly sobers him down.”

“Often at the expense, papa,” she replied with tears, “of many a broken heart. That surely, is not a happy argument; for, perhaps, after all, I should, like others, become but a victim to my ineffectual efforts at his reformation.”

“There is one thing, Miss Gourlay, you are certain to become, and that is, Countess of Cullamore, at his father’s death. Remember this; and. remember also, that, victim or no victim, I am determined you shall marry him. Yes, you shall marry him,” he added, stamping with vehemence, “or be turned a beggar upon the world. Become a victim, indeed! Begone, madam, to your room, and prepare for that obedience which your mother never taught you.”

She rose as he spoke, and with a graceful inclination of her head, silently withdrew.

This dialogue caused both father and daughter much pain. Certain portions of it, especially near the close, were calculated to force upon the memory of each, analogies that were as distressing to the warm-hearted girl, as they were embarrassing to her parent. The truth was, that her mother, then a year dead, had indeed become a victim to the moral profligacy of a man in whose character there existed nothing whatsoever to compensate her for the utter absence of domestic affection in all its phases. His principal vices, so far as they affected the peace of his family, were a brutal temper, and a most scandalous dishonesty in pecuniary transactions, especially in his intercourse with his own tenantry and tradesmen. Of moral obligation he seemed to possess no sense or impression whatever. A single day never occurred in which he was not guilty of some most dishonorable violation of his word to the poor, and those who were dependent on him. Ill-temper therefore toward herself, and the necessity of constantly witnessing a series of vile and unmanly frauds upon a miserable scale, together with her incessant efforts to instil into his mind some slight principle of common integrity, had, during an unhappy life, so completely harassed a mind naturally pure and gentle, and a constitution never strong, that, as her daughter hinted, and as every one intimate with the family knew, she literally fell a victim to the vices we have named, and the incessant

anxiety they occasioned her. These analogies, then, when unconsciously alluded to by his daughter, brought tears to her eyes, and he felt that the very grief she evinced was an indirect reproach to himself.

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“Now,” he exclaimed, after she had gone, “it is clear, I think, that the girl entertains something more than a mere moral objection to this match. I would have taxed her with some previous engagement, but that I fear it would be premature to do so at present. Dunroe is wild, no doubt of it; but I cannot believe that women, who are naturally vain and fond of display, feel so much alarm at this as they pretend. I never did myself care much about the sex, and seldom had an opportunity of studying their general character, or testing their principles; but still I incline to the opinion, that, where there is not a previous engagement, rank and wealth will, for the most part, outweigh every other consideration. In the meantime I will ride into Ballytrain, and reconnoitre a little. Perhaps the contents, of this communication are true—perhaps not; but, at all events, it can be no harm to look about me in a quiet way.”

He then read the letter a third time—examined the handwriting closely—locked it in a private drawer—rang the bell—ordered his horse—and in a few minutes was about to proceed to the “Mitre” inn, in order to make secret inquiries after such persons as he might find located in that or the other establishments of the town. At this moment, his daughter once more entered the apartment, her face glowing with deep agitation, and her large, mellow eyes lit up with a fixed, and, if one could judge, a lofty purpose. Her reception, we need hardly say, was severe and harsh.

“How, madam,” he exclaimed, “did I not order you to your room? Do you return to bandy undutiful hints and arguments with me?”

“Father,” said she, “I am not ignorant, alas! of your stern and indomitable character; but, upon the subject of forced and unsuitable matches, I may and I do appeal directly to the experience of your own married life, and of that of my beloved mother. She was, unhappily for herself—”

“And for me, Miss Gourlay—”

“Well, perhaps so; but if ever woman was qualified to make a man happy, she was. At all events, sir, unhappily she was forced into marriage with you, and you deliberately took to your bosom a reluctant bride. She possessed extraordinary beauty, and a large fortune. I, however, am not about to enter into your heart, or analyze its motives; it is enough to say that, although she had no previous engagement or affection for any other, she was literally dragged by the force of parental authority into a union with you. The consequence was, that her whole life, owing to—to—the unsuitableness of your tempers, and the strongly-contrasted materials which formed your characters, was one of almost unexampled suffering and sorrow. With this example before my eyes, and with the memory of it brooding over and darkening your own heart—yes, papa—my dear papa, let me call you with the full and most distressing recollections connected with it strong upon both of us, let me entreat and implore that you will not urge nor force me into a union with this hateful and repulsive profligate. I go upon my knees to you, and

entreat, as you regard my happiness, my honor, and my future peace of mind, that you will not attempt to unite me to this most unprincipled and dishonorable young man."

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Her father's brow grew black as a thunder-cloud; the veins of his temples swelled up, as if they had been filled with ink, and, after a few hasty strides through the study, he turned upon her such a look of fury as we need not attempt to describe.

"Miss Gourlay," said he, in a voice dreadfully deep and stern, "there is not an allusion made in that undutiful harangue—for so I must call it—that does not determine me to accomplish my purpose in effecting this union. If your mother was unhappy, the fault lay in her own weak and morbid temper. As for me, I now tell you, once for all, that your destiny is either beggary or a coronet; on that I am resolved!"

She stood before him like one who had drawn strength from the full knowledge of her fate. Her face, it is true, had become pale, but it was the paleness of a calm but lofty spirit, and she replied, with a full and clear voice:

"I said, sir—for I had her own sacred assurance for it—that my mother, when she married you, had no previous engagement; it is not so with your daughter—my affections are fixed upon another."

There are some natures so essentially tyrannical, and to whom resistance is a matter of such extraordinary novelty, that its manifestation absolutely surprises them out of their natural character. In this manner Sir Thomas Gourlay was affected. Instead of flying into a fresh hurricane of rage, he felt so completely astounded, that he was only capable of turning round to her, and asking, in a voice unusually calm:

"Pray name him, Miss Gourlay."

"In that, sir, you will excuse me—for the present. The day may come, and I trust soon will, when I can do so with honor. And now, sir, having considered it my duty not to conceal this fact from your knowledge, I will, with your permission, withdraw to my own apartment."

She paid him, with her own peculiar grace, the usual obeisance, and left the room. The stem and overbearing Sir Thomas Gourlay now felt himself so completely taken aback by her extraordinary candor and firmness, that he was only able to stand and look after her in silent amazement.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "I have reason to thank her for this important piece of information. She has herself admitted a previous attachment. So far my doubts are cleared up, and I feel perfectly certain that the anonymous information is correct. It now remains for me to find out who the object of this attachment is. I have no doubt that he is in the neighborhood; and, if so, I shall know how to manage him."

He then mounted his horse, and rode into Ballytrain, with what purpose it is now unnecessary, we trust, to trouble the reader at farther length.

CHAPTER V. Sir Thomas Gourlay fails in unmasking the Stranger

—Mysterious Conduct of Fenton

When Sir Thomas Gourlay, after the delay of better than an hour in town, entered the coffee-room of the “Mitre,” he was immediately attended by the landlord himself.

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“Who is this new guest you have got, landlord,” inquired the baronet—“They tell me he is a very mysterious gentleman, and that no one can discover his name. Do! you know anything about him?”

“De’il a syllable, Sir Tammas,” replied the landlord, who was a northern—“How ir you, Counsellor Crackenfudge,” he added, speaking to a person who passed upstairs—-“There he goes,” proceeded Jack the landlord—“a nice boy. But do you know, Sir Tammas, why he changed his name to Crackenfudge?”

Sir Thomas’s face at this moment, had grown frightful. While the landlord was speaking, the baronet, attracted by the noise of a carriage passing, turned to observe it, just at the moment when his daughter was bowing so significantly to the stranger in the window over them, as we have before stated. Here was a new light thrown upon the mystery or mysteries by which he felt himself surrounded on all hands. The strange guest in the Mitre inn, was then, beyond question, the very individual alluded to in the anonymous letter. The baronet’s face had, in the scowl of wrath, got black, as mine host was speaking. This expression, however, gradually diminished in the darkness of that wrathful shadow which lay over it. After a severe internal struggle with his tremendous passions, he at length seemed to cool down. His face became totally changed; and in a few minutes of silence and struggle, it passed from the blackness of almost ungovernable rage to a pallid hue, that might not most aptly be compared to the summit of a volcano covered with snow, when about to project its most awful and formidable eruptions.

The landlord, while putting the question to the baronet, turned his sharp, piercing eyes upon him, and, at a single glance, perceived that something had unusually moved him.

“Sir Tammas,” said he, “there is no use in denyin’ it, now—the blood’s disturbed in you.”

“Give your guest my compliments—Sir Thomas Gourlay’s compliments—and I should feel obliged by a short interview.”

On going up, Jack found the stranger and Fenton as we have already described them—“Sir,” said he, addressing the former—“there’s a gentleman below who wishes to know who you ir.”

“Who I am!” returned the other, quite unmoved; “and, pray who may he be?”

“Sir Tammas Gourlay; an’ all tell you what, if you don’t wish to see him, why don’t see him. A ‘ll take him the message, an’ if there’s anything about you that you don’t wish to be known or heard, make him keep his distance. He’s this minute in a de’il of a passion about something, an’ was comin’ up as if he’d ait you without salt, but a’ would n’t allow it; so, if you don’t wish to see him, am the boy won’t be afeard to say so. He’s not coming as a friend, a’ can tell you.”

“Sir Thomas Gourlay’s in the house, then,” said the stranger, with a good deal of surprise. He then paused for some time, and, during this pause, he very naturally concluded that the baronet had witnessed his daughter’s bow, so cautiously and significantly made to himself as she passed. Whilst he turned over these matters in his mind, the landlord addressed Fenton as follows:

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“You can go to another room, Fenton. A’m glad to see you in a decent suit of clothes, any way—a’ hope you’ll take yourself up, and avoid drink and low company; for de’il a haet good ever the same two brought anybody; but, before you go, a’ll give you a gless o’ grog to drink the Glorious Memory. Come, now, tramp, like a good fellow.”

“I have a particular wish,” said the stranger, “that Mr. Fenton should remain; and say to Sir Thomas Gourlay that I am ready to see him.”

“A’ say, then,” said Jack, in a friendly whisper, “be on your edge with him, for, if he finds you saft, the very de’il won’t stand him.”

“The gentleman, Sir Tammas,” said Jack, on going down stairs, “will be glad to see you. He’s overhead.”

Fenton, himself, on hearing that Sir Thomas was about to come up, prepared to depart; but the other besought him so earnestly to stay, that he consented, although with evident reluctance. He brought his chair over to a corner of the room, as if he wished to be as much out of the way as possible, or, it may be, as far from Sir Thomas’s eye, as the size of the apartment would permit. Be this as it may, Sir Thomas entered, and brought his ungainly person nearly to the centre of the room before he spoke. At length he did so, but took care not to accompany his words with that courtesy of manner, or those rules of good-breeding, which ever prevail among gentlemen, whether as friends or foes. After standing for a moment, he glanced from the one to the other, his face still hideously pale; and ultimately, fixing his eye upon the stranger, he viewed him from head to foot, and again from foot to head, with a look of such contemptuous curiosity, as certainly was strongly calculated to excite the stranger’s indignation. Finding the baronet spoke not, the other did.

“To what am I to attribute the honor of this visit, sir?”

Sir Thomas even then did not speak, but still kept looking at him with the expression we have described. At length he did speak:

“You have been residing for some time in our neighborhood, sir.” The stranger simply bowed.

“May I ask how long?”

“I have the honor, I believe, of addressing Sir Thomas Gourlay?”

“Yes, you have that honor.”

“And may I beg to know his object in paying me this unceremonious visit, in which he does not condescend either to announce himself, or to observe the usual rules of good-breeding?”

“From my rank and known position in this part of the country, and in my capacity also as a magistrate, sir,” replied the baronet, “I’m entitled to make such inquiries as I may deem necessary from those who appear here under suspicious circumstances.”

“Perhaps you may think so, but I am of opinion, sir, that you would consult the honor of the rank and position you allude to much more effectually, by letting such inquiries fall within the proper province of the executive officers of law, whenever you think there is a necessity for it.”

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“Excuse me, but, in that manner, I shall follow my own judgment, not yours.”

“And under what circumstances of suspicion do you deem me to stand at present?”

“Very strong circumstances. You have been now living here nearly a week, in a privacy which no gentleman would ever think of observing. You have hemmed yourself in by a mystery, sir; you have studiously concealed your name—your connections—and defaced every mark by which you could be known or traced. This, sir, is not the conduct of a gentleman; and argues either actual or premeditated guilt.”

“You seem heated, sir, and you also reason in resentment, whatever may have occasioned it. And so a gentleman is not to make an excursion to a country town in a quiet way—perhaps to recruit his health, perhaps to relax his mind, perhaps to gratify a whim—but he must be pounced upon by some outrageous dispenser of magisterial justice, who thinks, that, because he wishes to live quietly and unknown, he must be some cutthroat, or raw-head-and-bloody-bones coming to eat half the country?”

“I dare say, sir, that is all very fine, and very humorous; but when these mysterious vagabonds—”

The eye of the stranger blazed; lightning itself, in fact, was not quicker than the fire which gleamed from it, as the baronet uttered the last words. He walked over deliberately, but with a step replete with energy and determination:

“How, sir,” said he, “do you dare to apply such an expression to me?”

The baronet’s eye quailed. He paused a moment, during which he could perceive that the stranger had a spirit not to be tampered with.

“No, sir,” he replied, “not exactly to you, but when persons such as you come in this skulking way, probably for the purpose of insinuating themselves into families of rank—”

“Have I, sir, attempted to insinuate myself into yours,” asked the stranger, interrupting him.

“When such persons come under circumstances of strong suspicion,” said the other, without replying to him, “it is the business of every gentleman in the country to keep a vigilant eye upon them.”

“I shall hold myself accountable to no such gentleman,” replied the stranger; “but will consider every man, no matter what his rank or character may be, as unwarrantably impertinent, who arrogantly attempts to intrude himself in affairs that don’t—” he was about to add, “that don’t concern him,” when he paused, and added, “into any man’s affairs. Every man has a right to travel incognito, and to live incognito, if he chooses; and, on that account, sir, so long as I wish to maintain mine, I shall allow no man to

assume the right of penetrating it. If this has been the object of your visit, you will much oblige me by relinquishing the one, and putting an end to the other, as soon as may be."

"As a magistrate, sir, I demand to know your name," said the baronet, who thought that, in the stranger's momentary hesitation, he had observed symptoms of yielding.

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“As an independent man, sir, and a gentleman, I shall not answer such a question.”

“You brave me, sir—you defy me.” continued the other, his face still pale, but baleful in its expression.

“Yes, sir,” replied the other, “I brave you—I defy you.”

“Very well, sir,” returned the baronet—“remember these words.”

“I am not in the habit of forgetting anything that a man of spirit ought to remember,” said the other—“I have the honor of wishing you a good-morning.”

The baronet withdrew in a passion that had risen to red heat, and was proceeding to mount his horse at the door, when Counsellor Crackenfudge, who had followed him downstairs, thus addressed him:

“I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas; I happened to be sitting in the back-room while you were speaking to that strange fellow above; I pledge you my honor I did not listen; but I could not help overhearing, you know—well, Sir Thomas, I can tell you something about him.”

“How!” said the baronet, whose eye I gleamed with delight—“Can you, in truth, tell me anything about him, Mr. Crackenfudge? You will oblige me very much if you do.”

“I will tell you all I know about him, Sir Thomas,” replied the worthy counsellor; “and that is, that I know he has paid many secret visits to Mr. Birney the attorney.”

“To Birney!” exclaimed the other; and, as he spoke, he seemed actually to stagger back a step or two, whilst the paleness of his complexion increased to a hue that was ghastly—“to Birney!—to my blackest and bitterest enemy—to the man who, I suspect, has important family documents of mine in his possession. Thanks, even for this, Crackenfudge—you are looking to become of the peace. Hearken now; aid me in ferreting out this lurking scoundrel, and I shall not forget your wishes.” He then rode homewards.

The stranger, during this stormy dialogue with Sir Thomas Gourlay, turned his eye, from time to time, toward Fenton, who appeared to have lost consciousness itself so long as the baronet was in the room. On the departure, however, of that gentleman, he went over to him, and said:

“Why, Fenton, what’s the matter?” Fenton looked at him with a face of great distress, from which the perspiration was pouring, but seemed utterly unable to speak.

CHAPTER VI. Extraordinary Scene between Fenton and the Stranger.

The character of Fenton was one that presented an extraordinary variety of phases. With the exception of the firmness and pertinacity with which he kept the mysterious secret of his origin and identity—that is, if he himself knew them, he was never known to maintain the same moral temperament for a week together. Never did there exist a being so capricious and unstable. At one time, you found him all ingenuousness and candor; at another, no earthly power could extort a syllable of truth from his lips. For whole days, if not

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for weeks together, he dealt in nothing but the wildest fiction, and the most extraordinary and grotesque rodomontade. The consequence was, that no reliance could be placed on anything he said or asserted. And yet—which appeared to be rather unaccountable in such a character—it could be frequently observed that he was subject to occasional periods of the deepest dejection. During those painful and gloomy visitations, he avoided all intercourse with his fellow-men, took to wandering through the country—-rarely spoke to anybody, whether stranger or acquaintance, but maintained the strictest and most extraordinary silence. If he passed a house at meal-time he entered, and, without either preface or apology, quietly sat down and joined them. To this freedom on his part, in a country so hospitable as Ireland in the days of her prosperity was, and could afford to be, no one ever thought of objecting.

“It was,” observed the people, “only the poor young gentleman who is not right in the head.”

So that the very malady which they imputed to him was only a passport to their kindness and compassion. Fenton had no fixed residence, nor any available means of support, save the compassionate and generous interest which the inhabitants of Ballytrain took in him, in consequence of those gentlemanly manners which he could assume whenever he wished, and the desolate position in which some unknown train of circumstances had unfortunately placed him.

When laboring under these depressing moods to which we have alluded, his memory seemed filled with recollections that, so far as appearances went, absolutely stupefied his heart by the heaviness of the suffering they occasioned it; and, when that heart, therefore, sank as far as its powers of endurance could withstand this depression, he uniformly had recourse to the dangerous relief afforded by indulgence in the fiery stimulant of liquor, to which he was at all times addicted.

Such is a slightly detailed sketch of an individual whose fate is deeply involved in the incidents and progress of our narrative.

The horror which we have described as having fallen upon this unfortunate young man, during Sir Thomas Gourlay’s stormy interview with the stranger, so far from subsiding, as might be supposed, after his departure, assumed the shape of something bordering on insanity. On looking at his companion, the wild but deep expression of his eyes began to change into one of absolute frenzy, a circumstance which could not escape the stranger’s observation, and which, placed as he was in the pursuit of an important secret, awoke a still deeper interest, whilst at the same time it occasioned him much pain.

“Mr. Fenton,” said he, “I certainly have no wish, by any proceeding incompatible with an ungentlemanly feeling of impertinent curiosity, to become acquainted with the cause of this unusual excitement, which the appearance of Miss Gourlay and her father seems to produce upon you, unless in so far as its disclosure, in honorable confidence, might enable me, as a person sincerely your friend, to allay or remove it.”

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“Suppose, sir, you are mistaken.” replied the other—“Do you not know that there are memories arising from association, that are touched and kindled into great pain, by objects that are by no means the direct cause of them, or the cause of them in any sense?”

“I admit the truth of what you say, Mr. Fenton; but we can only draw our first inferences from appearances. It is not from any idle or prurient desire to become acquainted with the cause of your emotion that I speak, but simply from a wish to serve you, if you will permit me. It is distressing to witness what you suffer.”

“I have experienced,” said Fenton, whose excitement seemed not only to rise as he proceeded, but in a considerable degree to give that fervor and elevation to his language, which excitement often gives; “yes, sir,” he proceeded, his eyes kindling almost into fury, “I have experienced much treacherous and malignant sympathy, under the guise of pretended friendship—sympathy! why do I say sympathy? Persecution—-vengeance. Yes, sir, till I have become mad—or—or nearly so. No,” he added, “I am not mad—I never was mad—but I understand your object—avaunt, sir—begone—or I shall throw you out of the window.”

“Be calm, Mr. Fenton—be calm,” replied the stranger, “and collect yourself. I am, indeed, sincerely your friend.”

“Who told you, sir, that I was mad?”

“I never said so, Mr. Fenton.”

“It matters not, sir—you are a traitor—and as such I denounce you. This room is mine, sir, and I shall forthwith expel you from it—” and, as he spoke, he started up, and sprung at the stranger, who, on seeing him rise for the purpose, instantly rang the bell. The waiter immediately entered, and found the latter holding poor Fenton by the two wrists, and with such a tremendous grasp as made him feel like an infant, in point of strength, in his hands.

“This is unmeaning violence, sir,” exclaimed the latter, calmly but firmly, “unless you explain yourself, and give a reason for it. If you are moved by any peculiar cause of horror, or apprehension, or danger, why not enable me to understand it, in order that you may feel assured of my anxious disposition to assist you?”

“Gintlemen,” exclaimed Paudeen, “what in the name of Pether White and Billy Neelins is the reason of this? But I needn’t ax—it’s one of Mr. Fenton’s tantrams—an’ the occasion of it was, lying snug and warm this mornin’, in one of Andy Trimble’s whiskey barrels. For shame, Mr. Fenton, you they say a gintleman born, and to thrate one of your own rank—a gintleman that befriended you as he did, and put a daicint shoot of clo’es on your miserable carcase; when you know that before he did it, if the wind was

blowing from the thirty-two points of the compass, you had an openin' for every point, if they wor double the number. Troth, now, you're ongrateful, an' if God hasn't said it, you'll thravel from an onpenitent death-bed yet. Be quiet, will you, or my sinful sowl to glory, but I'll bundle you downstairs?"

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“He will be quiet, Pat,” said the stranger. “In truth, after all, this is a mere physical malady, Mr. Fenton, and will pass away immediately, if you will only sit down and collect yourself a little.”

Fenton, however, made another unavailable attempt at struggle, and found that he was only exhausting himself to no purpose. All at once, or rather following up his previous suspicions, he seemed to look upon the powerful individual who held him, as a person who had become suddenly invested with a new character that increased his terrors; and yet, if we may say so, almost forced him into an anxiety to suppress their manifestation. His limbs, however, began to tremble excessively; his eyes absolutely dilated, and became filled by a sense of terror, nearly as wild as despair itself. The transitions of his temper, however, like those of his general conduct, supervened upon each other with remarkable rapidity, and, as it were, the result of quick, warm, and inconsiderate impulses.

“Well,” he exclaimed at length, “I will be quiet, I am, I assure you, perfectly harmless; but, at the same time,” he added, sitting down, “I know that the whole dialogue between you and that awful-looking man, was a plot laid for me. Why else did you insist on my being present at it? This accounts for your giving me a paltry sum of money, too—it does, sir—and for your spurious and dishonest humanity in wishing to see me well clothed. Yes, I perceive it all; but, let what may happen, I will not wear these clothes any longer. They are not the offering of a generous heart, but the fraudulent pretext for insinuating yourself into my confidence, in order to—to—yes, but I shall not say it—it is enough that I know you, sir—that I see through, and penetrate your designs.”

He was about to put his threat with respect to the clothes into instant execution, when the stranger, once more seizing him, exclaimed—“You must promise, Mr. Fenton, before you leave my grasp, that you will make no further attempt to tear off your dress. I insist on this;” and as he spoke he fixed his eye sternly and commandingly on that of Fenton.

“I will not attempt it,” replied the latter; “I promise it, on the word of a gentleman.”

“There, then,” said the stranger—“Keep yourself quiet, and, mark me, I shall expect that you will not violate that word, nor yield to these weak and silly paroxysms.”

Fenton merely nodded submissively, and the other proceeded, still with a view of sounding him: “You say you know me; if so, who and what am I?”

“Do not ask me to speak at further length,” replied Fenton; “I am quite exhausted, and I know not what I said.”

He appeared now somewhat calmer, or, at least, affected to be so. By his manner, however, it would appear that some peculiar opinion or apprehension, with reference either to the baronet or the stranger, seemed as if confirmed, whilst, at the same time,

acting under one of his rapid transitions, he spoke and looked like a man who was influenced by new motives. He then withdrew in a mood somewhat between sullenness and regret.

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When the stranger was left to himself, he paced the room some time in a state of much anxiety, if not distress. At length he sat down, and, leaning his head upon his hand, exclaimed unconsciously aloud:

“Alas! I fear this search is vain. The faint traces of imaginary resemblance, which I thought I had discovered in this young man’s features, are visible no longer. It is; true, this portrait,” looking once more at the miniature, “was taken when the original was only a child of five years; but still it was remarked that the family resemblances were, from childhood up, both strong and striking. Then, this unfortunate person is perfectly inscrutable, and not to be managed by any ordinary procedure at present intelligible to me. Yet,—after all, as far as I have been able to conjecture, there is a strong similarity in the cases. The feeling among the people here is, that he is a gentleman by birth: but this may proceed from the air and manners which he can assume when he pleases. I would mention my whole design and object at hazard, but this would be running an unnecessary risk by intrusting my secret to him; and, although it is evident that he can preserve his own, it does not necessarily follow that he would keep mine. However, I must only persevere and bide my time, as the Scotch say.”

He again rose, and, pacing the apartment once more, his features assumed a still deeper expression of inward agitation.

“And, again,” he exclaimed, “that unfortunate rencounter! Great Heavens, what if I stand here a murderer, with the blood of a fellow-creature, hurried, I fear, in the very midst of his profligacy, into eternity! The thought is insupportable; and I know not, unless I can strictly preserve my incognito, whether I am at this moment liable, if apprehended, to pay the penalty which the law exacts. The only consolation that remains for me is, that the act was not of my seeking, but arrogantly and imperiously forced upon me.”

CHAPTER VII. The Baronet attempts by Falsehood

The Baronet attempts by Falsehood to urge his Daughter into an Avowal of her Lover’s Name.

Sir Thomas Gourlay, after his unpleasant interview with the stranger, rode easily home, meditating upon some feasible plan by which he hoped to succeed in entrapping his daughter into the avowal of her lover’s name, for he had no doubt whatsoever that the gentleman at the inn and he were one and the same individual. For this purpose, he determined to put on a cheerful face, and assume, as far as in him lay, an air of uncommon satisfaction. Now this was a task of no ordinary difficulty for Sir Thomas to encounter. The expression of all the fiercer and darker passions was natural to such a countenance as his; but even to imagine such a one lit up with mirth, was to conceive

an image so grotesque and ridiculous, that the firmest gravity must give way before it. His frown was

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a thing perfectly intelligible, but to witness his smile, or rather his effort at one, was to witness an unnatural phenomenon of the most awful kind, and little short of a prodigy. If one could suppose the sun giving a melancholy and lugubrious grin through the darkness of a total eclipse, they might form some conception of the jocular solemnity which threw its deep but comic shadow over his visage. One might expect the whole machinery of the face, with as much probability as that of a mill, to change its habitual motions, and turn in an opposite direction. It seemed, in fact, as if a general breaking up of the countenance was about to take place, and that the several features, like a crew of thieves and vagabonds flying from the officers of justice, were all determined to provide for themselves.

Lucy saw at a glance that her father was about to get into one of those tender and complacent moods which were few and far between, and, made wise by experience, she very properly conjectured, from his appearance, that some deep design was concealed under it. Anxious, therefore, to avoid a prolonged dialogue, and feeling, besides, her natural candor and invincible love of truth to a certain extent outraged by this treacherous assumption of cordiality, she resolved to commence the conversation.

“Has anything agreeable happened; papa?”

“Agreeable, Lucy, ahem!—why, yes—something agreeable has happened. Now, Lucy, poor foolish girl, would it not have been better to have placed confidence in me with respect to this lover of yours? Who can feel the same interest in your happiness that I do?”

“None, certainly, sir; unless some one whose happiness may probably depend on mine.”

“Yes, your lover—well, that now is a natural enough distinction; but still, you foolish, naughty girl, don’t you know that you are to inherit my wealth and property, and that they will make you happy? You silly thing, there’s a truth for you.”

“Were you yourself happy, papa, when we separated this morning? Are you happy this moment? Are you generally happy? Is there no rankling anxiety—no project of ambition—no bitter recollection corroding your heart? Does the untimely loss of my young brother, who would have represented and sustained your name, never press heavily upon it? I ask again, Papa, are you generally happy? Yet you are in possession of all the wealth and property you speak of.”

“Tut, nonsense, silly child! Nothing is more ridiculous than to hear a girl like you, that ought to have no will but mine, reasoning like a philosopher.”

“But, dear papa,” proceeded Lucy, “if you should persist in marrying me to a profligate, merely because he is a nobleman—oh, how often is that honorable name prostituted!—-and could give me a title, don’t you see how wretched I should be, and how completely your wealth and property would fail to secure my happiness?”

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“Very well argued, Lucy, only that you go upon wrong principles. To be sure, I know that young ladies—that is, very young and inexperienced ladies, somewhat like yourself, Lucy—have, or pretend to have—poor fools—a horror of marrying those they don’t love; and I am aware, besides, that a man might as well attempt to make a stream run up hill as combat them upon this topic. As for me, in spite of all my wealth and property—I say this in deference to you—I am really very happy this moment.”

“I am delighted to hear it, papa. May I ask, what has contributed to make you so?”

“I shall mention that presently; but, in the mean time, my theory on this subject is, that, instead of marrying for love, I would recommend only such persons to contract matrimony as entertain a kind of lurking aversion for each other. Let the parties commence with, say, a tolerably strong stock of honest hatred on both sides. Very well; they, are united. At first, there is a great deal of heroic grief, and much exquisite martyrdom on the part of the lady, whilst the gentleman is at once, if I may say so, indifferent and indignant. By and by, however, they become tired of this. The husband, who, as well as the wife, we shall suppose, has a strong spice of the devil in him, begins to entertain a kind of diabolical sympathy for the fire and temper she displays; while she, on the other hand, comes by degrees to admire in him that which she is conscious of possessing herself, that is to say, a sharp tongue and an energetic temperament. In this way, Lucy, they go on, until habit has become a second nature to them. The appetite for strife has been happily created. At length, they find themselves so completely captivated by it that it becomes the charm of their existence. Thenceforth a bewitching and discordant harmony prevails between them, and they entertain a kind of hostile affection for each other that is desperately delightful.”

“Why, you are quite a painter, papa; your picture is admirable; all it wants is truth and nature.”

“Thank you, Lucy; you are quite complimentary, and have made an artist of me, as artists now go. But is not this much more agreeable and animated than the sweet dalliance of a sugar-plum life, or the dull, monotonous existence resembling a Dutch canal, which we term connubial happiness?”

“Well, now, papa, suppose you were to hear me through?”

“Very well,” he replied; “I will.”

“I do not believe, sir, that life can present us with anything more beautiful and delightful than the union of two hearts, two minds, two souls, in pure and mutual affection, when that affection is founded upon something more durable than mere beauty or personal attraction—that is, when it is based upon esteem, and a thorough knowledge of the object we love.”

“Yes, Lucy; but remember there are such things as deceit, dissimulation, and hypocrisy in the world.”

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“Yes, and goodness, and candor, and honor, and truth, and fidelity, papa; do you remember that? When two beings, conscious, I say, of each other’s virtues—each other’s failings, if you will—are united in the bonds of true and pure affection, how could it happen that marriage, which is only the baptism of love upon the altar of the heart, should take away any of the tenderness of this attachment, especially when we reflect that its very emotions are happiness? Granting that love, in its romantic and ideal sense, may disappear after marriage, I have heard, and I believe, that it assumes a holier and still more tender spirit, and reappears under the sweeter and more beautiful form of domestic affection. The very consciousness, I should suppose, that our destinies, our hopes, our objects, our cares—in short, our joys and sorrows, are identical and mutual, to be shared with and by each other, and that all those delightful interchanges of a thousand nameless offices of tenderness that spring up from the on-going business of our own peculiar life—these alone, I can very well imagine, would constitute an enjoyment far higher, purer, holier, than mere romantic love. Then, papa, surely we are not to live solely for ourselves. There are the miseries and wants of others to be lessened or relieved, calamity to be mitigated, the pale and throbbing brow of sickness to be cooled, the heart of the poor and neglected to be sustained and cheered, and the limbs of the weary to be clothed and rested. Why, papa,” she proceeded, her, dark eye kindling at the noble picture of human duty she had drawn, “when we take into contemplation the delightful impression of two persons going thus, hand in hand, through life, joining in the discharge of their necessary duties, assisting their fellow-creatures, and diffusing good wherever they go—each strengthening and reflecting the virtues of the other, may we not well ask how they could look upon each other without feeling the highest and noblest spirit of tenderness, affection, and esteem?”

“O yes, I was right, Lucy; all romances, all imagination, all honeypot, with a streak of treacle here and there for the shading,” and, as he spoke, he committed another felony in the disguise of a horse-laugh, which, however, came only from the jaws out.

“But, papa,” she proceeded, anxious to change the subject and curtail the interview, “as I said, I trust something agreeable has happened; you seem in unusually good spirits.”

“Why, yes, Lucy,” he replied, setting his eyes upon her with an expression of good-humor that made her tremble—“yes, I was in Ballytrain, and had an interview with a friend of yours, who is stopping in the ‘Mitre.’ But, my dear, surely that is no reason why you should all at once grow so pale! I almost think that you have contracted a habit of becoming pale. I observed it this morning—I observe it now; but, after all, perhaps it is only a new method of blushing—the blush reversed—that is to say, blushing backwards. Come, you foolish girl, don’t be alarmed; your lover had more sense than you have, and knew when and where to place confidence.”

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He rose up now, and having taken a turn or two across the room, approached her, and in deep, earnest, and what he intended to be, and was, an impressive and startling voice, added:

“Yes, Miss Gourlay, he has told me all.”

Lucy looked at him, unmoved as to the information, for she knew it was false; but she left him nothing to complain of with—regard to her paleness now. In fact, she blushed deeply at the falsehood he attempted to impose upon her. The whole tenor and spirit of the conversation was instantly changed, and assumed for a moment a painful and disagreeable formality.

“To whom do you allude, sir.” she asked.

“To the gentleman, madam, to whom you bowed so graciously, and, let me add, significantly, to-day.”

“And may I beg to know, sir, what he has told you?”

“Have I not already said that he has told me all? Yes, madam, I have said so, I think. But come, Lucy,” he added, affecting to relax, “be a good girl; as you said, yourself, it should not be sir and madam between you and me. You are all I have in the world—my only child, and if I appear harsh to you, it is only because I love and am anxious to make you happy. Come, my dear child, put confidence in me, and rely upon my affection and generosity.”

Lucy was staggered for a moment, but only for a moment, for she thoroughly understood him.

“But, papa, if the gentleman you allude to has told you all, what is there left for me to confide to you?”

“Why, the truth is, Lucy, I was anxious to test his sincerity, and to have your version as well as his. He appears, certainly, to be a gentleman and a man of honor.”

“And if he be a man of honor, papa, how can you require such a test?”

“I said, observe, that he appears to be such; but, you know, a man may be mistaken in the estimate he forms of another in a first interview. Come, Lucy, do something to make me your friend.”

“My friend!” she replied, whilst the tears rose to her eyes. “Alas, papa, must I hear such language as this from a father’s lips? Should anything be necessary to make that father the friend of his only child? I know not how to reply to you, sir; you have placed me in a

position of almost unexampled distress and pain. I cannot, without an apparent want of respect and duty, give expression to what I know and feel."

"Why not, you foolish girl, especially when you see me in such good-humor? Take courage. You will find me more indulgent than you imagine. Imitate your lover yonder."

She looked at him, and her eyes sparkled through her tears with shame, but not merely with shame, for her heart was filled with such an indignant and oppressive sense of his falsehood as caused her to weep and sob aloud for two or three minutes.

"Come, my dear child, I repeat—imitate your lover yonder. Confess; but don't weep thus. Surely I am not harsh to you now?"

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“Papa,” she replied, wiping her eyes, “the confidence which you solicit, it is not in my power to bestow. Do not, therefore, press me on this subject. It is enough that I have already confessed to you that my affections are engaged. I will now add what perhaps I ought to have added before, that this was with the sanction of my dear mamma. Indeed, I would have said so, but that I was reluctant to occasion reflections from you incompatible with my affection for her memory.”

“Your mother, madam,” he added, his face blackening into the hue of his natural temper, “was always a poor, weak-minded woman. She was foolish, madam, and indiscreet, and has made you wicked—trained you up to hypocrisy, falsehood, and disobedience. Yes, madam, and in every instance where you go contrary to my will, you act upon her principles. Why do you not respect truth, Miss Gourlay?”

“Alas, sir!” she replied, stung and shocked by his unmanly reflections upon the memory of her mother, whilst her tears burst out afresh, “I am this moment weeping for my father’s disregard of it.”

“How, madam! I am a liar, am I? Oh, dutiful daughter!”

“Mamma, sir, was all truth, all goodness, all affection. She was at once an angel and a martyr, and I will not hear her blessed memory insulted by the very man who, above all others, ought to protect and revere it. I am not, papa, to be intimidated by looks. If it be our duty to defend the absent, is it not ten thousand times more so to defend the dead? Shall a daughter hear with acquiescence the memory of a mother, who would have died for her, loaded with obloquy and falsehood? No, sir! Menace and abuse myself as much as you wish, but I tell you, that while I have life and the power of speech, I will fling back, even into a father’s face, the falsehoods—the gross and unmanly falsehoods—with which he insults her tomb, and calumniates her memory and her virtues. Do not blame me, sir, for this language; I would be glad to honor you if I could; I beseech you, my father, enable me to do so.”

“I see you take a peculiar—a wanton pleasure in calling me a liar.”

“No, sir, I do not call you a liar; but I know you regard truth no farther than it serves your own purposes. Have you not told me just now, that the gentleman in the Mitre Inn has made certain disclosures to you concerning himself and me? And now, father, I ask you, is there one word of truth in this assertion? You know there is not. Have you not sought my confidence by a series of false pretences, and a relation of circumstances that were utterly without foundation? All this, however, though inexpressibly painful to me as your daughter, I could overlook without one word of reply; but I never will allow you to cast foul and cowardly reproach upon the memory of the best of mothers—upon the memory of a wife of whom, father, you were unworthy, and whom, to my own knowledge, your harshness and severity hurried into a premature grave. Oh, never did woman pay so dreadful a penalty for suffering herself to be forced into marriage with a

man she could not love, and who was unworthy of her affection! That, sir, was the only action of her life in which her daughter cannot, will not, imitate her."

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She rose to retire, but her father, now having relapsed into all his dark vehemence of temper, exclaimed—

“Now mark me, madam, before you go. I say you shall sleep under lock and key this night. I tell you that I shall use the most rigorous measures with you, the severest, the harshest, that I can devise, or I shall I break that stubborn will of yours. Do not imagine for one moment that you shall overcome me, or triumph in your disobedience. No, sooner than you should, I would break your spirit—I would break your heart”

“Be it so, sir. I am ready to suffer anything, provided only you will forbear to insult the memory of my mother.”

With these words she sought her own room, where she indulged in a long fit of bitter grief.

Sir Thomas Gourlay, in these painful contests of temper with his candid and high-minded daughter, was by no means so cool and able as when engaged in similar exercitations with strangers. The disadvantage against him in his broils with Lucy, arose from the fact that he had nothing in this respect to conceal from her. He felt that his natural temper and disposition were known, and that the assumption of any and every false aspect of character, must necessarily be seen through by her, and his hypocrisy detected and understood. Not so, however, with strangers. When manoeuvring with them, he could play, if not a deeper, at least a safer game; and of this he himself was perfectly conscious. Had his heart been capable of any noble or dignified emotion, he must necessarily have admired the greatness of his daughter’s mind, her indomitable love of truth, and the beautiful and undying tenderness with which her affection brooded over the memory of her mother. Selfishness, however, and that low ambition which places human happiness in the enjoyment of wealth, and honors, and empty titles, had so completely blinded him to the virtues of his daughter, and to the sacred character of his own duties as a father, bound by the first principles of nature to promote her happiness, without corrupting her virtues, or weakening her moral impressions—we say these things had so blinded him, and hardened his heart against all the purer duties and responsibilities of life, that he looked upon his daughter as a hardened, disobedient girl, dead to the influence of his own good—the ambition of the world—and insensible to the dignified position which awaited her among the votaries of rank and fashion. But, alas, poor man! how little did he know of the healthy and substantial virtues which confer upon those whose station lies in middle and in humble life, a benevolent and hearty consciousness of pure enjoyment, immeasurably superior to the hollow forms of life and conduct in aristocratic circles, which, like the tempting fruit of the Dead Sea, seem beautiful to the eye, but are nothing more, when tested by the common process of humanity, than ashes and bitterness to the taste. We do not now speak of a whole class, for wherever human nature is, it will have its virtues as well as its vices; But we talk of the system, which cannot be one of much happiness or generous feeling, so long as it separates itself from the general sympathies of mankind.

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CHAPTER VIII. The Fortune-Teller—An Equivocal Prediction.

The stranger's appearance at the "Mitre," and the incident which occurred there, were in a peculiar degree mortifying to the Black Baronet, for so he was generally called. At this precise period he had projected the close of the negotiation with respect to the contemplated marriage between Lucy and Lord Dunroe. Lord Cullamore, whose residence was only a few miles from Red Hall, had been for some time in delicate health, but he was now sufficiently recovered to enter upon the negotiation proposed, to which, were it not for certain reasons that will subsequently appear, he had, in truth, no great relish; and this, principally on Lucy Gourlay's account, and with a view to her future happiness, which he did not think had any great chance of being promoted by a matrimonial alliance with his son.

Not many minutes after the interview between Lucy and her father, a liveried servant arrived, bearing a letter in reply to one from Sir Thomas, to the following effect:

"My Dear Gourlay,—I have got much stronger within the last fortnight; that is, so far as my mere bodily health is concerned. As I shall proceed to London in a day or two, it is perhaps better that I should see you upon the subject of this union, between your daughter and my son, especially as you seem to wish it so anxiously. To tell you the truth, I fear very much that you are, contrary to remonstrance, and with your eyes open to the consequences, precipitating your charming and admirable Lucy upon wretchedness and disconsolation for the remainder of her life; and I can tell her, and would if I were allowed, that the coronet of a countess, however highly either she or you may appreciate it, will be found but a poor substitute for the want of that affection and esteem, upon which only can be founded domestic happiness and contentment.

"Ever, my dear Gourlay, faithfully yours,

"*Cullamore*."

The baronet's face, after having perused this epistle, brightened up as much as any face of such sombre and repulsive expression could be supposed to do; but, again, upon taking into consideration what he looked upon as the unjustifiable obstinacy of his daughter, it became once more stern and overshadowed. He ground his teeth with vexation as he paced to and fro the room, as was his custom when in a state of agitation or anger. After some minutes, during which his passion seemed only to increase, he went to her apartment, and, thrusting in his head to ascertain that she was safe, he deliberately locked the door, and, putting the key in his pocket, once more ordered his horse, and proceeded to Glenshee Castle, the princely residence of his friend, Lord Cullamore.

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None of our readers, we presume, would feel disposed to charge our hardened baronet with any tendency to superstition. That he felt its influence, however, was a fact; for it may have been observed that there is a class of minds which, whilst they reject all moral control when any legitimate barrier stands between them and the gratification of their evil passions or designs, are yet susceptible of the effects which are said to proceed from such slight and trivial incidents as are supposed to be invested with a mysterious and significant influence upon the actions of individuals. It is not, however, those who possess the strongest passions that are endowed with the strongest principles, unless when it happens that these passions are kept in subjection by religion or reason. In fact, the very reverse of the proposition in general holds true; and, indeed, Sir Thomas Gourlay was a strong and startling proof of this. In his case, however, it might be accounted for by the influence over his mind, when young, of a superstitious nurse named Jennie Corbet, who was a stout believer in all the superstitious lore which at that time constituted a kind of social and popular creed throughout the country. It was not that the reason of Sir Thomas was at all convinced by, or yielded any assent to, such legends, but a habit of belief in them, which he was never able properly to throw off, had been created, which left behind it a lingering impression resulting from their exhibition, which, in spite of all his efforts, clung to him through life.

Another peculiarity of his we may as well mention here, which related to his bearing while on horseback. It had been shrewdly observed by the people, that, whilst in the act of concocting any plan, or projecting any scheme, he uniformly rode at an easy, slow, and thoughtful pace; but, when under the influence of his angry passions, he dashed along with a fury and vehemence of speed that startled those whom he met, and caused them to pause and look after him with wonder.

The distance between Red Hall and Glenshee Castle was not more than four miles; the estates of both proprietors lying, in fact, together. The day was calm, mild, and breathed of the fragrant and opening odors of spring. Sir Thomas had nearly measured half the distance at a very slow pace, for, in truth, he was then silently rehearsing his part in the interview which was about to take place between him and his noble friend. The day, though calm, as we said, was nevertheless without sunshine, and, consequently, that joyous and exhilarating spirit of warmth and light which the vernal sun floods down upon all nature, rendering earth and air choral with music, was not felt so powerfully. On the contrary, the silence and gloom were somewhat unusual, considering the mildness which prevailed. Every one, however, has experienced the influence of such days—an influence which, notwithstanding the calm and genial character of the day itself, is felt to be depressing, and at variance with cheerfulness and good spirits.

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Be this as it may, Sir Thomas was proceeding leisurely along, when a turn of the road brought him at once upon the brow of the small valley from which the residence of the Cullamore family had its name—Glenshee, or, in English, the Glen of the Fairies. Its sides were wild, abrupt, and precipitous, and partially covered with copse-wood, as was the little brawling stream which ran through it, and of which the eye of the spectator could only catch occasional glimpses from among the hazel, dogberry, and white thorn, with which it was here and there covered. In the bottom, there was a small, but beautiful green carpet, nearly, if not altogether circular, about a hundred yards in diameter, in the centre of which stood one of those fairy rings that gave its name and character to the glen. The place was, at all times, wild, and so solitary that, after dusk, few persons in the neighborhood wished to pass it alone. On the day in question, its appearance was still and impressive, and, owing to the gloom which prevailed, it presented a lonely and desolate aspect, calculated, certainly, in some degree, to inspire a weak mind with something of that superstitious feeling which was occasioned by its supernatural reputation. We said that the baronet came to a winding part of the road which brought this wild and startling spot before him, and just at the same moment he was confronted by an object quite as wild and as startling. This was no-other than a celebrated fortune-teller of that day, named Ginty Cooper, a middle-aged sibyl, who enjoyed a very wide reputation for her extraordinary insight into futurity, as well as for performing a variety of cures upon both men and cattle, by her acquaintance, it was supposed, with fairy lore, the influence of charms, and the secret properties of certain herbs with which, if you believed her, she had been made acquainted by the *Dainhe Shee*, or good people themselves.

The baronet's first feeling was one of annoyance and vexation, and for what cause, the reader will soon understand.

"Curse this ill-looking wretch," he exclaimed mentally; "she is the first individual I have met since I left home. It is not that I regard the matter a feather, but, somehow, I don't wish that a woman—especially such a blasted looking sibyl as this—should be the first person I meet when going on any business of importance." Indeed, it is to be observed here, that some of Ginty's predictions and cures were such as, among an ignorant and credulous people, strongly impressed by the superstitions of the day, and who placed implicit reliance upon her prophetic and sanative faculties, were certainly calculated to add very much to her peculiar influence over them, originating, as they believed, in her communion with supernatural powers. Her appearance, too, was strikingly calculated to sustain the extraordinary reputation which she bore, yet it was such as we feel it to be almost impossible to describe. Her face

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was thin, and supernaturally pale, and her features had a death-like composure, an almost awful rigidity, that induced the spectator to imagine that she had just risen from the grave. Her thin lips were repulsively white, and her teeth so much whiter that they almost filled you with fear; but it was in her eye that the symbol of her prophetic power might be said to lie. It was wild, gray, and almost transparent, and whenever she was, or appeared to be, in a thoughtful mood, or engaged in the contemplation of futurity, it kept perpetually scintillating, or shifting, as it were, between two proximate objects, to which she seemed to look as if they had been in the far distance of space—that is, it turned from one to another with a quivering rapidity which the eye of the spectator was unable to follow. And yet it was evident on reflection, that in her youth she must have been not only good-looking, but handsome. This quick and unnatural motion of the eye was extremely wild and startling, and when contrasted with the white and death-like character of her teeth, and the moveless expression of her countenance, was in admirable keeping with the supernatural qualities attributed to her. She wore no bonnet, but her white death-bed like cap was tied round her head by a band of clean linen, and came under her chin, as in the case of a corpse, thus making her appear as if she purposely assumed the startling habiliments of the grave. As for the outlines of her general person, they afforded evident proof—thin and emaciated as she then was—that her figure in early life must have been remarkable for great neatness and symmetry. She inhabited a solitary cottage in the glen, a fact which, in the opinion of the people, completed the wild prestige of her character.

“You accursed hag,” said the baronet, whose vexation at meeting her was for the moment beyond any superstitious impression which he felt, “what brought you here? What devil sent you across my path now? Who are you, or what are you, for you look like a libel on humanity?”

“If I don’t,” she replied, bitterly, “I know who does. There is not much beauty between us, Thomas Gourlay.”

“What do you mean by Thomas Gourlay, you sorceress?”

“You’ll come to know that some day before you die, Thomas; perhaps sooner than you can think or dream of.”

“How can you tell that, you irreverent old viper?”

“I could tell you much more than that, Thomas,” she replied, showing her corpse-like teeth with a ghastly smile of mocking bitterness that was fearful.

The Black Baronet, in spite of himself, began to feel somewhat uneasy, for, in fact, there appeared such a wild but confident significance in her manner and language that he

deemed it wiser to change his tactics with the woman, and soothe her a little if he could. In truth, her words agitated him so much that he unconsciously pulled out of his waistcoat pocket the key of Lucy's room, and began to dangle with it as he contemplated her with something like alarm.

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“My poor woman, you must be raving,” he replied. “What could a destitute creature like you know about my affairs? I don’t remember that I ever saw you before.”

“That’s not the question, Thomas Gourlay, but the question is, what have you done with the child of your eldest brother, the lawful heir of the property and title that you now bear, and bear unjustly.”

He was much startled by this allusion, for although aware that the disappearance of the child in question had been for many long years well known, yet, involved, as it was, in unaccountable mystery, still the circumstance had never been forgotten.

“That’s an old story, my good woman,” he replied. “You don’t charge me, I hope, as some have done, with making away with him? You might as well charge me with kidnapping my own son, you foolish woman, who, you know, I suppose, disappeared very soon after the other.”

“I know he did,” she replied; “but neither I nor any one else ever charged you with that act; and I know there are a great many of opinion that both acts were committed by some common enemy to your house, who wished, for some unknown cause of hatred, to extinguish your whole family. That is, indeed, the best defence you have for the disappearance of your brother’s son; but, mark me, Thomas Gourlay—that defence will not pass with God, with me, nor with your own heart. I have my own opinion upon that subject, as well as upon many others. You may ask your own conscience, Thomas Gourlay, but he’ll be a close friend of yours that will ever hear its answer.”

“And is this all you had to say to me, you ill-thinking old vermin.” he replied, again losing his temper.

“No,” she answered, “I wish to tell your fortune; and you will do well to listen to me.”

“Well,” said he, in a milder tone, putting at the same time the key of Lucy’s door again into his pocket, without being in the slightest degree conscious of it, “if you are, I suppose I must cross your hand with silver as usual; take this.”

“No,” she replied, drawing back with another ghastly smile, the meaning of which was to him utterly undefinable, “from your hand nothing in the shape of money will ever pass into mine; but listen”—she looked at him for some moments, during which she paused, and then added—“I will not do it, I am not able to render good for evil, yet; I will suffer you to run your course. I am well aware that neither warning nor truth would have any effect upon you, unless to enable you to prepare and sharpen your plans with more ingenious villany. But you have a daughter; I will speak to you about her.”

“Do,” said the baronet; “but why not take the silver?”

“You will know that one day before you die, too,” said she, “and I don’t think it will smooth your death-bed pillow.”

“Why, you are a very mysterious old lady.”

“I’ll now give you a proof of that. You locked in your daughter before you left home.”

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Sir Thomas could not for his life prevent himself from starting so visibly that she observed it at once.

“No such thing,” he replied, affecting a composure which he certainly did not feel; “you are an impostor, and I now see that you know nothing.”

“What I say is true,” she replied, solemnly, “and you have stated, Thomas Gourlay, what you know to be a falsehood; I would be glad to discover you uttering truth unless with some evil intention. But now for your daughter; you wish to hear her fate?”

“Certainly I do; but then you know nothing. You charge me with falsehood, but it is yourself that are the liar.”

She waved her hand indignantly.

“Will my daughter’s husband be a man of title?” he asked, his mind passing to the great and engrossing object of his ambition.

“He will be a man of title,” she replied, “and he will make her a countess.”

“You must take money,” said he, thrusting his hand into his pocket, and once more pulling out his purse—“that is worth something, surely.”

She waved her hand again, with a gesture of repulse still more indignant and frightful than before, and the bitter smile she gave while doing it again displayed her corpse-like teeth in a manner that was calculated to excite horror itself.

“Very well,” replied the baronet; “I will not press you, only don’t make such cursed frightful grimaces. But with respect to my daughter, will the marriage be with her own consent?”

“With her own consent—it will be the dearest wish of her heart.”

“Could you name her husband?”

“I could and will. Lord Dunroe will be the man, and he will make her Countess of Cullamore.”

“Well, now,” replied the other, “I believe you can speak truth, and are somewhat acquainted with the future. The girl certainly is attached to him, and I have no doubt the union will be, as you say, a happy one.”

“You know in your soul,” she replied, “that she detests him; and you know she would sacrifice her life this moment sooner than marry him.”

“What, then, do you mean.” he asked, “and why do you thus contradict yourself?”

“Good-by, Thomas Gourlay,” she replied. “So far as regards either the past or the future, you will hear nothing further from me to-day; but, mark me, we shall meet again ——and we have met before.”

“That, certainly, is not true,” he said, “unless it might be accidentally on the highway; but, until this moment, my good woman, I don’t remember to have seen your face in my life.”

[Illustration: *Page* 350— How will you be prepared to render an account]

She looked toward the sky, and pointing her long, skinny finger upwards, said, “How will you be prepared to render an account of all your deeds and iniquities before Him who will judge you there!”

There was a terrible calmness, a dreadful solemnity on her white, ghastly features as she spoke, and pointed to the sky, after which she passed on in silence and took no further notice of the Black Baronet.

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It is very difficult to describe the singular variety of sensations which her conversation, extraordinary, wild, and mysterious as it was, caused this remarkable man to experience. He knew not what to make of it. One thing was certain, however, and he could not help admitting it to himself, that, during their short and singular dialogue, she had, he knew not how, obtained and exercised an extraordinary ascendency over him. He looked after her, but she was proceeding calmly along, precisely as if they had not spoken.

“She is certainly the greatest mystery in the shape of woman,” he said to himself, as he proceeded, “that I have ever yet met—that is, if she be a thing of flesh and blood—for to me she seems to belong more to death and its awful accessories, than to life and its natural reality. How in the devil’s name could she have known that I locked that obstinate and undutiful girl up. This is altogether inexplicable, upon principles affecting only the ordinary powers of common humanity. Then she affirmed, prophesied, or what you will, that Lucy and Dunroe will be married—willingly and happily! That certainly is strange, and as agreeable as strange; but I will doubt nothing after the incident of the locking up, so strangely revealed to me too, at a moment when, perhaps, no human being knew it but Lucy and myself. And, what is stranger still, she knows the state of the girl’s affections, and that she at present detests Dunroe. Yet, stay, have I not seen her somewhere before? She said so herself. There is a faint impression on me that her face is not altogether unfamiliar to me, but I cannot recall either time or place, and perhaps the impression is a wrong one.”

CHAPTER IX. Candor and Dissimulation

Glenshee Castle was built by the father of the then Lord Cullamore, at a cost of upwards of one hundred thousand pounds. Its general effect and situation were beautiful, imposing, and picturesque in the extreme. Its north and east sides, being the principal fronts, contained the state apartments, while the other sides, for the building was a parallelogram, contained the offices, and were overshadowed, or nearly altogether concealed, by trees of a most luxuriant growth. In the east front stood a magnificent circular tower, in fine proportion with it; whilst an octagon one, of proportions somewhat inferior, terminated the northern angle. The front, again, on the north, extending from the last mentioned tower, was connected with a fine Gothic chapel, remarkable for the beauty of its stained windows, supervening buttresses, and a belfry at its western extremity. On the north front, which was the entrance, rose a porch leading into a vestibule, and from thence into the magnificent hall. From this sprung a noble stone staircase, with two inferior flights that led to a corridor, which communicated with a gorgeous suit of bedchambers. The grand hall communicated on the western side with

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those rooms that were appropriated to the servants, and those on the opposite, with the state apartments, which were of magnificent size and proportions, having all the wood-work of Irish oak, exquisitely polished. The gardens were in equal taste, and admirably kept. The pleasure grounds were ornamented with some of the rarest exotics. On each side of the avenue, as you approached the castle, stood a range of noble elms, beeches, and oaks intermingled; and, as you reached the grand entrance, you caught a view of the demesne and deer-park, which were, and are, among the finest in the kingdom. There was also visible, from the steps of the hall and front window, the bends of a sweet, and winding river near the centre of the demesne, spanned by three or four light and elegant arches, that connected the latter and the deer-park with each other. Nothing, however, was so striking in the whole landscape as the gigantic size and venerable appearance of the wood, which covered a large portion of the demesne, and the patriarchal majesty of those immense trees, which stood separated from the mass of forest, singly or in groups, in different parts of it. The evening summer's deep light, something between gold and purple, as it poured its mellow radiance upon the green openings between these noble trees, or the evening smoke, as it arose at the same hour from the chimneys of the keepers' houses among their branches, were sights worth a whole gallery of modern art.

As the baronet approached the castle, he thought again of the woman and her prophecies, and yielded to their influence, in so far as they assured him that his daughter was destined to become the proud mistress of all the magnificence by which he was surrounded. The sun had now shone forth, and as its clear light fell upon the house, its beautiful pleasure-grounds, its ornamented lawns, and its stately avenues, he felt that there was something worth making a struggle for, even at the expense of conscience, when he contemplated, with the cravings of an ambitious heart, the spirit of rich and deep repose in which the whole gorgeous spectacle lay.

On reaching the hall he rang, and in a few minutes was admitted to his friend, Lord Cullamore.

Lord Cullamore was remarkable for that venerable dignity and graceful ease, which, after all, can only result from early and constant intercourse with polished and aristocratic society. This person was somewhat above the middle size, his eye clear and significant, his features expressive, and singularly indicative of what he felt or said. In fact, he appeared to be an intelligent, candid man, who, in addition to that air bestowed upon him by his rank and position, and which could never for a moment be mistaken, was altogether one of the best specimens of his class. He had neither those assumptions of hateful condescension, nor that eternal consciousness of his high birth, which too frequently degrade and disgrace the commonplace

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and vulgar nobleman; especially when he makes the privileges of his class an offence and an oppression to his inferiors, or considers it a crime to feel or express those noble sympathies, which, as a first principle, ought to bind him to that class by whom he lives, and who constitute the great mass of humanity, from whose toil and labor originate the happiness of his order. When in conversation, the natural animation of his lordship's countenance was checked, not only by a polite and complacent sense of what was due to those with whom he spoke, and a sincere anxiety to put them at their ease, but evidently by an expression that seemed the exponent of some undivulged and corroding sorrow. We may add, that he was affectionate, generous, indolent; not difficult to be managed when he had no strong purpose to stimulate him; keen of observation, but not prone to suspicion; consequently often credulous, and easily imposed upon; but, having once detected fraud or want of candor, the discovery was certain forever to deprive the offending party of his esteem—no matter what their rank or condition in life might be.

We need scarcely say, therefore, that this, amiable nobleman, possessing as he did all the high honor and integrity by which his whole life was regulated, (with one solitary exception, for which his heart paid a severe penalty,) carried along with him, in his old age, that respect, reverence, and affection, to which the dignified simplicity of his life entitled him. He was, indeed, one of those few noblemen whose virtues gave to the aristocratic spirit, true grace and appropriate dignity, instead of degrading it, as too many of his caste do, by pride, arrogance, and selfishness.

Sir Thomas Gourlay, on entering the magnificent library to which he was conducted, found his lordship in the act of attaching his signature to some papers. The latter received him kindly and graciously, and shook hands with him, but without rising, for which he apologized.

"I am not at all strong, Sir Thomas," he added; "for although this last attack has left me, yet I feel that it has taken a considerable portion of my strength along with it. I am, however, free from pain and complaint, and my health is gradually improving."

"But, my lord, do you think you will be able to encounter the fatigue and difficulties of a journey to London." replied the other—"Will you have strength for it?"

"I hope so; travelling by sea always agreed with and invigorated my constitution. The weather, too, is fine, and. I will take the long voyage. Besides, it is indispensable that I should go. This wild son of mine has had a duel with some one in a shooting gallery—-has been severely hit—and is very ill; but, at the same time, out of danger."

"A duel! Good heavens! My lord, how did it happen." asked the baronet.

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“I am not exactly aware of all the particulars; but I think they cannot be creditable to the parties, or to Dunroe, at least; for one of his friends has so far overshot the mark as to write to me, for my satisfaction, that they have succeeded in keeping the affair out of the papers. Now, there must be something wrong when my son’s friends are anxious to avoid publicity in the matter. The conduct of that young man, my dear Sir Thomas, is a source of great affliction to me; and I tremble for the happiness of your daughter, should they be united.”

“You are too severe on Dunroe, my lord,” replied the baronet—“It is better for a man to sow his wild oats in season than out of season. Besides, you know the proverb, ‘A reformed rake,’ *etc*.”

“The popularity of a proverb, my good friend, is no proof of its truth; and, besides, I should wish to place a hope of my son’s reformation upon something firmer and more solid than the strength of an old adage.”

“But you know, my lord,” replied the other, “that the instances of post-matrimonial reformation, if I may use the word, from youthful folly, are sufficient to justify the proverb. I am quite certain, that, if Lord Dunroe were united to a virtuous and sensible wife, he would settle down into the character of a steady, honorable, and independent man. I could prove this by many instances, even within your knowledge and mine. Why, then, exclude his lordship from the benefit of a contingency, to speak the least, which we know falls out happily in so many instances?”

“You mean you could prove the probability of it, my dear baronet; for, at present, the case is not susceptible of proof. What you say may be true; but, on the other hand, it may not; and, in the event of his marrying without the post-matrimonial reformation you speak of, what becomes of your daughter’s happiness?”

“Nay, I know generous Dunroe so well, my lord, that I would not, even as Lucy’s father, hesitate a moment to run the risk.”

“But what says Lucy herself? And how does she stand affected toward him? For that is the main point. This matter, you know, was spoken over some few years ago, and conditionally approved of by us both; but my son was then very young, and had not plunged into that course of unjustifiable extravagance and profligacy which, to my cost, has disgraced his latter years. I scorn to veil his conduct, baronet, for it would be dishonorable under the circumstances between us, and I trust you will be equally candid in detailing to me the sentiments of your daughter on the subject.”

“My lord, I shall unquestionably do so; but Lucy, you must know, is a girl of a very peculiar disposition. She possesses, in fact, a good deal of her unworthy father’s determination and obstinacy. Urge her with too much vehemence, and she will resist;

try to accelerate her pace, and she will stand still; but leave her to herself, to the natural and reasonable suggestions of her excellent sense, and you will get her to do anything."

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“That is but a very indifferent character you bestow upon your daughter, Sir Thomas,” replied his lordship—“I trust she deserves a better one at your hands.”

“Why, my lord,” replied the baronet, smiling after his own peculiar fashion, that is to say, with a kind of bitter sarcasm, “I have as good a right, I think, to exaggerate the failings of my daughter as you have to magnify those of your son. But a truce to this, and to be serious: I know the girl; you know, besides, something about women yourself, my lord, and I need not say that it is unwise to rely upon the moods and meditations of a young lady before marriage. Upon the prospect of such an important change in their position, the best of them will assume a great deal. The period constitutes the last limited portion of their freedom; and, of course, all the caprices of the heart, and all the giddy ebullitions of gratified vanity, manifest themselves so strangely, that it is extremely difficult to understand them, or know their wishes. Under such circumstances, my lord, they will, in the very levity of delight, frequently say ‘no,’ when they mean ‘yes,’ and vice versa.”

“Sir Thomas,” replied his lordship, gravely, “marriage, instead of being the close, should be the commencement, of their happiness. No woman, however, of sense, whether before marriage or after it, is difficult to be understood. Upon a subject of such importance—one that involves the happiness of her future life—no female possessing truth and principle would, for one moment, suffer a misconception to exist. Now your daughter, my favorite Lucy, is a girl of fine sense and high feeling, and I am at a loss, Sir Thomas, I assure you, to reconcile either one or the other with your metaphysics. If Miss Gourlay sat for the disagreeable picture you have just drawn, she must be a great hypocrite, or you have grossly misrepresented her, which I conceive it is not now your interest or your wish to do.”

“But, my lord, I was speaking of the sex in general.”

“But, sir,” replied his lordship with dignity, “we are here to speak of your daughter.”

Our readers may perceive that the wily baronet was beating about the bush, and attempting to impose upon his lordship by vague disquisitions. He was perfectly aware of Lord Cullamore’s indomitable love of truth, and he consequently feared to treat him with a direct imposition, taking it for granted that, if he had, an interview of ten minutes between Lucy and his lordship might lead to an exposure of his duplicity and falsehood. He felt himself in a painful and distressing dilemma. Aware that, if the excellent peer had the slightest knowledge of Lucy’s loathing horror of his son, he would never lend his sanction to the marriage, the baronet knew not whether to turn to the right or to the left, or, in other words, whether to rely on truth or falsehood. At length, he began to calculate upon the possibility of his daughter’s

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ultimate acquiescence, upon the force of his own unbending character, her isolated position, without any one to encourage or abet her in what he looked upon as her disobedience, consequently his complete control over her; having summoned up all those points together, he resolved to beat about a little longer, but, at all events, to keep the peer in the dark, and, if pressed, to hazard the falsehood. He replied, however, to his lordship's last observation:

"I assure you, my lord, I thought not of my daughter while I drew the picture."

"Well, then," replied his lordship, smiling, "all I have to say is, that you are very eloquent in generalities—generalities, too, my friend, that do not bear upon the question. In one word, is Miss Gourlay inclined to this marriage? and I beseech you, my dear baronet, no more of these generalities."

"She is as much so, my lord," replied the other, "as nineteen women out of every twenty are in general. But it is not to be expected, I repeat, that a delicately-minded and modest young creature will at once step forward unabashed and exclaim, 'Yes, papa, I will marry him.' I protest, my lord, it would require the desperate heroism of an old maid on the last legs of hope, or the hardihood of a widow of three husbands, to go through such an ordeal. We consequently must make allowance for those delicate and blushing evasions which, after all, only mask compliance."

By this reply the baronet hoped to be able to satisfy his friend, without plunging into the open falsehood. The old nobleman, however, looked keenly at him, and asked a question which penetrated like a dagger into the lying soul within him.

"She consents, then, in the ordinary way?"

"She does, my lord."

"Well," replied the peer, "that, as the world goes, is, perhaps, as much as can be expected at present. You have not, I dare say, attempted to force her very much on the subject, and the poor girl has no mother. Under such circumstances, the delicacy of a young lady is certainly entitled to a manly forbearance. Have you alluded to Dunroe's want of morals?"

"Your opinion of his lordship and mine differ on this point considerably, my lord," replied the baronet—"You judge him with the severity of a father, I with the moderation of a friend. I have certainly made no allusion to his morals."

"Of course, then, you are aware, that it is your duty to do so; as a father, that it is a most solemn and indispensable duty?"

The soul of Sir Thomas Gourlay writhed within him like a wounded serpent, at the calm but noble truth contained in this apophthegm. He was not, however, to be caught; the subtlety of his invention enabled him to escape on that occasion at least.

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“It has this moment occurred to me, my lord, with reference to this very point, that it may be possible, and by no means improbable—at least I for one anxiously hope it—that the recent illness of my Lord Dunroe may have given him time to reflect upon his escapades and follies, and that he will rejoin society a wiser and a better man. Under these expectations, I appeal to your own good sense, my lord, whether it would be wise or prudent by at present alluding—especially if it be rendered unnecessary by his reformation—to his want of morals, in any conversation I may hold with my daughter, and thereby deprive him of her personal respect and esteem, the only basis upon which true affection and domestic happiness can safely rest. Let us therefore wait, my lord. Perhaps the loss of some of his hot blood may have cooled him. Perhaps, after all,” he added, smiling, “we may have reason to thank his phlebotomist.”

The peer saw Sir Thomas’s play, and, giving him another keen glance, replied:

“I never depended much upon a dramatic repentance, my dear baronet. Many a resolution of amendment has been made on the sick bed; but we know in general how they are kept, especially by the young. Be this as it may, our discussion has been long enough, and sufficiently ineffectual. My impression is, that Miss Gourlay is disinclined to the alliance. In truth, I dare say she is as well acquainted with his moral reputation as we are—perhaps better. Dunroe’s conduct has been too often discussed in fashionable life to be a secret to her, or any one else who has access to it. If she reject him from a principle of virtuous delicacy and honor, she deserves a better fate than ever to call him husband. But perhaps she may have some other attachment?”

“My lord,” replied Sir Thomas, rising, “I think I can perceive on which side the disinclination lies. You have—and pray excuse me for saying so—studiously thrown, during the present conference, every possible obstruction in the way of an arrangement on this subject. If your lordship is determined that the alliance between our families shall not take place, I pray you to say so. Upon your own showing my daughter will have little that she ought to regret in escaping Dunroe.”

“And Dunroe would have much to be thankful to God for in securing your daughter. But, Sir Thomas Gourlay, I will be candid and open with you. Pray observe, sir, that, during this whole discussion, conference, or what you will, I did not get out of you a single direct answer, and that upon a subject involving the life-long happiness of your only child. I tell you, baronet, that your indirectness of purpose, and—you will excuse me, too, for what I am about to say, the importance of the subject justifies me—your evasions have excited my suspicions, and my present impression is, that Miss Gourlay is averse to a matrimonial union with my son; that she has heard reports of his character which have justly

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alarmed her high-minded sense of delicacy and honor; and that you, her parent, are forcing her into a marriage which she detests. Look into your own heart, Sir Thomas, and see whether you are not willing to risk her peace of mind for the miserable ambition of seeing her one day a countess. Alas! my friend," he continued, "there is no talisman in the coronet of a countess to stay the progress of sorrow, or check the decline of a breaking heart. If Miss Gourlay be, as I fear she is, averse to this union, do not sacrifice her to ambition and a profligate. She is too precious a treasure to be thrown away upon two objects so utterly worthless. Her soul is too pure to be allied to contamination—her heart too noble, too good, too generous, to be broken by unavailing grief and a repentance that will probably come too late."

"If I assure you, my lord, that she is not averse to the match—nay"—and here this false man consoled his conscience by falling back upon the prophecy of Ginty Cooper—"if I assure you that she will marry Dunroe willingly—nay, with delight, will your lordship then rest satisfied?"

"I must depend upon your word, Sir Thomas; am I not in conversation with a gentleman?"

"Well, then, my lord, I assure you that it is so. Your lordship will find, when the time comes, that my daughter is not only not indisposed to this union, but absolutely anxious to become your daughter-in-law"—bad as he was, he could not force himself to say, in so many plain words, "the wife of your son"—"But, my lord," he proceeded, "if you will permit me to make a single observation, I will thank you, and I trust you will excuse me besides."

"Unquestionably, Sir Thomas."

"Well, then, my lord, what I have observed during our conversation, with great pain, is, that you seem to entertain—pardon me, I speak in good feeling, I assure your lordship—that you seem, I say, to entertain a very unkind and anything but a parental feeling for your son. What, after all, do his wild eccentricities amount to more than the freedom and indulgence in those easy habits of life which his wealth and station hold out to him with greater temptation than they do to others? I cannot, my lord, in fact, see anything so monstrous in the conduct of a young nobleman like him, to justify, on the part of your lordship, language so severe, and, pardon me, so prejudicial to his character. Excuse me, my lord, if I have taken a liberty to which I am in nowise entitled." Socrates himself could scarcely have assumed a tone more moral, or a look of greater sincerity, or more anxious interest, than did the Black Baronet whilst he uttered these words.

The peer rose up, and his eye and whole person were marked by an expression and an air of the highest dignity, not unmingled with deep and obvious feeling.

“Sir Thomas Gourlay,” said he, “you seem to forget the object of our conference, and our respective positions.”

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“My Lord,” exclaimed the other, in a deprecating tone, “I meant no offence, upon my honor.”

“I have taken none,” replied his lordship; “but I must teach you to understand me. Whatever my son’s conduct may be, one thing is evident, that you are his apologist; now, as a moral man, anxious for the happiness of your child, I tell you that you ought to have exchanged positions with me; it is you who, when about to intrust your daughter to him for life, ought to have investigated his moral character and habits, and manifested an anxiety to satisfy yourself whether they were such as would reflect honor upon her, and secure her peace of mind and tranquillity in the married state. You say, too, that I do not speak of my son in a kind or parental feeling; but do you imagine, sir, that, engaged as I am here, in a confidential and important conference, the result of which may involve the happiness or misery of two persons so dear to us both, I would be justified in withholding the truth, or lending myself to a course of dishonorable deception?”

He sat down again, and seemed deeply affected.

“God knows,” he said, “that I love that wild and unthinking young man, perhaps more than I ought; but do you imagine, sir, that, because I have spoken of him with the freedom necessary and due to the importance and solemnity of our object in meeting, I could or would utter such sentiments to the world at large? I pray you, sir, then, to make and observe the distinction; and, instead of assailing me for want of affection as a parent, to thank me for the candor with which I have spoken.”

The baronet felt subdued; it is evident that his mind was too coarse and selfish to understand the delicacy, the truth, and high, conscientious feeling with which Lord Cullamore conducted his part of this negotiation.

“My lord,” said the baronet, who thought of another point on which to fall back, “there is one circumstance, one important fact, which we have both unaccountably overlooked, and which, after all, holds out a greater promise of domestic happiness between these young persons than anything we have thought of. His lordship is attached to my daughter. Now, where there is love, my lord, there is every chance and prospect of happiness in the married life.”

“Yes, if it be mutual, Sir Thomas; everything depends on that. I am glad, however, you mentioned it. There is some hope left still; but alas, alas! what is even love when opposed to selfishness and ambition? I could—I myself could——” he seemed deeply moved, and paused for some time, as if unwilling to trust himself with speech—“Yes, I am glad you mentioned it, and I thank you, Sir Thomas, I thank you. I should wish to see these two young people happy. I believe he is attached to your daughter, and I will now mention a fact which certainly proves it. The gentleman with whom he fought that unfortunate duel was forced into it by Dunroe, in consequence of his having paid some

marked attentions to Miss Gourlay, when she and her mother were in Paris, some few months before Lady Gourlay's decease. I did not wish to mention this before, out of respect for your daughter; but I do so now, confidentially, of course, in consequence of the turn our conversation has taken."

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Something on the moment seemed to strike the baronet, who started, for he was unquestionably an able hand at putting scattered facts and circumstances together, and weaving a significant conclusion from them.

“That, my lord, at all events,” said the coarse-minded man, after having recovered himself, “that is gratifying.”

“What!” exclaimed Lord Cullamore, “to make your daughter the cause and subject of a duel, an intemperate brawl in a shooting gallery. The only hope I have is, that I trust she was not named.”

“But, my lord, it is, after all, a proof of his affection for her.”

His lordship smiled sarcastically, and looked at him with something like amazement, if not with contempt; but did not deign to reply.

“And now, my lord,” continued the baronet, “what is to be the result of our conference? My daughter will have all my landed property at my death, and a large marriage-portion besides, now in the funds. I am apparently the last of my race. The disappearance and death—I take it for granted, as they have never since been heard of—of my brother Sir Edward’s heir, and very soon after of my own, have left me without a hope of perpetuating my name; I shall settle my estates upon Lucy.”

His lordship appeared abstracted for a few moments—“Your brother and you,” he observed, “were on terms of bitter hostility, in consequence of what you considered an unequal marriage on his part, and I candidly assure you, Sir Thomas, that, were it not for the mysterious disappearance of your own son, so soon after the disappearance of his, it would have been difficult to relieve you from dark and terrible suspicions on the subject. As it is, the people, I believe, criminate you still; but that is nothing; my opinion is, that the same enemy perpetrated the double crime. Alas! the worst and bitterest of all private feuds are the domestic. There is my own brother; in a moment of passion and jealousy he challenged me to single combat; I had sense to resist his impetuosity. He got a foreign appointment, and there has been a gulf like that of the grave between him and his, and me and mine, ever since.”

“Nothing, my lord,” replied Sir Thomas, his countenance, as he spoke, becoming black with suppressed rage, “will ever remove the impression from my mind, that the disappearance or murder of my son was not a diabolical act of retaliation committed under the suspicion that I was privy to the removal or death, as the case may be, of my brother’s heir; and while I have life I will persist in charging Lady Gourlay, as I must call her so, with the crime.”

“In that impression,” replied his lordship, “you stand alone. Lady Gourlay, that amiable, mild, affectionate, and heart-broken woman, is utterly incapable of that, or any act of

cruelty whatsoever. A woman who is the source of happiness, kindness, relief, and support, to so many of her humble and distressed fellow-creatures, is not likely to commit or become accessory in any way to such a detestable and unnatural crime. Her whole life and conduct render such a supposition monstrous and incredible."

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Both, after he had closed his observations, mused for some time, when the baronet, rising and pacing to and fro, as was his custom, at length asked—“Well, my lord, what say you? Are we never to come to a conclusion?”

“My determination is simply this, my dear baronet,—that, if you and Miss Gourlay are satisfied to take Lord Dunroe, with all his imperfections on his head, I shall give no opposition. She will, unless he amends and reforms, take him, I grant you, at her peril; but be it so. If the union, as, you say, will be the result of mutual attachment, in God’s name let them marry. It is possible, we are assured, that the ‘unbelieving husband may be saved by the believing wife.’”

“I am quite satisfied, my lord, with this arrangement; it is fair, and just, and honorable, and I am perfectly willing to abide by it. When does your lordship propose to return to us?”

“I am tired of public life, my dear baronet. My daughter, Lady Emily, who, you know, has chiefly resided with her maiden aunt, hopes to succeed in prevailing on her to accompany us to Glenshee Castle, to spend the summer and autumn, and visit some of the beautiful scenery of this unknown land of ours. Something, as to time, depends upon Dunroe’s convalescence. My stay in England, however, will be as short as I can make it. I am getting too old for the exhausting din and bustle of society; and what I want now, is quiet repose, time to reflect upon my past life, and to prepare myself, as well as I can, for a new change. Of course, we will be both qualified to resume the subject of this marriage after my return, and, until then, farewell, my dear baronet. But mark me—no force, no violence.”

Sir Thomas, as he shook hands with him, laughed—“None will be necessary, my lord, I assure you—I pledge you my honor for that.”

The worthy baronet, on mounting his horse, paced him slowly out of the grounds, as was his custom when in deep meditation.

“If I don’t mistake,” thought he, “I have a clew to this same mysterious gentleman in the inn. He has seen and become acquainted with Lucy in Paris, under sanction of her weak-minded and foolish mother. The girl herself admitted that her engagement to him was with her consent. Dunroe, already aware of his attentions to her, becomes jealous, and on meeting him in London quarrels with him, that is to say, forces him, I should think, into one;—not that the fellow seems at all to be a coward either,—but why the devil did not the hot-headed young scoundrel take steadier aim, and send the bullet through his heart or brain? Had he pinked him, it would have saved me much vexation and trouble.”

He then passed to another train of thought—“Thomas Gourlay,—plain Thomas Gourlay—what the devil could the corpse-like hag mean by that? Is it possible that this insane

scoundrel will come to light in spite of me? Would to Heaven that I could ascertain his whereabouts, and get him into my power once more. I would take care to put him in a place of safety." He then touched his horse with the spurs, and proceeded to Red Hall at a quicker pace.

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CHAPTER X. A Family Dialogue—and a Secret nearly Discovered.

Our scene must necessarily change to a kind of inn or low tavern, or, as they are usually denominated, eating-houses, in Little Mary street, on the north side of the good city of Dublin. These eating-houses were remarkable for the extreme neatness and cleanliness with which they were kept, and the wonderful order and regularity with which they were conducted. For instance, a lap of beef is hung from an iron hook on the door-post, which, if it be in the glorious heat of summer, is half black with flies, but that will not prevent it from leaving upon your coat a deep and healthy streak of something between grease and tallow as you necessarily brush against it—first, on your going in, and secondly, on your coming out.

The evening was tolerably advanced, and the hour of dinner long past; but, notwithstanding this, there were several persons engaged in dispatching the beef and cabbage we have described. Two or three large county Meath farmers, clad in immense frieze jackets, corduroy knee-breeches, thick woollen stockings, and heavy soled, shoes, were not so much eating as devouring the viands that were before them; whilst in another part of the rooms sat two or three meagre-looking scriveners' clerks, rather out at elbows, and remarkable for an appearance of something that might, without much difficulty, be interpreted into habits that could not be reconciled with sobriety.

As there is not much, however, that is either picturesque or agreeable in the description of such an establishment, we shall pass into an inner room, where those who wished for privacy and additional comfort might be entertained on terms somewhat more expensive. We accordingly beg our readers to accompany us up a creaking pair of stairs to a small backroom on the first floor, furnished with an old, round oak table, with turned legs, four or five old-fashioned chairs, a few wood-cuts, daubed with green and yellow, representing the four seasons, a Christmas carol, together with that miracle of ingenuity, a reed in a bottle, which stood on the chimney-piece.

In this room, with liquor before them, which was procured from a neighboring public house—for, in establishments of this kind, they are not permitted to keep liquor for sale—sat three persons, two men and a woman. One of the men seemed, at first glance, rather good-looking, was near or about fifty, stout, big-boned, and apparently very powerful as regarded personal strength. He was respectably enough dressed, and, as we said, unless when it happened that he fell into a mood of thoughtfulness, which he did repeatedly, had an appearance of frankness and simplicity which at once secured instant and unhesitating good will. When, however, after putting the tumbler to his lips, and gulping down a portion of it, and then replacing the liquor on the table, he folded his arms and knitted his brows, in an instant the expression of openness and good humor changed into one of deep and deadly malignity.

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The features of the elder person exhibited a comic contrast between nature and habit—-between an expression of good humor, broad and legible, which no one could mistake for a moment, and an affectation of consequence, self-importance, and mock heroic dignity that were irresistible. He was a pedagogue.

The woman who accompanied them we need not describe, having already made the reader acquainted with her in the person of the female fortune-teller, who held the mysterious dialogue with Sir Thomas Gourlay on his way to Lord Cullamore's.

"This liquor," said the schoolmaster, "would be nothing the worse of a little daicent mellowness and flavor; but, at the same time, we must admit that, though sadly deficient in a spirit of exhilaration, it bears a harmonious reference to the beautiful beef and cabbage which we got for dinner. The whole of them are what I designate as sorry specimens of metropolitan luxury. May I never translate a classic, but I fear I shall soon wax aegrotat—I feel something like a telegraphic despatch commencing between my head and my stomach; and how the communication may terminate, whether peaceably or otherwise, would require, O divine Jacinta! your tripodial powers or prophecy to predict. The whiskey, in whatever shape or under whatever disguise you take it, is richly worthy of all condemnation."

"I will drink no more of it, uncle," replied the other man; "it would soon sicken me, too. This shan't pass; it's gross imposition—and that is a bad thing to practise in this world. Ginty, touch the bell, will you?—we will make them get us better."

A smile of a peculiar nature passed over the woman's ghastly features as she looked with significant caution at her brother, for such he was.

"Yes, do get better whiskey," she said; "it's too bad that we should make my uncle sick from mere kindness."

"I cannot exactly say that I am much out of order as yet," replied the schoolmaster, "but, as they say, if the weather has not broken, the sky is getting troubled; I hope it is only a false, alarm, and may pass away without infliction. If there is any of the minor miseries of life more trying than another, it is to drink liquor that fires the blood, splits the head, but basely declines to elevate and rejoice the heart. O, divine poteen! immortal essence of the *hordeum beatum!*—which is translated holy barley—what drink, liquor, or refreshment can be placed, without the commission of something like small sacrilege, in parallel with thee! When I think of thy soothing and gradually exhilarating influence, of the genial spirit of love and friendship which, owing to thee, warms the heart of man, and not unfrequently of the softer sex also; when I reflect upon the cheerful light which thou diffusest by gentle degrees throughout the soul, filling it with generosity, kindness, and courage, enabling it to forget care and calamity, and all the various ills that flesh is heir to; when I remember too that

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thou dost so frequently aid the inspiration of the bard, the eloquence of the orator, and changest the modesty of the diffident lover into that easy and becoming assurance which is so grateful to women, is it any wonder I should feel how utterly incapable I am, without thy own assistance, to expound thy eulogium as I ought! Hand that tumbler here, Charley,—bad as it is, there is no use, as the proverb says, in laving one's liquor behind them. We will presently correct it with better drink."

Charley Corbet, for such was the name of the worthy schoolmaster's nephew, laughed heartily at the eloquence of his uncle, who, he could perceive, had been tampering a little with something stronger than water in the course of the evening.

"What can keep this boy." exclaimed Ginty; "he knew we were waiting for him, and he ought to be here now."

"The youth will come," said the schoolmaster, "and a hospitable youth he is—*me ipso teste*, as I myself can bear witness. I was in his apartments in the *Collegium Sanctae Trinitatis*, as they say, which means the blessed union of dulness, laziness, and wealth, for which the same divine establishment has gained an appropriate and just celebrity—I say I was in his apartments, where I found himself and a few of his brother students engaged in the agreeable relaxation of taking a hair of the same dog that bit them, after a liberal compotation on the preceding night. Third place, as a scholar! Well! who may he thank for that, I interrogate. Not one Denis O'Donegan!—O no; the said Denis is an ignoramus, and knows nothing of the classics. Well, be it so. All I say is, that I wish I had one classical lick at their provost, I would let him know what the master of a plantation seminary (*—a periphrasis for hedge-school) could do when brought to the larned scratch?"

"How does Tom look, uncle." asked Corbet; "we can't say that he has shown much affection for his friends since he went to college."

"How could you expect it, Charley, my worthy nepos." said the schoolmaster—"These sprigs of classicality, when once they get under the wing of the collegium aforesaid, which, like a comfortable, well-feathered old bird of the stubble, warms them into what is ten times better than celebrity—*videlicet*, snug and independent dulness—these sprigs, I say, especially, when their parents or instructors happen to be poor, fight shy of the frieze and caubeen at home, and avoid the risk of resuscitating old associations. Tom, Charley looks—at least he did when I saw him to-day—very like a lad who is more studious of the bottle than the book; but I will not prejudge the youth, for I remember what he was while under my tuition. If he be as cunning now and assiduous in the prosecution of letters as I found him—if he be as cunning, as ripe at fiction, and of as unembarrassed brow as he was in his schoolboy career, he will either hang, on the one side, or rise to become lord chancellor or a bishop on the other."

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“He will be neither the one nor the other then,” said the prophetess, “but something better both for himself and his friends.”

“Is this by way of the oracular, Ginty?”

“You may take it so if you like,” replied the female.

“And does the learned page of futurity present nothing in the shape of a certain wooden engine, to which is attached a dangling rope, in association with the youth? for in my mind his merits are as likely to elevate him to the one as to the other. However, don’t look like the pythoness in her fury, Ginty; a joke is a joke; and here’s that he may be whatever you wish him! Ay, by the bones of Maro, this liquor is pleasant discussion!” We may observe here that they had been already furnished with a better description of drink—“But with regard to the youth in question, there is one thing puzzles me, oh, most prophetical niece, and that is, that you should take it into your head to effect an impossibility, in other words, to make a gentleman of him; *ex quovis ligno nonfit Mercurius*, is a good ould proverb.”

“That is but natural in her, uncle,” replied Corbet, “if you knew everything; but for the present you can’t; nobody knows who he is, and that is a secret that must be kept.”

“Why,” replied the pedagogue, “is he not a slip from the Black Baronet, and are not you, Ginty——?”

“Whether the child you speak of,” she replied, “is living or dead is what nobody knows.”

“There is one thing I know,” said Corbet, “and that is, that I could scald the heart and soul in the Black Baronet’s body by one word’s speaking, if I wished; only the time is not yet come; but it will come, and that soon, I hope.”

“Take care, Charley,” replied the master; “no violation of sacred ties. Is not the said Baronet your foster-brother?”

“He remembered no such ties when he brought shame and disgrace on our family,” replied Corbet, with a look of such hatred and malignity as could rarely be seen on a human countenance.

“Then why did you live with him, and remain in his confidence so long,” asked his uncle.

“I had my own reasons for that—may be they will be known soon, and may be they will never be known,” replied his nephew—“Whisht! there’s a foot on the stairs,” he added; “it’s this youth, I’m thinking.”

Almost immediately a young man, in a college-gown and cap, entered, the room, apparently the worse for liquor, and approaching the schoolmaster, who sat next him, slapped his shoulder, exclaiming:

“Well, my jolly old pedagogue, I hope you have enjoyed yourself since I saw you last? Mr. Corbet, how do you do? And Cassandra, my darling death-like old prophetess, what have you to predict for Ambrose Gray,” for such was the name by which he went.

“Sit down, Mr. Gray,” said Corbet, “and join us in one glass of punch.”

“I will, in half-a-dozen,” replied the student; “for I am always glad to see my friends.”

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“But not to come to see them,” said Mrs. Cooper—“However, it doesn’t matter; we are glad to see you, Mr. Ambrose. I hope you are getting on well at college?”

“Third place, eh, my old grinder: are you not proud of me,” said Ambrose, addressing the schoolmaster.

“I think, Mr. Gray, the pride ought to be on the other side,” replied O’Donegan, with an affectation of dignity—“but it was well, and I trust you are not insensible of the early indoctrination you received at—whose hands I will not say; but I think it might be guessed notwithstanding.”

During this conversation, the eyes of the prophetess were fixed upon the student, with an expression of the deepest and most intense interest. His personal appearance was indeed peculiar and remarkable. He was about the middle size, somewhat straggling and bony in his figure; his forehead was neither good nor bad, but the general contour of his face contained not within it a single feature with the expression of which the heart of the spectator could harmonize. He was beetle-browed, his mouth diabolically sensual, and his eyes, which were scarcely an inch asunder, were sharp and piercing, and reminded one that the deep-seated cunning which lurked in them was a thing to be guarded against and avoided. His hands and feet were large and coarse, his whole figure disagreeable and ungainly, and his voice harsh and deep.

The fortune-teller, as we have said, kept her eyes fixed upon his features, with a look which seemed to betray no individual feeling beyond that of some extraordinary and profound interest. She appeared like one who was studying his character, and attempting to read his natural disposition in his countenance, manner, and conversation. Sometimes her eye brightened a little, and again her death-like face became overshadowed with gloom, reminding one of that strange darkness which, when the earth is covered with snow, falls with such dismal effect before an approaching storm.

“I grant you, my worthy old grinder, that you did indoctrinate me, as you say, to some purpose; but, my worthy old grinder, again I say to you, that, by all the gerunds, participles, and roots you ever ground in your life, it was my own grinding that got me the third place in the scholarship.”

“Well, Mr. Ambrose,” rejoined the pedagogue, who felt disposed to draw in his horns a little, “one thing is clear, that, between us both, we did it. What bait, what line, what calling, or profession in life, do you propose to yourself, Mr. Ambrose? Your course in college has been brilliant so far, thanks to—ahem—no matter—you have distinguished yourself.”

“I have carried everything before me,” replied Ambrose—“but what then? Suppose, my worthy old magister, that I miss a fellowship—why, what remains, but to sink down into a

resident mastership, and grind blockheads for the remainder of my life? But what though I fail in science, still, most revered and learned O'Donegan, I have ambition—-ambition—and, come how it may, I will surge up out of obscurity, my old buck. I forgot to tell you, that I got the first classical premium yesterday, and that I am consequently—-no, I didn't forget to tell you, because I didn't know it myself when I saw you to-day. Hip, hip—hurra!"

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His two male companions filled their glasses, and joined him heartily. O'Donegan shook him by the hand, so did Corbet, and they now could understand the cause of his very natural elevation of spirits.

"So you have all got legacies," proceeded Mr. Ambrose; "fifty pounds apiece, I hear, by the death of your brother, Mr. Corbet, who was steward to Lady Gourlay—I am delighted to hear it—hip, hip, hurra, again."

"It's true enough," observed the prophetess, "a good, kind-hearted man was my poor brother Edward."

"How is that old scoundrel of a Black Baronet in your neighborhood—Sir Thomas—he who murdered his brother's heir?"

"For God's sake, Mr. Ambrose, don't say so. Don't you know that he got heavy damages against Captain Furlong for using the same words?"

"He be hanged," said the tipsy student; "he murdered him as sure as I sit at this table; and God bless the worthy, be the same man or woman, who left himself, as he left his brother's widow, without an heir to his ill-gotten title and property."

The fortune-teller rose up, and entreated him not to speak harshly against Sir Thomas Gourlay, adding, "That, perhaps, he was not so bad as the people supposed; but," she added, "as they—that is, she and her brother—happened to be in town, they were anxious to see him (the student); and, indeed, they would feel obliged if he came with them into the front room for ten minutes or so, as they wished to have a little private conversation with him."

The change in his features at this intimation was indeed surprising. A keen, sharp sense of self-possession, an instant recollection of his position and circumstances, banished from them, almost in an instant, the somewhat careless and tipsy expression which they possessed on his entrance.

"Certainly," said he—"Mr. O'Donegan, will you take care of yourself until we return?"

"No doubt of it," replied the pedagogue, as they left the room, "I shall not forget myself, no more than that the image and superscription of Sir Thomas Gourlay, the Black Baronet, is upon your diabolical visage."

Instead of ten minutes, the conference between the parties in the next room lasted for more than an hour, during which period O'Donegan did not omit to take care of himself, as he said. The worthy pedagogue was one of those men, who, from long habit, can never become tipsy beyond a certain degree of elevation, after which, no matter what may be the extent of their indulgence, nothing in the shape of liquor can affect them. When Gray and his two friends returned, they found consequently nothing but empty

bottles before them, whilst the schoolmaster viewed them with a kind of indescribable steadiness of countenance, which could not be exactly classed with either drunkenness or sobriety, but was something between both. More liquor, however, was ordered in, but, in the meantime, O'Donegan's eyes were fastened

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upon Mr. Gray with a degree of surprise, which, considering the change in the young man's appearance, was by no means extraordinary. Whatever the topic of their conversation may have been, it is not our purpose at present to disclose; but one thing is certain, that the transition which took place in Gray's features, as well as in his whole manner, was remarkable almost beyond belief. This, as we have said, manifested itself in some degree, on hearing that Corbet and his sister had something to say to him in the next room. Now, however, the change was decided and striking. All symptoms of tipsy triumph, arising from his success in college, had completely disappeared, and were replaced by an expression of seriousness and mingled cunning, which could not possibly escape observation. There was a coolness, a force of reflection, a keen, calm, but agitated lustre in his small eyes, that was felt by the schoolmaster to be exceedingly disagreeable to contemplate. In fact, the face of the young man was, in a surprising degree, calculating and sinister. A great portion of its vulgarity was gone, and there remained something behind that seemed to partake of a capacity for little else than intrigue, dishonesty, and villany. It was one of those countenances on which, when moved by the meditations of the mind within, nature frequently expresses herself as clearly as if she had written on it, in legible characters, 'Beware of this man'.

After a little time, now that the object of this mysterious meeting had been accomplished, the party separated.

We mentioned that Corbet and Sir Thomas Gourlay were foster-brothers—a relation which, in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, formed the basis of an attachment, on the part of the latter, stronger, in many instances, than that of nature itself. Corbet's brother stood also to him in the same relation as he did to the late Sir Edward Gourlay, under whom, and subsequently under his widow, he held the situation of house-steward until his death. Edward Corbet, for his Christian name had been given him after that of his master—his mother having nursed both brothers—was apparently a mild, honest, affectionate man, trustworthy and respectful, as far, at least, as ever could be discovered to the contrary, and, consequently, never very deep in the confidence of his brother Charles, who was a great favorite with Sir Thomas, was supposed to be very deeply in his secrets, and held a similar situation in his establishment. It was known, or at least supposed, that his brother Edward, having lived since his youth up with a liberal and affectionate master, must have saved a good deal of money; and, as he had never married, of course his brother, and also his sister—the fortune-teller—took it for granted that, being his nearest relations, whatever savings he had put together, must, after his death, necessarily pass into their hands. He was many years older than either, and as they maintained a constant and deferential intercourse with him—studied

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all his habits and peculiarities—and sent him, from time to time, such little presents as they thought might be agreeable to him, the consequence was, that they maintained their place in his good opinion, so far at least as to prevent him from leaving the fruits of his honest and industrious life to absolute strangers. Not that they inherited by any means his whole property, such as it was, several others of his relatives received more or less, but his brother, sister, and maternal uncle—the schoolmaster—were the largest inheritors.

The illness of Edward Corbet was long and tedious; but Lady Gourlay allowed nothing to be wanting that could render his bed of sickness or death easy and tranquil, so far as kindness, attention, and the ministry of mere human comforts could effect it. During his illness, his brother Charles visited him several times, and had many private conversations with him. And it may be necessary to state here, that, although these two relatives had never lived upon cold or unfriendly terms, yet the fact was that Edward felt it impossible to love Charles with the fulness of a brother's affection. The natural disposition of the latter, under the guise of an apparently good-humored and frank demeanor, was in reality inscrutable.

Though capable, as we said, of assuming a very different character whenever it suited his purpose, he was nevertheless a man whose full confidence was scarcely ever bestowed upon a human being. Such an individual neither is nor can be relished in society; but it is precisely persons of his stamp who are calculated to win their way with men of higher and more influential position in life, who, when moved by ambition, avarice, or any other of the darker and more dangerous passions of our nature, feel an inclination, almost instinctive, to take such men into their intrigues and deliberations. The tyrant and oppressor discovers the disposition and character of his slave and instrument with as much sagacity as is displayed by the highly bred dog that scents out the game of which the sportsman is in pursuit. In this respect, however, it not unfrequently happens, that even those who are most confident in the penetration with which they make such selections, are woefully mistaken in the result.

We allude particularly to the death of Edward Corbet, at this stage of our narrative, because, from that event, the train of circumstances which principally constitute the body of our narrative originated.

His brother had been with him in the early part of the day on which he breathed his last. On arriving at the mansion in Merrion square, he met Lady Gourlay on the steps of the hall door, about to enter her carriage.

"I am glad you are come, Corbet," she said—"Your poor brother has been calling for you—see him instantly—for his sands are numbered. The doctor thinks he cannot pass the turn of the day."

“God bless your ladyship,” replied Corbet, “for your uncommon kindness and attention to him during his long and severe illness. All that could be done for a person in his circumstances, your ladyship did; and I know he is deeply sensible of it, my lady.”

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“It was only my duty, Corbet,” she replied, “to a true-hearted and faithful servant, for such he was to our family. I could not forget the esteem in which his master, my dear husband, held him, nor the confidence which he never failed, and justly, to repose in him. Go immediately to him, for he has expressed much anxiety to see you.”

His brother, indeed, found him hovering on the very brink of the grave. What their conversation was, we know not, unless in so far as a portion of it at least may be inferred from the subsequent circumstances of our story. After having spent about an hour with him, his brother, who, it seems, had some pressing commissions to execute for Sir Thomas, was obliged to leave him for a time, but promised to return as soon as he could, get them discharged. In the meantime, poor Corbet sank rapidly after Charles’s departure, and begged, with a degree of anguish that was pitiable, to see Lady Gourlay, as he had something, he said, of the utmost importance to communicate to her. Lady Gourlay, however, had gone out, and none of the family could give any opinion as to the period of her return; whilst the dying man seemed to experience a feeling that amounted almost to agony at her absence. In this state he remained for about three hours, when at length she returned, and found him with the mild and ghastly impress of immediate death visible in his languid, dying eyes, and hollow countenance.

“They tell me you wish to see me, Corbet,” she said—“If there is anything that can be done to soothe your mind, or afford you ease and comfort in your departing hour, mention it, and, if it be within our power, it shall be done.”

He made an effort to speak, but his voice was all but gone. At length, after several efforts, he was able to make, her understand that he wished her to bend down her head to him; she did so; and in accents that were barely, and not without one or two repetitions, intelligible, he was able to say, “Your son is living, and Sir Thomas knows ——”

Lady Gourlay was of a feminine, gentle, and quiet disposition, in fact, a woman from whose character one might expect, upon receiving such a communication, rather an exhibition of that wild and hysteric excitement which might be most likely to end in a scream or a fainting fit. Here, however, the instincts of the defrauded heart of the bereaved and sorrowing mother were called into instant and energetic life. The physical system, instead of becoming relaxed or feeble, grew firm and vigorous, and her mind collected and active. She saw, from the death-throes of the man, that a single moment was not to be lost, and instantly, for her mouth was still at his ear, asked, in a distinct and eager voice, “Where, Corbet, where? for God’s mercy, where? and what does Sir Thomas know?”

The light and animation of life were fast fading from his face; he attempted to speak again, but voice and tongue refused to discharge their office—he had become speechless. Feeling conscious, however, that he could not any longer make himself

understood by words, he raised his feeble hand, and attempted to point as if in a certain direction, but the arm fell powerlessly down—he gave a deep sigh and expired.

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Thus far only can we proceed at present. How and why the stranger makes his appearance at Ballytrain, and whether in connection with this incident or not, are circumstances which we will know in due time.

CHAPTER XI. The Stranger's Visit to Father MacMalum.

The stranger, after Fenton had gone, began to feel that it was impossible either to wheedle or extort any information whatsoever, whether of importance or otherwise, from that extraordinary and not very sane individual. That, however, there was a deep mystery about him, be it what it might, he could not, for a moment, doubt; and, for this reason, he resolved by no means to relax his exertions, or suffer Fenton, if he could fairly prevent it, to slip through his fingers. His unaccountable conduct and terror, during, as well as after, his own angry altercation with the baronet, went, in his opinion, strongly to connect him, in some manner, with that unscrupulous man. But how to develop the nature of this connection constituted the very difficulty which not only disappointed but mortified him.

"I will call upon Birney," thought he; "he is acute and sensible, and probably, from his greater experience of life, will be able to throw out some hint that may be valuable, and enable me to proceed with more effect."

We have already said, that it was somewhat difficult to commonplace observers to determine his (the stranger's) exact position in society by a first glance at his dress. This ambiguity of appearance, if, after all, it could properly be called so, was assumed for the express purpose of avoiding observation as much as possible. The fact, however, of finding that his desire to remain unnoticed had been not merely observed and commented on, but imputed to him almost as a crime, determined him no longer to lie *perdu* in his inn, but to go abroad, and appear in public like another; whilst, at the same time, his resolution remained fixed as ever, for various reasons, to conceal his name. The moment, therefore, he had made up his mind to this course, that assumed restraint of manner and consciousness of not being what we appear to be were completely thrown aside, and the transition which ensued was indeed extraordinary. His general deportment became at once that of a perfect gentleman, easy, elegant, if not absolutely aristocratic; but without the slightest evidence of anything that could be considered supercilious or offensive. His dress was tastefully within the fashion, but not in its extreme, and his admirable figure thus displayed to the best advantage; whilst his whole person was utterly free from every symptom of affectation or foppery. Nor was the change in the tone of his features less striking. Their style of beauty was at once manly and intellectual, combining, as they did, an expression of great sweetness, obvious good sense, and remarkable determination. He bore, in fact, the aspect of a man who could play with a child on the green, or beard a lion in his lair.

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The sagacity of the Irish people, in the estimate they form of personal appearance and character, is, indeed, very extraordinary. Our friend, the stranger, when casting his eye over the town of Ballytrain, on his way to have an interview with Birney, who, we may as well observe, was in his confidence, perceived that it was market-day. As he went out upon the street, a crowd of persons were standing opposite the inn door, where an extensive yarn market, in these good old times, was always held; and we need scarcely say that his gentlemanly and noble figure, and the striking elegance of his manner, at once attracted their attention.

“Well,” said one of them, “there goes a real gintleman, begad, at any rate.”

“Divil a lie in that,” added another; “there’s no mistakin’ the true blood.”

“Who is he,” asked a third—“Does nobody know him?”

“Troth,” said the other, “it doesn’t signify a traneen who or what he is; whether he’s gentle or simple, I say that the whole country ought to put their heads under his feet.”

“Why so, Jemmy Trailcudgel,” asked a fourth; “what did he do for the counthry?”

“I’ll tell you that, Micky,” replied the other—“The Black Baronet, bad luck to him, came to the inn where he stops, and insisted, right or wrong, on knowing who and what he was.”

“I wouldn’t put it past him, the turk o’ blazes! Well, an’ what happened?”

“Why, the gintleman got up, and tuck a hoult o’ the black villain by the nose, led him to the head of the stairs, then turned him down before him, and made his feet right and left play against the barrow knight, like the tucks of a cloth mill, until he thrundled him clane —I’m not so sure of that, though—out o’ the hall door.”

“An’ for that same, God prosper him! Begad, he’s a bully gentleman,” observed a stout, frieze-coated fellow, with a large bunch of green linen yarn on his lusty arm—“he is, and it’s in him, and upon him, as every one that has eyes to see may know.”

The object of their praise, on entering the office of his friend Birney, found him at his desk, with professional papers and documents before him. After the ordinary greetings of the day, and an accurate account of the baronet’s interview with him, the stranger introduced the topic in which he felt so deep an interest.

“I am unfortunate, Mr. Birney,” said he; “Fenton, notwithstanding his eccentricity, insanity, or whatever it may be termed, seems to suspect my design, and evades, with singular address, every attempt, on my part, to get anything out of him. Is he absolutely deranged, think you? For, I assure you, I have just now had a scene with him, in which his conduct and language could proceed from nothing short of actual insanity. A little affected with liquor he unquestionably was, when he came in first. The appearance,

however, of Sir Thomas not only reduced him to a state of sobriety, but seemed to strike him with a degree of terror altogether inexplicable."

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“How was that,” asked Birney.

The stranger accordingly described the scene between himself and Fenton, with which the reader is acquainted.

“He is not a madman, certainly, in the ordinary sense of the word,” replied Birney, after a pause; “but, I think, he may be called a kind of lunatic, certainly. My own opinion is, that, whatever insanity he may be occasionally afflicted with results more from an excessive indulgence in liquor than from any other cause. Be that, however, as it may, there is no question but that he is occasionally seized with fits of mental aberration. From what you tell me, and his exaggerated suspicions of a plot between you and Sir Thomas Gourlay, I think it most probable that he is your man still.”

“I, too, think it probable,” replied the stranger; “but, alas, I think it possible he may not. On comparing his features with the miniature, I confess I cannot now trace the resemblance which my sanguine imagination—and that only, I fear—first discovered.”

“But, consider, sir, that that miniature was taken when the original of it was only five or six years of age; and you will also recollect that growth, age, education, and peculiar habits of life, effect the most extraordinary changes in the features of the same individual. No, sir, I would not advise you to feel disheartened by this.”

“But, can you fall upon no hint or principle, Mr. Birney, by which I might succeed in unlocking the secret which this young man evidently possesses?”

“All I can recommend to you, sir, is comprised within one word—patience. Mark him well; ingratiate yourself with him; treat him with kindness; supply his wants; and I have no doubt but you may ultimately win upon his confidence.”

“Is there no sagacious old person in the neighborhood, no senachie or genealogist, to whom you could refer me, and from whose memory of past events in this part of the country I might be able to gain something to guide me?”

“There is one woman,” replied Birney, “who, were she tractable as to the past as she is communicative of the future, could furnish you more details of family history and hereditary scandal than any one else I can think of just now. Some of her predictions—-for she is a fortune-teller—have certainly been amazing.”

“The result, I have no doubt,” replied the other, “of personal acquaintance with private occurrences, rendered incredible under ordinary circumstances, in consequence of her rapid transitions from place to place. I shall certainly not put myself under the guidance of an impostor, Mr. Birney.”

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“In this case, sir, I think you are right; for it has been generally observed that, in no instance, has she ever been known to make any reference to the past in her character of fortune-teller. She affects to hold intercourse with the fairies, or good people, as we term them, and insists that it is from them that she derives the faculty of a prophetess. She also works extraordinary cures by similar aid, as she asserts. The common impression is, that her mind is burdened with some secret guilt, and that it relieves her to contemplate the future, as it regards temporal fate, but that she dares not look back into the past. I know there is nothing more certain than that, when asked to do so, in peculiar moods of mind, she manifests quite as much of the maniac as poor Fenton.”

“Away with the old impostress!” exclaimed the stranger; “I will have none of her! Can you think of no one else?”

“Of course, you have not had time to become acquainted with our parish priest?” replied Birney. “Since ‘Aroint thee, witch,’ is your creed, I think you had better try him.”

“Not an unnatural transition,” replied the stranger, smiling; “but what is he like? Give me an outline.”

“He is named the Rev. Peter M’Mahon,and I forewarn you, that you are as likely, if he be not in the mood, to get such a reception as you may not relish. He is somewhat eccentric and original, but, at the same time, his secret piety and stolen benevolence are beyond all question. With his limited means, the good he does is incalculable. He is, in fact, simple, kind-hearted, and truly religious. In addition to all, he is a considerable bit of a humorist; when the good man’s mind is easy, his humor is kindly, rich, and mellow; but, when any way in dudgeon, it is comically sarcastic.”

“I must see this man,” said the stranger; “you have excited my curiosity. By all accounts he is worth a visit.”

“He is more likely to serve you in this matter than any one I know,” said the attorney; “or, if he can’t himself, perhaps he may find out those that can. Very little has happened in the parish within the last thirty-five years with which he is not acquainted.”

“I like the man,” replied the other, “from your description of him.”

“At all events, you would if you knew him,” replied Birney. “He is both a good priest and a good man.”

He then directed him to the worthy clergy-man’s residence, which was not more than a mile and a half from the town, and the stranger lost little time in reaching it.

On approaching the house, he was much struck with the extraordinary air of neatness, cleanliness, and comfort, which characterized not only the house itself, but everything about it. A beautiful garden facing the south, stretched down to the left, as you

approached the elegant little whitewashed dwelling, which, placed on a green knoll, literally shone for miles over the beautiful and serene country by which it was surrounded.

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Below it, to the south, between firm green banks and meadows, wound a beautiful river, and to the north rose one of the most picturesque hills, probably, in the kingdom; at the hip of which was a gloomy, precipitous glen, which, for wildness and solitary grandeur, is unrivalled by anything of the kind we have seen. On the top of the hill is a cave, supposed to be Druidical, over which an antiquarian would dream half a life; and, indeed, this is not to be wondered at, inasmuch as he would find there some of the most distinctly traced Ogham characters to be met with in any part of the kingdom.

On entering the house, our nameless friend found the good priest in what a stranger might be apt to consider a towering passion.

“You lazy bosthoon,” said he, to a large, in fact to a huge young fellow, a servant, “was it to allow the pigs, the destructive vagabonds, to turn up my beautiful bit of lawn that I undertook to give you house-room, wages, and feeding—eh? and a bitther business to me the same feeding is. If you were a fellow that knew when he had enough, I could bear the calamity of keeping you at all. But that’s a subject, God help you, and God help me too that has to suffer for it, on which your ignorance is wonderful. To know when to stop so long as the blessed victuals is before you is a point of polite knowledge you will never reach, you immaculate savage. Not a limb about you but you’d give six holidays to out of the seven, barrin’ your walrus teeth, and, if God or man would allow you the fodder, you’d give us an elucidation of the perpetual motion. Be off, and get the strongest set of rings that Jemmy M’Quade can make for those dirty, grubbing bastes of pigs. The Lord knows I don’t wondher that the Jews hated the thieves, for sure they are the only blackguard animals that ever committed suicide, and set the other bastes of the earth such an unchristian example. Not that a slice of ham is so bad a thing in itself, especially when it is followed by a single tumbler of poteen punch.”

“Troth, masther, I didn’t see the pigs, or they’d not have my sanction to go into the lawn.”

“Not a thing ever you see, or wish to see, barring your dirty victuals.”

“I hope, sir,” said the stranger, much amused in the meantime, but with every courtesy of manner, “that my request for a short interview does not come at an unseasonable hour?”

“And, do you hear me, you bosthoon,” proceeded his reverence—this, however, he uttered sotto voce, from an apprehension lest the stranger should hear his benevolent purposes—“did you give the half crown to Widow Magowran, whose children, poor creatures, are lying ill of fever?”

Not a word to the stranger, who, however, overheard him.

“I did, plaise your reverence,” replied the huge servant.

“What did she say,” asked the other, “when you slipped it to her?”

“She said nothing, sir, for a minute or so, but dropped on her knees, and the tears came from her eyes in such a way that I couldn’t help letting down one or two myself. ‘God spare him,’ she then said, ’for his piety and charity makes him a blessin’ to the parish.’ Throth, I couldn’t help lettin’ down a tear or two myself.”

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“You couldn’t now.” exclaimed the simple-hearted priest; “why, then, I forgive you the pigs, you great, good-natured bosthoon.”

The stranger now thought that he might claim some notice from his reverence.

“I fear, sir,” said he—

“And whisper, Mat,” proceeded the priest—paying not the slightest attention to him, “did you bring the creel of turf to poor Barney Farrell and his family, as I desired you?”

“I did, your reverence, and put a good heap on it for the creatures.”

“Well, I forgive you the pigs!” exclaimed the benevolent priest, satisfied that his pious injunctions had been duly observed, and extending a portion of his good feeling to the instrument; “and as for the appetite I spoke of, sure, you good-natured giant you, haven’t you health, exercise, and a most destructive set of grinders? and, indeed, the wonder would be if you didn’t make the sorrow’s havoc at a square of bacon; so for heaping the creel I forgive you the digestion and the pigs both.”

“Will you permit me.” interposed the stranger, a third time.

“But listen again,” proceeded his reverence, “did you bring the bread and broth to the poor Caseys, the creatures?”

“No, sir,” replied Mat, licking his lips, as the stranger thought, “it was Kitty Kavanagh brought that; you know you never trust me wid the vittles—ever since—”

“Yes, I ought to have remembered that notorious fact. There’s where your weakness is strongest, but, indeed, it is only one of them; for he that would trust you with the carriage of a bottle of whiskey might be said to commit a great oversight of judgment. With regard to the victuals, I once put my trust in God, and dispatched you, after a full meal, with some small relief to a poor family, in the shape of corned beef and greens, and you know the sequel, that’s enough. Be off now, and get the rings made as I desired you.”

He then turned to the stranger, whom he scanned closely; and we need hardly assure our reader that the other, in his turn, marked the worthy priest’s bearing, manner, and conversation with more than usual curiosity. The harmless passion in which he found him—his simple but touching benevolence, added to the genuine benignity with which he relaxed his anger against Mat Euly, the gigantic servant, because he told him that he had put a heap upon the creel of turf which he brought to poor Barney Farrell and his family, not omitting the tears he represented himself to have shed from Christian sympathy with Widow Magowran, both of which acts were inventions of the purest water, resorted to in order to soften the kind-hearted priest; all this, we say, added to what he had heard from Birney, deeply interested the stranger in the character of Father

Peter. Nor was he less struck by his appearance. Father MacMahon was a round, tight, rosy-faced little man, with laughing eyes, full of good nature, and a countenance which altogether might

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be termed a title-page to benevolence. His lips were finely cut, and his well-formed mouth, though full of sweetness, was utterly free from every indication of sensuality or passion. Indeed, it was at all times highly expressive of a disposition the most kind and placable, and not unfrequently of a comical spirit, that blended with his benevolence to a degree that rendered the whole cast of his features, as they varied with and responded to the kindly and natural impulses of his heart, a perfect treat to look upon. That his heart and soul were genuinely Irish, might easily be perceived by the light of humor which beamed with such significant contagion from every feature of his face, as well as by the tear which misery and destitution and sorrow never failed to bring to his cheek, thus overshadowing for a time, if we may say so, the whole sunny horizon of his countenance. But this was not all; you might read there a spirit of kindly sarcasm that was in complete keeping with a disposition always generous and affectionate, mostly blunt and occasionally caustic. Nothing could exceed the extreme neatness with which he attended to his dress and person. In this point he was scrupulously exact and careful; but this attention to the minor morals was the result of anything but personal pride, for we are bound to say, that, with all his amiable eccentricities, more unaffected humility never dwelt in the heart of a Christian minister.

He had, in fact, paid little or no attention to the stranger until Mat Ruly went out; when, on glancing at him with more attention, he perceived at once that he was evidently a person of no ordinary condition in life.

“I have to ask your pardon, sir,” said he, “for seeming to neglect you as I did, but the truth is, I was in a white heat of passion with that great good-natured colossus of mine, Mat Ruly, for, indeed, he is good-natured, and that I can tell you makes me overlook many a thing in him that I would not otherwise pass by. Ah, then, sir, did you observe,” he added, “how he confessed to heaping the creel of turf for the Farrells, and crying with poor Widow Magowran?”

The stranger could have told him that, if he had seen the comical wink which the aforesaid Mat had given to one of the servant-maids, as he reported his own sympathy and benevolence to his master, he might probably have somewhat restricted his encomium upon him.

“I can’t say, sir,” he replied, “that I paid particular attention to the dialogue between you.”

“Bless me,” exclaimed Father Peter, “what am I about? Walk into the parlor, sir. Why should I have kept you standing here so long? Pray, take a seat, sir. You must think me very rude and forgetful of the attention due to a gentleman of your appearance.”

“Not at all, sir,” replied the other, seating himself—“I rather think you were better engaged and in higher duties than any that are likely to arise from my communication with you.”

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“Well, sir,” replied the priest, smiling, “that you know is yet to be determined on; but in the mane time I’ll be happy to hear your business, whatever it is; and, indeed, from your looks, although the Lord knows they’re often treacherous, I tell you that if I can stretch a point to sarve you I will; provided always that I can do so with a good conscience, and provided also that I find your character and conduct entitle you to it. So, then, I say, let us have at the business you spake of, and to follow up this proposition with suitable energy, what’s your name and occupation? for there’s nothing like knowing the ground a man stands on. I know you’re a stranger in this neighborhood, for I assure you there is not a face in the parish but I am as well acquainted with as my own, and indeed a great deal betther, in regard that I never shave with a looking-glass. I tried it once or twice and was near committing suicide in the attempt.”

There was something so kind, frank, yet withal so eccentric, and, as it would seem, so unconsciously humorous in the worthy father’s manner, that the stranger, whilst he felt embarrassed by the good-natured bluntness of his interrogations, could not help experiencing a sensation that was equally novel and delightful, arising as it did from the candor and honesty of purpose that were so evident in all the worthy man did and said.

“I should never have supposed, from the remarkable taste of your dress and your general appearance,” he replied, “that you make your toilet without a looking-glass.”

“It’s a fact, though; neither I nor my worthy father before me ever troubled one; we left them to the girshas and the women; habit is everything, and for that reason I could shave as well at midnight as at the hour of noon. However, let us pass that by, thank God I can go out with as clane a face, and I trust with as clear a conscience, always barring the passions that Mat Euly puts me into, as some of my neighbors; yet, God forgive me, why should I boast? for I know and feel that I fall far short of my duty in every sense, especially when I reflect how much of poverty and destitution are scattered through this apparently wealthy parish. God forgive me, then, for the boast I made, for it was both wrong and sinful!”

A touch of feeling which it would be difficult to describe, but which raised him still more highly in the estimation of the stranger, here passed over his handsome and benevolent features, but after it had passed away he returned at once to the object of the stranger’s visit.

“Well,” said he, “to pass now from my omissions and deficiencies, let us return to the point we were talking of; you haven’t told me your name, or occupation, or profession, or business of any kind—that is, if you have any?”

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“I assure you, reverend sir,” replied the other, “that I am at the present moment placed in such a position, that I fear it is out of my power to satisfy you in any of these points. Whilst, at the same time, I confess that, nameless and stranger as I am, I feel anxious to receive your advice and assistance upon a matter of considerable—indeed of the deepest—importance to an unfortunate and heart-broken lady, whose only son, when but six years of age, and then heir to a large property, disappeared many years ago in a manner so mysterious, that no trace, until very recently, has ever been found of him. Nor, indeed, has she found any clew to him yet, beyond a single intimation given to her by her house-steward—a man named Corbet—who, on his death-bed, had merely breath to say that ‘your son lives, and that Sir Thomas—’ These, sir, were the man’s last words; for, alas! unhappy for the peace of mind of this excellent lady, he expired before he could complete the sentence, or give her the information for which her heart yearned. Now, reverend sir,” he added, “I told you that it is out of my power, for more than one reason, to disclose my name; but, I assure you, that the fact of making this communication to you, which you perceive I do frankly and without hesitation, is placing a confidence in you, though a personal stranger to me, which I am certain you will respect.”

“Me a stranger!” exclaimed the priest, “in my own parish where I have lived curate and parish priest for close upon forty years; hut hut! this is a good joke. Why, I tell you, sir, that there is not a dog in the parish but knows me, with the exception of a vile cur belonging to Jemmy M’Gurth, that I have striven to coax and conciliate a hundred ways, and yet I never pass but he’s out at me. Indeed, he’s an ungrateful creature, and a mane sconce besides; for I tell you, that when leaving home, I have often put bread in my pocket, and on going past his owner’s house, I would throw it to him—now not a lie in this—and what do you think the nasty vermin would do? He’d ait the bread, and after he had made short work of it—for he’s aquil to Mat Kuly in appetite—he’d attack me as fresh, and indeed a great dale fresher in regard of what he had got; ay, and with more bitterness, if possible, than ever. Now, sir, I remember that greedy and ungrateful scrub of an animal about three years ago; for indeed the ill feeling is going on between us for nearly seven—I say I remember him in the dear year, when he wasn’t able to bark at me until he staggered over and put himself against the ditch on the roadside, and then, heaven knows, worse execution of the kind was never heard. However, there’s little else than ingratitude in this world, and eaten bread, like hunger, is soon forgotten, though far seldomer by dogs, I am sorry to say, than by man—a circumstance which makes the case I am repeating to you of this cur still worse. But, indeed, he served me right; for bribery, even to a dog, does not deserve to prosper. But I beg your pardon, sir, for obtruding my own little grievances upon a stranger. What is it you expect me to do for you in this business? You allude, I think, to Lady Gourlay; and, in truth, if it was in my power to restore her son to her, that good and charitable lady would not be long without him.”

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“I do,” replied the other—“She is under a strong impression, in consequence of the dying man’s allusion to the boy’s uncle, Sir Thomas, ‘who,’ he said, ‘knows,’ that he is cognizant of the position—whatever it may be—in which her unfortunate son is placed.”

“Not unlikely, but still what can I do in this?”

“I am scarcely aware of that myself,” replied the other; “but I may say that it was Mr. Birney, who, under the circumstances of peculiar difficulty in which I am placed, suggested to me to see you, and who justified me besides in reposing this important confidence in you.”

“I thank Mr. Birney,” said Father Peter, “and you may rest assured, that your confidence will not be abused, and that upon a higher principle, I trust, than my friendship for that worthy and estimable gentleman. I wish all in his dirty roguish profession were like him. By the way,” he added, as if struck by a sudden thought, “perhaps you are the worthy gentleman who kicked the Black Baronet downstairs in the Mitre inn?”

“No,” he replied; “some warm words we had, which indeed for one reason I regret; but that was all. Sir Thomas, sir, I believe, is not popular in the neighborhood?”

“I make it a point, my friend,” replied the priest, “never to spake ill of the absent; but perhaps you are aware that his only son disappeared as mysteriously as the other, and that he charges his sister-in-law as the cause of it; so that, in point of fact, their suspicions are mutual.”

“I believe so,” said the other; “but I wish to direct your attention to another fact, or, rather, to another individual, who seems to me to be involved in considerable mystery.”

“And pray, who is that.” replied the priest—“Not yourself, I hope; for in truth, by all accounts, you’re as mysterious as e’er a one of them.”

“My mystery will soon disappear, I trust,” said the stranger, smiling—“The young man’s name to whom I allude is Fenton; but I appeal to yourself, reverend sir, whether, if Sir Thomas Gourlay were to become aware of the dying man’s words, with which I have just made you acquainted, he might not be apt, if it be a fact that he has in safe and secret durance his brother’s son, and the heir to the property which he himself now enjoys, whether, I say, he might not take such steps as Would probably render fruitless every search that could be made for him?”

“You needn’t fear me, sir,” replied his reverence; “if you can keep your own secret as well as I will, it won’t travel far, I can tell you. But what about this unfortunate young man, Fenton? I think I certainly heard the people say from time to time that nobody knows anything about him, either as to where he came from or who he is. How is he involved in this affair, though?”

“I cannot speak with any certainty,” replied the other; “but, to tell you the truth, I often feel myself impressed with strong suspicions, that he is the very individual we are seeking.”

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“But upon what reasons do you ground those suspicions.” asked his reverence.

The stranger then related to him the circumstances in connection with Fenton’s mysterious terror of Sir Thomas Gourlay, precisely as the reader is already acquainted with them.

“But,” said the priest, “can you believe now, if Sir Thomas was the kidnapper in this instance, that he would allow unfortunate Fenton, supposing he is his brother’s heir, and who, they say, is often *non compos*, to remain twenty-four hours at large?”

“Probably not; but you know he may be unaware of his residence so near him. Sir Thomas, like too many of his countrymen, has been an absentee for years, and is only a short time in this country, and still a shorter at Red Hall. The young man probably is at large, because he may have escaped. There is evidently some mysterious relation between Fenton and the baronet, but what it is or can be I am utterly unable to trace. Fenton, with all his wild eccentricity or insanity, is cautious, and on his guard against me; and I find it impossible to get anything out of him.”

The worthy priest fell into a mood of apparently deep but agreeable reflection, and the stranger felt a hope that he had fallen upon some plan, or, at all events, that he had thought of or recalled to memory some old recollection that might probably be of service to him.

“The poor fellow, sir,” said he, addressing the other with singular benignity, “is an orphan; his mother is dead more than twelve years, and his father, the idle and unfortunate man, never has been of the slightest use to him, poor creature.”

“What,” exclaimed the stranger, with animation, “you, then, know his father!”

“Know him! to be sure I do. He is, or rather he was, a horse-jockey, and I took the poor neglected young lad in because he had no one to look after him. But wasn’t it kind-hearted of the creature to heap the creel of turf though, and shed tears for poor Widow Magowran? In truth, I won’t forget either of these two acts to him.”

“You speak, sir, of your servant, I believe.” observed the other, with something like chagrin.

“In truth, there’s not a kind-hearted young giant alive this day. Many a little bounty that I, through the piety and liberality of the charitable, am enabled to distribute among my poor, and often send to them with Mat; and I believe there’s scarcely an instance of the kind in which he is the bearer of it, that he doesn’t shed tears just as he did with Widow Magowran. Sure I have it from his own lips.”

“I have little doubt of it,” replied the stranger.

“And one day,” proceeded the credulous, easy man, “that I was going along the Race-road, I overtook him with a creel of turf, the same way, on his back, and when I looked down from my horse into the creel, I saw with astonishment that it wasn’t more than half full. ‘Mat,’ said I, ’what’s the raison of this? Didn’t I desire you to fill the creel to the top, and above it?’

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"'Troth,' said poor Mat, 'I never carried such a creelful in my life as it was when I left home.'

"'But what has become of the turf, then?' I asked.

"He gave me a look and almost began to cry—'Arra now, your reverence,' he replied, 'how could you expict me to have the heart to refuse a few sods to the great number of poor creatures that axed me for them, to boil their pratees, as I came along? I hope, your reverence, I am not so hard-hearted as all that comes to.'"

"I know," proceeded the priest, "that it was wrong not to bring the turf to its destination; but, you see, sir, it was only an error of judgment—although the head was wrong, the heart was right—and that's a great point."

It was not in human nature, however, to feel annoyed at this characteristic ebullition. The stranger's chagrin at once disappeared, and as he was in no particular hurry, and wished to see as much of the priest as possible, he resolved to give him his own way.

He had not long to wait, however. After about a minute's deep thought, he expressed himself as follows—and it may be observed here, once for all, that on appropriate occasions his conversation could rise and adapt itself to the dignity of the subject, with a great deal of easy power, if not of eloquence—"Now, sir," said he, "you will plaise to pay attention to what I am about to say: Beware of Sir Thomas Gourlay—as a Christian man, it is my duty to put you on your guard; but consider that you ask me to involve myself in a matter of deep family interest and importance, and yet, as I said, you keep yourself wrapped, up in a veil of impenetrable mystery. Pray, allow me to ask, is Mr. Birney acquainted with your name and secret?"

"He is," replied the other, "with both"

"Then, in that case," said the worthy priest, with very commendable prudence, "I will walk over with you to his house, and if he assures me personally that you are a gentleman in whose objects I may and ought to feel an interest, I then say, that I shall do what I can for you, although that may not be much. Perhaps I may put you in a proper train to succeed. I will, with these conditions, give you a letter to an old man in Dublin, who may give you, on this very subject, more information than any other person I know, with one exception."

"My dear sir," replied the stranger, getting on his legs—"I am quite satisfied with that proposal, and I feel that it is very kind of you to make it."

"Yes, but you won't go," said the priest, "till you take some refreshment. It's now past two o'clock."

"I am much obliged to you," replied the other, "but I never lunch."

“Not a foot you’ll stir then till you take something—I don’t want you to lunch—a bit and a sup just—come, don’t refuse now, for I say you must.”

The other smiled, and replied—“But, I assure you, my dear sir, I couldn’t—I breakfasted late.”

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“Not a matter for that, you must have something, I say—a drop of dram then—pure poteen—or maybe you’d prefer a glass of wine? say which; for you must taste either the one or the other”—and as he spoke, with a good-humored laugh, he deliberately locked the door, and put the key in his pocket—“It’s an old proverb,” he added, “that those who won’t take are never ready to give, and I’ll think you after all but a poor-hearted creature if you refuse it. At any rate, consider yourself a prisoner until you comply.”

“Well, then,” replied our strange friend, still smiling, “since your hospitality will force me, at the expense of my liberty, I think I must—a glass of sherry then, since you are so kind.”

“Ah,” replied his reverence, “I see you don’t know what’s good—that’s the stuff,” he added, pointing to the poteen, “that would send the radical heat to the very ends of your nails—I never take more than a single tumbler after my dinner, but that’s my choice.”

The stranger then joined him in a glass of sherry, and they proceeded to Mr. Birney’s.

CHAPTER XII. Crackenfudge Outwitted by Fenton

—The Baronet, Enraged at His Daughter’s Firmness, strikes Her.

Crackenfudge, who was completely on the alert to ascertain if possible the name of the stranger, and the nature of his business in Ballytrain, learned that Fenton and he had had three or four private interviews, and he considered it very likely that if he could throw himself in that wild young fellow’s way, without any appearance of design, he might be able to extract something concerning the other out of him. In the course, then, of three or four days after that detailed in our last chapter, and we mention this particularly, because Father M’Mahon was obliged to write to Dublin, in order to make inquiries touching the old man’s residence to whom he had undertaken to give the stranger a letter—in the course, we say, of three or four days after that on which the worthy priest appears in our pages, it occurred that Crackenfudge met the redoubtable Fenton in his usual maudlin state, that is to say, one in which he could be termed neither drunk nor sober. We have said that Fenton’s mind was changeful and unstable; sometimes evincing extraordinary quietness and civility, and sometimes full of rant and swagger, to which we may add, a good deal of adroitness and tact. In his most degraded state he was always known to claim a certain amount of respect, and would scarcely hold conversation with any one who would not call him Mr. Fenton.

On meeting Fenton, the worthy candidate for the magistracy, observing the condition he was in, which indeed was his usual one, took it for granted that his chance was good. He accordingly addressed him as follows:

“Fenton,” said he, “what’s the news in town?”

“To whom do you speak, sirra?” replied Fenton, indignantly. “Take off your hat, sir, whenever you address a gentleman.”

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“Every one knows you’re a gentleman, Mr. Fenton,” replied Crackenfudge; “and as for me, a’d be sorry to address you as anything else.”

“I’m sorry I can’t return the compliment, then,” said Fenton; “everyone knows you’re anything but a gentleman, and that’s the difference between us. What piece of knavery have you on the anvil now, my worthy embryo magistrate?”

“You’re severe this morning, Mr. Fenton; a’ don’t think a’ ever deserved that at your hands. But come, Mr. Fenton, let us be on good terms. A’ acknowledge you are a gentleman, Mr. Fenton.”

“Take care,” replied Fenton, “and don’t overdo the thing neither. Whether is it the knave or fool predominates in you to-day, Mr. Crackenfudge?”

“A’ hope a’m neither the one nor the other,” replied the embryo magistrate. “A’ hope a’m not, Mr. Fenton.”

“I believe, however, you happen to be both,” said Fenton; “that’s a fact as well known, my good fellow, as the public stocks there below; and if Madam Fame reports aright, it’s a pity you should be long out of them. Avaunt, you upstart! Before the close of your life, you will die with as many aliases as e’er a thief that ever swung from a gallows, and will deserve the swing, too, better than the thief.”

“A’ had a right to change my name,” replied the other, “when a’ got into property. A’ was ashamed of my friends, because there’s a great many of them poor.”

“Invert the tables, you misbegotten son of an elve,” replied Fenton; “’tis they that are ashamed of you; there is not one among the humblest of them but would blush to name you. So you did not uncover, as I desired you; but be it so. You wish to let me, sir, who am a gentleman, know, and to force me to say, that there is a knave under your hat. But come, Mr. Crackenfudge,” he continued, at once, and by some unaccountable impulse, changing his manner, “come, my friend Crackenfudge, you must overlook my satire. Thersites’ mood has past, and now for benevolence and friendship. Give us your honest hand, and bear not malice against your friend and neighbor.”

“You must have your own way, Mr. Fenton,” said Crackenfudge, smiling, or assuming a smile, and still steady as a sleuthhound to his purpose.

“Where now are you bound for, oh, benevolent and humane Crackenfudge?”

“A’ was jist thinking of asking this strange fellow—”

“Right, O Crackenfudgius! that impostor is a fellow; or if you prefer the reverse of the proposition, that fellow is an impostor. I have found him out.”

“A’ hard,” replied Crackenfudge, “that he and you were on rather intimate terms, and—”

“And so as being my companion, you considered him a fellow! Proceed, Crackenfudgius.”

“No, not at all; a’ was thinkin’ of makin’ his acquaintance, and paying some attention to him; that is, if a’ could know who and what he is.”

“And thou shalt know, my worthy mock magistrate. I am in a communicative humor to-day, and know thou shalt.”

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“And what may his name be, pray, Mr. Fenton?” with a peculiar emphasis on the Mr.

“Caution,” said Fenton; “don’t overdo the thing, I say, otherwise I am silent as the grave. Heigh-ho! what put that in my head? Well, sir, you shall know all you wish to know. In the first place, as to his name—it is Harry Hedles. He was clerk to a toothbrush-maker in London, but it seems he made a little too free with a portion of the brush money: he accordingly brushed off to our celebrated Irish metropolis, ycleped Dublin, where, owing to a tolerably good manner, a smooth English accent, and a tremendous stock of assurance, he insinuated himself into several respectable families as a man of some importance. Among others, it is said that he has engaged the affections of a beautiful creature, daughter and heiress to an Irish baronet, and that they are betrothed to each other. But as to the name or residence of the baronet, O Crackenfudgius, I am not in a condition to inform you—for this good reason, that I don’t know either myself.”

“But is it a fair question, Mr. Fenton, to ask how you became acquainted with all this?”

“How?” exclaimed Fenton, with a doughty but confident swagger; “incredulous varlet, do you doubt the authenticity of my information? He disclosed to me every word of it himself, and sought me out here for the purpose of getting me to influence my friends, who, you distrustful caitiff, are persons of rank and consequence, for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between him and old Grinwell, the toothbrush man, and having the prosecution stopped. Avaunt! now, begone! This is all the information I can afford upon the subject of that stout but gentlemanly impostor.”

Crackenfudge, we should have said, was on horseback during the previous dialogue, and no sooner had Fenton passed on, with a look of the most dignified self-consequence on his thin and wasted, though rather handsome features, than the candidate magistrate set spurs to his horse, and with a singularly awkward wabbling motion of his feet and legs about the animal’s sides, his right hand flourishing his whip at the same time into circles in the air, he approached Red Hall, as if he brought tidings of some great national victory.

He found the baronet perusing a letter, who, after having given him a nod, and pointing to a chair, without speaking, read on, with an expression of countenance which almost alarmed poor Crackenfudge. Whatever intelligence the letter may have contained, one thing seemed obvious—that it was gall and wormwood to his heart. His countenance, naturally more than ordinarily dark, literally blackened with rage and mortification, or perhaps with both; his eyes flashed fire, and seemed as about to project themselves out of his head, and poor Crackenfudge could hear most distinctly the grinding of his teeth. At length he rose up, and strode, as was his custom, through the room, moved by such a state of feeling

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as it was awful to look upon. During all this time he never seemed to notice Crackenfudge, whose face, on the other hand, formed a very ludicrous contrast with that of the baronet. There was at any time very little meaning, to an ordinary observer, in the countenance of this anxious candidate for the magisterial bench, but it was not without cunning; just as in the case of a certain class of fools, any one may recollect that anomalous combination of the latter with features whose blankness betokens the natural idiot at a first glance. Crackenfudge, who, on this occasion, felt conscious of the valuable intelligence he was about to communicate, sat with a face in which might be read, as far at least as anything could, a full sense of the vast importance with which he was charged, and the agreeable surprise which he must necessarily give the raging baronet. Not that the expression, after all, could reach anything higher than that union of stupidity and assurance which may so frequently be read in the same countenance.

"A' see, Sir Thomas," he at length said, "that something has vexed you, and a'm sorry to see it."

The baronet gave him a look of such fury, as in a moment banished not only the full-blown consciousness of the important intelligence he was about to communicate, but its very expression from his face, which waxed meaningless and cowardly-looking as ever.

"A' hope," he added, in an apologetical tone, "that a' didn't offend you by my observation; at least, a' didn't intend it."

"Sir," replied the baronet, "your apology is as unseasonable as the offence for which you make it. You see in what a state of agitation I am, and yet, seeing this, you have the presumption to annoy me by your impertinence. I have already told you, that I would help you to this d——d magistracy: although it is a shame, before God and man to put such a creature as you are upon the bench. Don't you see, sir, that I am not in a mood to be spoken to?"

Poor Crackenfudge was silent; and, upon remembering his previous dialogue with Fenton, he could not avoid thinking that he was treated rather roughly between them, The baronet, however, still moved backward and forward, like an enraged tiger in his cage, without any further notice of Crackenfudge; who, on his part, felt likely to explode, unless he should soon disburden himself of his intelligence. Indeed, so confident did he feel of the sedative effect it would and must have upon the disturbed spirit of this dark and terrible man, that he resolved to risk an experiment, at all hazards, after his own way. He accordingly puckered his face into a grin that was rendered melancholy by the terror which was still at his heart, and, in a voice that had one of the most comical quavers imaginable, he said: "Good news, Sir Thomas."

"Good devil, sir! what do you mean?"

“A’ mean good news, Sir Thomas. The fellow in the inn—a’ know everything about him.”

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“Eh! what is that? I beg your pardon, Crackenfudge; I have treated you discourteously and badly—but you will excuse me. I have had such cause for excitement as is sufficient to drive me almost mad. What is the good news you speak of, Crackenfudge?”

“Do you know who the fellow in the inn is, Sir Thomas?”

“Not I; but I wish I did.”

“Well, then, a’ can tell you.”

Sir Thomas turned abruptly about, and, fastening his dark gleaming eyes upon him, surveyed him with an expression of which no language could give an adequate description.

“Crackenfudge,” said he, in a voice condensed into tremendous power and interest, “keep me not a moment in suspense—don’t tamper with me, sir—don’t attempt to play upon me—don’t sell your intelligence, nor make a bargain for it. Curse your magistracy—have I not already told you that I will help you to it? What is the intelligence—the good news you speak of?”

“Why, simply this, Sir Thomas,” replied the other,—“that a’ know who and what the fellow in the inn is; but, for God’s sake, Sir Thomas, keep your temper within bounds, or if you don’t, a’ must only go home again, and keep my secret to myself. You have treated me very badly, Sir Thomas; you have insulted me, Sir Thomas; you have grossly offended me, Sir Thomas, in your own house, too, and without the slightest provocation. A’ have told you that a’ know everything about the fellow in the inn; and now, sir, you may thank the treatment a’ received that a’ simply tell you that, and have the honor of bidding you good day.”

“Crackenfudge,” replied. Sir Thomas, who in an instant saw his error, and felt in all its importance the value of the intelligence with which the other was charged, “I beg your pardon; but you may easily see that I was not—that I am not myself.”

“You pledge your honor, Sir Thomas, that you will get me the magistracy? A’ know you can if you set about it. A’ declare to God, Sir Thomas, a’ will never have a happy day unless I’m able to write J. P. after my name. A’ can think of nothing else. And, Sir Thomas, listen to me; my friends—a’ mean my relations—poor, honest, contemptible creatures, are all angry with me, because a’ changed my name to Crackenfudge.”

“But what has this to do with the history of the fellow in the inn?” replied Sir Thomas. “With respect to the change of your name, I have been given to understand that your relations have been considerably relieved by it.”

“How, Sir Thomas?”

“Because they say that they escape the disgrace of the connection; but, as for myself,” added the baronet, with a peculiar sneer, “I don’t pretend to know anything about the matter—one way or other. But let it pass, however; and now for your intelligence.”

“But you didn’t pledge your honor that you would get me the magistracy.”

“If,” said. Sir Thomas, “the information you have to communicate be of the importance I expect, I pledge my honor, that whatever man can do to serve you in that matter, I will. You know I cannot make magistrates at my will—I am not the lord chancellor.”

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“Well, then, Sir Thomas, to make short work of it, the fellow’s name is Harry Hedles. He was clerk to the firm of Grinwell and Co., the great tooth-brush manufacturers—-absconded with some of their cash, came over here, and smuggled himself, in the shape of a gentleman, into respectable families; and a’m positively informed, that he has succeeded in seducing the affections, and becoming engaged to the daughter and heiress of a wealthy baronet.”

The look which Sir Thomas turned upon Crackenfudge made the cowardly caitiff tremble.

“Harkee, Mr. Crackenfudge,” said he; “did you hear the name of the baronet, or of his daughter?”

“A’ did not, Sir Thomas; the person that told me was ignorant of this himself.”

“May I ask who your informant was, Mr. Crackenfudge?”

“Why, Sir Thomas, a half mad fellow, named Fenton, who said that he saw this vagabond at an establishment in England conducted by a brother of this Grinwell’s.”

The baronet paused for a moment, but the expression which took possession of his features was one of the most intense interest that could be depicted on the human countenance; he fastened his eyes upon Crackenfudge, as if he would have read the very soul within him, and by an effort restrained himself so far as to say, with forced composure, “Pray, Mr. Crackenfudge, what kind of a person is this Fenton, whom you call half-mad, and from whom you had this information?”

Crackenfudge described Fenton, and informed Sir Thomas that in the opinion of the people he was descended of a good family, though neglected and unfortunate. “But,” he added, “as to who he really is, or of what family, no one can get out of him. He’s close and cunning.”

“Is he occasionally unsettled in his reason?” asked the baronet, with assumed indifference.

“No doubt of it, Sir Thomas; he’ll sometimes pass a whole week or fortnight and never open his lips.”

The baronet appeared to be divided between two states of feeling so equally balanced as to leave him almost without the power of utterance. He walked, he paused, he looked at Crackenfudge as if he would speak, then resumed his step with a hasty and rapid stride that betokened the depth of what he felt.

“Well, Crackenfudge,” he said, “your intelligence, after all, is but mere smoke. I thought the fellow in the inn was something beyond the rank of clerk to a tooth-brush maker; he

is not worth our talk, neither is that madman Fenton. In the mean time, I am much obliged to you, and you may calculate upon my services wherever they can be made available to your interests. I would not now hurry you away nor request you to curtail your visit, were it not that I expect Lord Cullamore here in about half an hour, or perhaps less, and I wish to see Miss Gourlay previous to his arrival."

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“But you won’t forget the magistracy, Sir Thomas? A’m dreaming of it every night. A’ think that a’m seated upon a bench with five or six other magistrates along with me, and you can’t imagine the satisfaction I feel in sending those poor vermin that are going about in a state of disloyalty and starvation to the stocks or the jail. Oh, authority is a delightful thing, Sir Thomas, especially when a man can exercise it upon the vile rubbish that constitutes the pauper population of the country. You know, if a’ were a magistrate, Sir Thomas, a’ would fine every one—as well as my own tenants, whom I do fine—that did not take off their hat or make me a courtesy.”

“And if you were to do so, Crackenfudge,” replied the baronet, with a grim, sardonic smile, or rather a sneer, “I assure you, that such a measure would become a very general and heavy impost upon the country. But goodby, now; I shall remember your wishes as touching the magistracy. You shall have J. P. after your name, and be at liberty to fine, flog, put in the stocks, and send to prison as many of the rubbish you speak of as you wish.”

“That will be delightful, Sir Thomas. A’ll then make many a vagabond that despises and laughs at me suffer.”

“In that case, the country at large will suffer heavily; for to tell you the truth, Crackenfudge, you are anything but a favorite. Goodby, now, I must see my daughter.” And so he nodded the embryo magistrate out.

After the latter had taken his departure, Sir Thomas rubbed his hands, with a strong turbid gleam of ferocious satisfaction, that evidently resulted from the communication that Crackenfudge had made to him.

“It can be no other,” thought he; “his allusion to the establishment of Grinwell is a strong presumptive proof that it is; but he must be secured forthwith, and that with all secrecy and dispatch, taking it always for granted that he is the fugitive for whom we have been seeking so long. One point, however, in our favor is, that as he knows neither his real name nor origin, nor even the hand which guided his destiny, he can make no discovery of which I may feel apprehensive. Still it is dangerous that he should be at large, for it is impossible to say what contingency might happen—what chance would, or perhaps early recollection might, like a spark of light to a train, blow up in a moment the precaution of years. As to the fellow in the inn, the account of him may be true enough, for unquestionably Grinwell, who kept the asylum, had a brother in the tooth-brush business, and this fact gives the story something like probability, as does the mystery with which this man wraps himself so closely. In the meantime, if he be a clerk, he is certainly an impostor of the most consummate art, for assuredly so gentlemanly a scoundrel I have never yet come in contact with. But, good heavens! if such a report should have gone abroad concerning that stiff-necked and obstinate girl, her reputation and prospects in life are ruined

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forever. What would Dunroe say if he heard it? as it is certain he will. Then, again, here is the visit from this conscientious old blockhead, Lord Cullamore, who won't allow me to manage my daughter after my own manner. He must hear from her own lips, forsooth, how she relishes this union. He must see her, he says; but, if she betrays me now and continues restive, I shall make her feel what it is to provoke me. This interview will ruin me with old Cullamore; but in the meantime I must see the girl, and let her know what the consequences will be if she peaches against me."

All this, of course, passed through his mind briefly, as he walked to and fro, according to his usual habit. After a few minutes he rang, and with a lowering brow, and in a stern voice, ordered Miss Gourlay to be conducted to him. This was accordingly done, her maid having escorted her to the library door, for it is necessary to say here, that she had been under confinement since the day of her father's visit to Lord Cullamore.

She appeared pale and dejected, but at the same time evidently sustained by serious composure and firmness. On entering the room, her father gazed at her with a long, searching look, that seemed as if he wished to ascertain, from her manner, whether imprisonment had in any degree tamed her down to his purposes. He saw, indeed, that she was somewhat paler than usual, but he perceived at once that not one jot of her resolution had abated. After an effort, he endeavored to imitate her composure, and in some remote degree the calm and serene dignity of her manner. Lucy, who considered herself a prisoner, stood after having entered the room, as if in obedience to her father's wishes.

"Lucy, be seated," said he; and whilst speaking, he placed himself in an arm-chair, near the fire, but turned toward her, and kept his eyes steadily fixed upon her countenance. "Lucy," he proceeded, "you are to receive a visit from Lord Cullamore, by and by, and it rests with you this day whether I shall stand in his estimation a dishonored man or not."

"I do not understand you, papa."

"You soon shall. I paid him a visit, as you are aware, at his own request, a few days ago. The object of that visit was to discuss the approaching union between you and his son. He said he would not have you pressed against your inclinations, and expressed an apprehension that the match was not exactly in accordance with your wishes. Now, mark me, Lucy, I undertook, upon my own responsibility, as well as upon yours, to assure him that it had your fullest concurrence, and I expect that you shall bear me out and sustain me in this assertion."

"I who am engaged to another?"

"Yes, but clandestinely, without your father's knowledge or approbation."

“I admit my error, papa; I fully and freely acknowledge it, and the only atonement I can make to you for it is, to assure you that although I am not likely ever to marry according to your wishes, yet I shall never marry against them.”

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“Ha!” thought the baronet, “I have brought her down a step already.”

“Now, Lucy,” said he, “it is time that this undutiful obstinacy on your part should cease. It is time you should look to and respect—yes, and obey your father’s wishes. I have already told you that I have impressed Lord Cullamore with a belief that you are a free and consenting party to this marriage, and I trust you have too much delicacy and self-respect to make your father a liar, for that is the word. I admit I told him a falsehood, but I did so for the honor and exaltation of my child. You will not betray me, Lucy?”

“Father,” said she, “I regret that you make these torturing communications to me. God knows I wish to love and respect you, but when, under solemn circumstances, you utter, by your own admission, a deliberate falsehood to a man of the purest truth and honor; when you knowingly and wilfully mislead him for selfish and ambitious purposes;—nay, I will retract these words, and suppose it is from an anxiety to secure me rank and happiness,—I say, father, when you thus forget all that constitutes the integrity and dignity of man, and stoop to the discreditable meanness of falsehood, I ask you, is it manly, or honorable, or affectionate, to involve me in proceedings so utterly shameful, and to ask me to abet you in such a wanton perversion of truth? Sir, there are fathers—indeed, I believe, most fathers living—who would rather see any child of theirs stretched and shrouded up in the grave than know them to be guilty of such a base and deliberate violation of all the sacred principles of truth as this.”

“You will expose me then, and disgrace me forever with this cursed conscientious old blockhead? I tell you that he doubts my assertion as touching your consent, and is coming to hear the truth from your own lips. But hearken, girl, betray me to him, and by heavens you know not the extent to which my vengeance will carry me.”

He rose up, and glared at her in a manner that made her apprehensive for her personal safety.

“Father,” said she, growing pale, for the dialogue, brief as it was, had brought the color into her cheeks, “will you permit me to withdraw? I am quite unequal to these contests of temper and opinion; permit me, sir, to withdraw. I have already told you, that provided you do not attempt to force me into a marriage contrary to my wishes I shall never marry contrary to yours.”

The baronet swore a deep and blasphemous oath that he would enter into no such stipulation. The thing, he said, was an evasion, an act of moral fraud and deceit upon her part, and she should not escape from him.

“You wish to gain time, madam, to work out your own treacherous purposes, and to defeat my intentions with respect to you; but it shall not be. You must see Lord Cullamore; you must corroborate my assertions to him; you must save me from shame

and dishonor or dread the consequences. A paltry sacrifice, indeed, to tell a fib to a doting old peer, who thinks no one in the world honest or honorable but himself!”

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“Think of the danger of what you ask,” she replied; “think of the deep iniquity—the horrible guilt, and the infamy of the crime into which you wish to plunge me. Reflect that you are breaking down the restraints of honor and conscience in iny heart; that you are defiling my soul with falsehood; and that if I yield to you in this, every subsequent temptation will beset me with more success, until my faith, truth, honor, integrity, are gone forever—until I shall be lost. Is there no sense of religion, father? Is there no future life? Is there no God—no judgment? Father, in asking me to abet your falsehood, and sustain you in your deceit, you transgress the limits of parental authority, and the first principles of natural affection. You pervert them, you abuse them; and, I must say, once and for all, that be the weight of your vengeance what it may, I prefer bearing it to enduring the weight of a guilty conscience.”

The baronet rose, and rushing at her, raised his open hand and struck her rather severely on the side of the head. She felt, as it were, stunned for a little, but at length she rose up, and said: “Father, this is the insanity of a bad ambition, or perhaps of affection, and you know not what you have done.” She then approached him, and throwing her arms about his neck, exclaimed: “Papa, kiss me; and I shall never think of it, nor allude to it;” as she spoke the tears fell in showers from her eyes.

“No, madam,” he replied, “I repulse you; I throw you off from me now and forever.”

“Be calm, papa; compose yourself, my dear papa. I shall not see Lord Cullamore; it would be now impossible; I could not sustain an interview with him. You, consequently, can have nothing to fear; you can say I am ill, and that will be truth indeed.”

“I shall never relax one moment,” he replied, “until I either subdue you, or break your obstinate heart. Come, madam,” said he, “I will conduct you to your apartment.”

She submissively preceded him, until he committed her once more to the surveillance of the maid whom he had engaged and bribed to be her sentinel.

It is unnecessary to say that the visit of the honorable old nobleman ended in nothing. Lucy was not in a condition to see him; and as her father at all risks reiterated his assertions as to her free and hearty consent to the match, Lord Cullamore went away, now perfectly satisfied that if his son had any chance of being reclaimed by the influence of a virtuous wife, it must be by his union with Lucy. The noble qualities and amiable disposition of this excellent young lady were so well known that only one opinion prevailed with respect to her.

Some wondered, indeed, how such a man could be father to such a daughter; but, on the other hand, the virtues of the mother were remembered, and the wonder was one no longer.

CHAPTER XIII. The Stranger's Second Visit to Father M'Mahon

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—Something like an Elopement.

On the evening of the same day the stranger desired Paudeen Gair to take a place for him in the “Fly,” which was to return to Dublin on that night. He had been furnished with a letter from Father M’Mahon, to whom he had, in Mr. Birney’s, fully disclosed his name and objects. He felt anxious, however, to engage some trustworthy servant or attendant, on whose integrity he could fully rely, knowing, or at least apprehending, that he might be placed in circumstances where he could not himself act openly and freely without incurring suspicion or observation. Paudeen, however, or, as we shall call him in future, Pat Sharpe, had promised to procure a person of the strictest honesty, in whom every confidence could be placed. This man’s name, or rather his nickname, was Dandy Dulcimer, an epithet bestowed upon him in consequence of the easy and strolling life he led, supporting himself, as he passed from place to place, by his performances upon that simple but pleasing instrument.

“Pat,” said the stranger in the course of the evening, “have you succeeded in procuring me this cousin of yours?” for in that relation he stood to Pat.

“I expect him here every minute, sir,” replied Pat; “and there’s one thing I’ll lay down my life on—you may trust him as you would any one of the twelve apostles—barring that blackguard Judas. Take St. Pettier, or St. Paul, or any of the dacent apostles, and the divil a one of them honester than Dandy. Not that he’s a saint like them either, or much overburdened with religion, poor fellow; as for honesty and truth—divil a greater liar ever walked in the mane time; but, by truth, I mane truth to you, and to any one that employs him—augh, by my soul, he’s the flower of a boy.”

“He won’t bring his dulcimer with him, I hope.”

“Won’t he, indeed? Be me sowl, sir, you might as well separate sowl and body, as take Dandy from his dulcimer. Like the two sides of a scissors, the one’s of no use widout the other. They must go together, or Dandy could never cut his way through the world by any chance. Hello! here he is. I hear his voice in the hall below.”

“Bring him up, Pat,” said the stranger; “I must see and speak to him; because if I feel that he won’t suit me, I will have nothing to do with him.”

Dandy immediately entered, with his dulcimer slung like a peddler’s bos at his side, and with a comic movement of respect, which no presence or position could check, he made a bow to the stranger, that forced him to smile in spite of himself.

“You seem a droll fellow,” said the stranger. “Are you fond of truth?”

“Hem! Why, yes, sir. I spare it as much as I can. I don’t treat it as an everyday concern. We had a neighbor once, a widow M’Cormick, who was rather penurious, and

whenever she saw her servants buttering their bread too thickly, she used to whisper to them in a confidential way, ‘Ahagur, the thinner you spread it the further it will go.’ Hem! However, I must confess that once or twice a year I draw on it by way of novelty, that is, on set days or bonfire nights; and I hope, sir, you’ll admit that that’s treating it with respect.”

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“How did you happen to turn musician?” asked the other.

“Why, sir, I was always fond of a jingle; but, to tell you the truth, I would rather have the same jingle in my purse than in my instrument. Divil such an unmusical purse ever a man was cursed with than I have been doomed to carry during my whole life.”

“Then it was a natural love of music that sent you abroad as a performer?”

“Partly only, sir; for there were three causes went to it. There is a certain man named Dandy Dulcimer, that I had a very loving regard for, and I thought it against his aise and comfort to ask him to strain his poor bones by hard work. I accordingly substituted pure idleness for it, which is a delightful thing in its way. There, sir, is two of the causes—-love of melody and a strong but virtuous disinclination to work. The third—” but here he paused and his face darkened.

“Well,” inquired the stranger, “the third? What about the third?”

Dandy significantly pointed back with his thumb over his shoulder, in the direction of Red Hall. “It was him,” he said; “the Black Baronet—or rather the incarnate divil.”

“That’s truth, at all events,” observed Pat corroborating the incomplete assertion.

“It was he, sir,” continued Dandy, “that thrust us out of our comfortable farm—he best knows why and wherefore—and like a true friend of liberty, he set us at large from our comfortable place, to enjoy it.”

“Well,” replied the stranger, “if that be true it was hard; but you know every story has two sides; or, as the proverb goes, one story is well until the other is told. Let us dismiss this. If I engage you to attend me, can you be faithful, honest, and cautious?”

“To an honest man, sir, I can; but to no other. I grant I have acted the knave very often, but it was always in self-defence, and toward far greater knaves than myself. An honest man did once ax me to serve him in an honest way; but as I was then in a roguish state of mind I tould him I couldn’t conscientiously do it.”

“If you were intrusted with a secret, for instance, could you undertake to keep it?”

“I was several times in Dublin, sir, and I saw over the door of some public office a big, brazen fellow, with the world on his back; and you know that from what he seemed to suffer I thought he looked very like a man that was keeping a secret. To tell God’s truth, sir, I never like a burden of any kind; and whenever I can get a man that will carry a share of it, I—”

“Tut! your honor, never mind him,” said Pat. “What the deuce are you at, Dandy? Do you want to prevent the gintleman from engagin’ you? Never mind him, sir; he’s as honest as the sun.”

“It matters not, Pat,” said the stranger; “I like him. Are you willing to take service with me for a short time, my good fellow?”

“If you could get any one to give you a caracther, sir, perhaps I might,” replied Dandy.

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“How, sirrah! what do you mean?” said the stranger.

“Why, sir, that we humble folks haven’t all the dishonesty to ourselves. I think our superiors come in now and then for the lion’s share of it. There, now, is the Black Baronet.”

“But you are not entering the service of the Black Baronet.”

“No; but the ould scoundrel struck his daughter to-day, because she wouldn’t consent to marry that young profligate, Lord Dunroe; and has her locked up besides.”

The stranger had been standing with his back to the fire, when the Dandy mentioned these revolting circumstances; for the truth was, that Lucy’s maid had taken upon her the office of that female virtue called curiosity, and by the aid of her eye, her ear, and an open key-hole was able to communicate to one or two of the other servants, in the strictest confidence of course, all that had occurred during the interview between father and daughter. Now it so happened, that Dandy, who had been more than once, in the course of his visits, to the kitchen, promised, as he said, to *metamurphy* one of them into Mrs. Dulcimer, *alias* Murphy—that being his real name—was accidentally in the kitchen while the dialogue lasted, and for some time afterwards; and as the expectant Mrs. Dulcimer was one of the first to whom the secret was solemnly confided, we need scarcely say that it was instantly transferred to Dandy’s keeping, who mentioned it more from honest indignation than from any other motive.

It would be difficult to describe the combination of feelings that might be read in the stranger’s fine features—distress, anger, compassion, love, and sorrow, all struggled for mastery. He sat down, and there was an instant pause in the conversation; for both Dandy and his relative felt that he was not sufficiently collected to proceed with it. They consequently, after glancing with surprise at each other, remained silent, until the stranger should resume it. At length, after a struggle that was evidently a severe one, he said,

“Now, my good fellow, no more of this buffoonery. Will you take service with me for three months, since I am willing to accept you? Ay or no?”

“As willing as the flowers of May, your honor; and I trust you will never have cause to find fault with me, so far as truth, honesty, and discretion goes. I can see a thing and not see it. I can hear a thing and not hear it. I can do a thing and not do it—but it must be honest. In short, sir, if you have no objection, I’m your man. I like your face, sir; there’s something honorable and manly in it.”

“Perhaps you would wish to name the amount of the wages you expect. If so, speak.”

“Divil a wage or wages I’ll name, sir; that’s a matter I’ll lave to your own generosity.”

“Very well, then; I start by the ‘Fly’ tonight, and you, observe, are to accompany me. The trunk which I shall bring with me is already packed, so that you will have very little trouble.”

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Dandy and his relative both left him, and he, with a view of allaying the agitation which he felt, walked toward the residence of Father M'Mahon, who had promised, if he could, to furnish him with further instructions ere he should start for the metropolis.

After they had left the room, our friend Crackenfudge peeped out of the back apartment, in order to satisfy himself that the coast was clear; and after stretching his neck over the stairs to ascertain that there was no one in the hall, he tripped down as if he were treading on razors, and with a face brimful of importance made his escape from the inn, for, in truth, the mode of his disappearing could be termed little else.

Now, in the days of which we write, it so happened that there was a vast portion of bitter rivalry between mail coaches and their proprietors. At this time an opposition coach, called "the Flash of Lightning"—to denominate, we presume, the speed at which it went—ran against the "Fly," to the manifest, and frequently to the actual, danger of the then reigning monarch's liege and loyal subjects. To the office of this coach, then, did Crackenfudge repair, with an honorable intention of watching the motions of our friend the stranger, prompted thereto by two motives—first, a curiosity that was naturally prurient and mean; secondly, by an anxious wish to serve Sir Thomas Gourlay, and, if possible, to involve himself in his affairs, thus rendering his interest touching the great object of his ambition—the magistracy—a matter not to be withheld. He instantly took his seat for Dublin—an inside seat—in order to conceal himself as much as possible from observation. Having arranged this affair, he rode home in high spirits, and made preparations for starting, in due time, by "the Flash of Lightning."

The stranger, on his way to Father M'Mahon's, called upon his friend Birney, with whom he had a long confidential conversation. They had already determined, if the unfortunate heir of Red Hall could be traced, and if his disappearance could, be brought home to the baronet, to take such public or rather legal proceedings as they might be advised to by competent professional advice. Our readers may already guess, however, that the stranger was influenced by motives sufficiently strong and decisive to prevent him, above all men, from appearing, publicly or at all, in any proceedings that might be taken against the baronet.

On arriving at Father M'Mahon's, he found that excellent man at home; and it was upon this occasion that he observed with more attention than before the extraordinary neatness of his dwelling-house and premises. The cleanliness, the order, the whiteness, the striking taste displayed, the variety of culinary utensils, not in themselves expensive, but arranged with surprising regularity, constituting a little paradise of convenience and comfort, were all perfectly delightful to contemplate. The hall-door was open, and when the stranger entered,

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he found no one in the kitchen, for it is necessary to say here that, in this neat but unassuming abode of benevolence and goodness, that which we have termed the hall-door led, in the first instance, to the beautiful little kitchen we have just described. The stranger, having heard voices in conversation with the priest, resolved to wait a little until his visitors should leave him, as he felt reluctant to intrude upon him while engaged with his parishioners. He could not prevent himself, however, from overhearing the following portion of their I conversation.

“And it was yesterday he put in the distraint?”

“It was, your reverence.”

“Oh, the dirty Turk; not a landlord at all is half so hard to ourselves as those of our own religion: they’ll show some lenity to a Protestant, and I don’t blame them for that, but they trample those belonging to their own creed under their inhuman hoofs.”

“How much is it, Nogher?”

“Only nine pounds, your reverence.”

“Well, then, bring me a stamp in the course of the day, and I’ll pass my bill to him for the amount.”

“Troth, sir, wid great respect, your reverence will do no such thing. However I may get it settled, I won’t lug you in by the head and shoulders. You have done more of that kind of work than you could afford. No, sir; but if you will send Father James up to my poor wife and daughter that’s so ill with this faver—that’s all I want.”

“To be sure he’ll go, or rather I’ll go myself, for he won’t be home till after station. Did this middleman landlord of yours know that there was fever in your family when he; sent in the bailiffs?”

“To do him justice, sir, he did not; but he knows it since the day before yesterday, and yet he won’t take them off unless he gets either the rent or security.”

“Indeed, and the hard-hearted Turk will have the security;—whisper,—call down tomorrow with a stamp, and I’ll put my name on it; and let these men, these keepers, go about their business. My goodness! to think of having two strange fellows night and day in a sick and troubled family! Oh, dear me! one half the world doesn’t know how the other lives. If many of the rich and wealthy, Michael, could witness the scenes that I witness, the sight might probably soften their hearts. Is this boy your son, Nogher?”

“He is, sir.”

“I hope you are giving him a good education; and I hope, besides, that he is a good boy. Do you attend to your duty regularly, my good lad?”

“I do, plaise your reverence.”

“And obey your parents?”

“I hope so, sir.”

“Indeed,” said his father, “poor Mick doesn’t lave us much to complain of in that respect; he’s a very good boy in general, your reverence.”

“God bless you, my child,” said the priest, solemnly, placing his hand upon the boy’s head, who was sitting, “and guide your feet in the paths of religion and virtue!”

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“Oh, sir,” exclaimed the poor affectionate lad, bursting into tears, “I wish you would come to my mother! she is very ill, and so is my sister.”

“I will go, my child, in half-an-hour. I see you are a good youth, and full of affection; I will go almost immediately. Here, Mat Ruly,” he shouted, raising the parlor window, on seeing that neat boy pass;—“here, you colossus—you gigantic prototype of grace and beauty;—I say, go and saddle Freney the Robber immediately; I must attend a sick call without delay. What do you stare and gape for? shut that fathomless cleft in your face, and be off. Now, Nogher,” he said, once more addressing the man, “slip down to-morrow with the stamp; or, stay, why should these fellows be there two hours, and the house and the family as they are? Sit down here for a few minutes, I’ll go home with you; we can get the stamp in Ballytrain, on our way,—ay, and draw up the bill there too; —indeed we can and we will too; so not a syllable against it. You know I must have my will, and that I’m a raging lion when opposed.”

“God bless your reverence,” replied the man, moved almost to tears by his goodness; “many an act of the kind your poor and struggling parishioners has to thank you for.”

On looking into the kitchen, for the parlor door was open, he espied the stranger, whom he approached with every mark of the most profound respect, but still with perfect ease and independence.

After the first salutations were over—

“Well, sir,” said the priest, “do you hold to your purpose of going to Dublin?”

“I go this night,” replied the other; “and, except through the old man to whom you are so kind as to give me the letter, I must confess I have but slight expectations of success. Unless we secure this unfortunate young man, that is, always supposing that he is alive, and are able clearly and without question to identify his person, all we may do must be in vain, and the baronet is firm in both title and estates.”

“That is evident,” replied the priest. “Could you find the heir alive, and identify his person, of course your battle is won. Well; if there be anything like a thread to guide you through the difficulties of this labyrinth, I have placed it in your hands.”

“I am sensible of your good wishes, sir, and I thank you very much for the interest you have so kindly taken in the matter. By the way, I engaged a servant to accompany me —one Dulcimer, Dandy Dulcimer; pray, what kind of moral character does he bear?”

“Dandy Dulcimer!” exclaimed the priest; “why, the thief of the world! is it possible you have engaged him?”

“Why? is he not honest?” asked the other, with surprise.

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“Honest!” replied the priest; “the vagabond’s as honest a vagabond as ever lived. You may trust him in anything and everything. When I call him a vagabond, I only mean it in a kind and familiar sense; and, by the way, I must give you an explanation upon the subject of my pony. You must have heard me call him ‘Freney the Robber’ a few minutes ago. Now, not another sense did I give him that name in but in an ironical one, just like *lucus a non lucendo*, or, in other words, because the poor creature is strictly honest and well tempered. And, indeed, there are some animals much more moral in their disposition than others. Some are kind, affectionate, benevolent, and grateful; and some, on the other hand, are thieving robbers and murderers. No, sir, I admit that I was wrong, and, so to speak, I owe Freney an apology for having given him a bad name; but then again I have made it up to him in other respects. Now, you’ll scarcely believe what I am going to tell you, although you may, for not a word of lie in it. When Freney sometimes is turned out into my fields, he never breaks bounds, nor covets, so to speak, his neighbor’s property, but confines himself strictly and honestly to his own; and I can tell you it’s not every horse would do that, or man either. He knows my voice, too, and, what is more, my very foot, for he will whinny when he hears it, and before he sees me at all.”

“Pray,” said the stranger, exceedingly amused at this narrative, “how does your huge servant get on?”

“Is it Mat Ruly?—why, sir, the poor boy’s as kind-hearted and benevolent, and has as sharp an appetite as ever. He told me that he cried yesterday when bringing a little assistance to a poor family in the neighborhood. But, touching this matter on which you are engaged, will you be good enough to write to me from time to time? for I shall feel anxious to hear how you get on.”

The stranger promised to do so, and after having received two letters from him they shook hands and separated.

We have stated before that Dandy Dulcimer had a sweetheart in the service of Sir Thomas Gourlay. Soon after the interview between the stranger and Dandy, and while the former had gone to get the letters from Father M’Mahon, this same sweetheart, by name Alley Mahon, came to have a word or two with Paudeen Gair, or Pat Sharpe. When Paudeen saw her, he imputed the cause of her visit to something connected with Dandy Dulcimer, his cousin; for, as the latter had disclosed to him the revelation which Alley had made, he took it for granted that the Dandy had communicated to her the fact of his being about to accept service with the stranger at the inn, and to proceed with him to Dublin. And, such, indeed, was the actual truth. Paudeen had, on behalf of Dandy, all but arranged the matter with the stranger a couple of days before, Dandy being a consenting party, so that nothing was wanting but an interview between the latter and the stranger, in order to complete the negotiation.

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“Pat,” said Alley, after he had brought her up to a little back-room on the second story, “I know that your family ever and always has been an honest family, and that a stain of thraichery or disgrace was never upon one of their name.”

“Thank God, and you, Alley; I am proud to know that what you say is right and true.”

“Well, then,” she replied, “it is, and every one knows it. Now, then, can you keep a secret, for the sake of truth and conscience, ay, and religion; and if all will not do, for the sake of her that paid back to your family, out of her own private purse, what her father robbed them of?”

“By all that’s lovely,” replied Pat, “if there’s a livin’ bein’ I’d sacrifice my life for, it’s her.”

“Listen; I want you to secure two seats in the ‘Fly,’ for this night; inside seats, or if you can’t get insides, then outsides will do.”

“Stop where you are,” replied Pat, about to start downstairs; “the thing will be done in five minutes.”

“Are you mad, Pat?” said she; “take the money with you before you go.”

“Begad,” said Pat, “my heart was in my mouth—here, let us have it. And so the darling young lady is forced to fly from the tyrant?”

“Oh, Pat,” said Alice, solemnly, “for the sake of the living God, don’t breathe that you know anything about it; we’re lost if you do.”

“If Dandy was here, Alley,” he replied, “I’d make him swear it upon your lips; but, hand us the money, for there’s little time to be lost; I hope all the seats aren’t taken.”

He was just in time, however; and in a few minutes returned, having secured for two the only inside seats that were left untaken at the moment, although there were many claimants for them in a few minutes afterwards.

“Now, Alley,” said he, after he had returned from the coach-office, which, by the way, was connected with the inn, “what does all this mane? I think I could guess something about it. A runaway, eh?”

“What do you mean by a runaway?” she replied; “of course she is running away from her brute of a father, and I am goin’ with her.”

“But isn’t she goin’ wid somebody else?” he inquired.

“No,” replied Alley; “I know where she is goin’; but she is goin’ wid nobody but myself.”

“Ah, Alley,” replied Pat, shrewdly, “I see she has kept you in the dark; but I don’t blame her. Only, if you can keep a secret, so can I.”

“Pat,” said she, “desire the coachman to stop at the white gate, where two faymales will be waitin’ for it, and let the guard come down and open the door for us; so that we won’t have occasion to spake. It’s aisy to know one’s voice, Pat.”

“I’ll manage it all,” said Pat; “make your mind aisy—and what is more, I’ll not breathe a syllable to mortual man, woman, or child about it. That would be an ungrateful return for her kindness to our family. May God bless her, and grant her happiness, and that’s the worst I wish her.”

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The baronet, in the course of that evening, was sitting in his dining-room alone, a bottle of Madeira before him, for indeed it is necessary to say, that although unsocial and inhospitable, he nevertheless indulged pretty freely in wine. He appeared moody, and gulped down the Madeira as a man who wished either to sustain his mind against care, or absolutely to drown memory, and probably the force of conscience. At length, with a flushed face, and a voice made more deep and stern by his potations, and the reflections they excited, he rang the bell, and in a moment the butler appeared.

“Is Gillespie in the house, Gibson?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Send him up.”

In a few minutes Gillespie entered; and indeed it would be difficult to see a more ferocious-looking ruffian than this scoundrel who was groom to the baronet. Fame, or scandal, or truth, as the case may be, had settled the relations between Sir Thomas and him, not merely as those of master and servant, but as those of father and son. Be this as it may, however, the similarity of figure and feature was so extraordinary, that the inference could be considered by no means surprising.

“Tom,” said the baronet, “I suppose there is a Bible in the house?”

“I can’t say, sir,” replied the ruffian. “I never saw any one in use. O, yes, Miss Gourlay has one.”

“Yes,” replied the other, with a gloomy reflection, “I forgot; she is, in addition to her other accomplishments, a Bible reader. Well, stay where you are; I shall get it myself.”

He accordingly rose and proceeded to Lucy’s chamber, where, after having been admitted, he found the book he sought, and such was the absence of mind, occasioned by the apprehensions he felt, that he brought away the book, and forgot to lock the door.

“Now, sir,” said the baronet, sternly, when he returned, “do you respect this book? It is the Bible.”

“Why, yes, sir. I respect every book that has readin’ in it—printed readin’.”

“But this is the Bible, on which the Christian religion is founded.”

“Well, sir, I don’t doubt that,” replied the enlightened master of horse; “but I prefer the *Seven Champions of Christendom*, or the *History of Valentine and Orson*, or *Fortunatus’s Purse*.”

“You don’t relish the Bible, then?”

“I don’t know, sir; I never read a line of it—although I heard a great deal about! it. Isn’t that the book the parsons preach I from?”

“It is,” replied the baronet, in his deep voice. “This book is the source and origin and history of the revelation of God’s will to man; this is the book on which oaths are taken, and when taken falsely, the falsehood is perjury, and the individual so perjuring himself is transported, either for life or a term of years, while living and when dead, Gillespie—-mark me well, sir—when dead, his soul goes to eternal perdition in the flames of hell. Would you now, knowing this—that you would be transported in this world, and damned in the next—would you, I say, take an oath upon this book and break it?”

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“No, sir, not after what you said.”

“Well, then, I am a magistrate, and I wish to administer an oath to you.”

“Very well, sir, I’ll swear whatever you like.”

“Then listen—take the book in your right hand—you shall swear the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God! You swear to execute whatever duty I may happen to require at your hands, and to keep the performance of that duty a secret from every living mortal, and besides to keep secret the fact that I am in any way connected with it—you swear this?”

“I do, sir,” replied the other, kissing the book.

The baronet paused a little.

“Very well,” he added, “consider yourself solemnly sworn, and pray recollect that if you violate this oath—in other words, if you commit perjury, I shall have you transported as sure as your name is Gillespie.”

“But your honor has sworn me to secrecy, and yet I don’t know the secret.”

“Neither shall you—for twenty-four hours longer. I am not and shall not be in a condition to mention it to you sooner, but I put you under the obligation now, in order that you may have time to reflect upon its importance. You may go.”

Gillespie felt exceedingly puzzled as to the nature of the services about to be required at his hands, but as every attempt to solve this difficulty was fruitless, he resolved to await the event in patience, aware that the period between his anxiety on the subject and a knowledge of it was but short.

We need not hesitate to assure our readers, that if Lucy Gourlay had been apprised, or even dreamt for a moment, that the stranger and she were on that night to be fellow-travellers in the same coach, she would unquestionably have deferred her journey to tha metropolis, or, in other words, her escape from the senseless tyranny of her ambitious father. Fate, however, is fate, and it is precisely the occurrence of these seemingly incidental coincidences that in fact, as well as in fiction, constitutes the principal interest of those circumstances which give romance to the events of human life and develop its character.

The “Fly” started from Ballytrain at the usual hour, with only two inside passengers—to wit, our friend the stranger and a wealthy stock-farmer from the same parish. He was a large, big-boned, good-humored fellow, dressed in a strong frieze outside coat or jock, buckskin breeches, top-boots, and a heavy loaded whip, his inseparable companion wherever he went.

The coach, on arriving at the white gate, pulled up, and two females, deeply and closely veiled, took their seats inside. Of course, the natural politeness of the stranger prevented him from obtruding his conversation upon ladies with whom he was not acquainted. The honest farmer, however, felt no such scruples, nor, as it happened, did one at least of the ladies in question.

“This is a nice affair,” he observed, “about the Black Baronet’s daughter.”

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“What is a nice affair?” asked our friend Alley, for she it was, as the reader of course is already aware—“What is a nice affair?”

“Why, that Miss Gourlay, they say, fell in love with a buttonmaker’s clerk from London, and is goin’ to marry him in spite of all opposition.”

“Who’s your authority for that?” asked Alley; “but whoever is, is a liar, and the truth is not in him—that’s what I say.”

“Ay, but what do you know about it?” asked the grazier. “You’re not in Miss Gourlay’s saicrets—and a devilish handsome, gentlemanly lookin’ fellow they say the button-maker is. Faith, I can tell you, I give tooth-an-egg-credit. The fellow will get a darlin’ at all events—and he’ll be very bad indeed, if he’s not worth a ship-load of that profligate Lord Dunroe.”

“Well,” replied Alley, “I agree with you there, at all events; for God sees that the same Lord Dunroe will make the cream of a bad husband to whatsoever poor woman will suffer by him. A bad bargain he will be at best, and in that I agree with you.”

“So far, then,” replied the grazier, “we do agree; an’, dang my buttons, but I’ll lave it to this gentleman if it wouldn’t be betther for Miss Gourlay to marry a daicent button-maker any day, than such a hurler as Dunroe. What do you say, sir?”

“But who is this button-maker,” asked the stranger, “and where is he to be found?”

Lucy, on recognizing his voice, could scarcely prevent her emotion from becoming perceptible; but owing to the darkness of the night, and the folds of her thick veil, her fellow-travellers observed nothing.

“Why,” replied the grazier, who had evidently, from a lapse of memory, substituted one species of manufacture for another thing, “they tell me he is stopping in the head inn in Ballytrain; an’, dang my buttons, but he must be a fellow of mettle, for sure didn’t he kick that tyrannical ould scoundrel, the Black Baronet, down-stairs, and out of the hall-door, when he came to bullyrag over him about his daughter—the darlin’?”

Lucy’s distress was here incredible; and had not her self-command and firmness of character been indeed unusual, she would have felt it extremely difficult to keep her agitation within due bounds.

“You labor under a mistake there,” replied the stranger; “I happen to know that nothing of the kind occurred. Some warm words passed between them, but no blows. A young person named Fenton, whom I know, was present.”

“Why,” observed the grazier, “that’s the young fellow that goes mad betimes, an’ a quare chap he is, by all accounts. They say he went mad for love.”

From this it was evident that rumor had, as usual, assigned several causes for Fenton's insanity.

"Yes, I believe so," replied the stranger.

Alley, who thought she had been overlooked in this partial dialogue, determined to sustain her part in the conversation with a dignity becoming her situation, now resolved to flourish in with something like effect.

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“They know nothing about it,” she said, “that calls Miss Gourlay’s sweetheart a button-maker. Miss Gourlay’s not the stuff to fall in love wid any button-maker, even if he made buttons of goold; an’ sure they say that the king an’ queen, and the whole royal family wears golden buttons.”

“I think, in spaiking of buttons,” observed the grazier, with a grin, “that you might lave the queen out.”

“And why should I lave the queen out?” asked Alley, indignantly, and with a towering resolution to defend the privileges of her sex. “Why ought I lave the queen out, I say?”

“Why,” replied the grazier, with a still broader grin, “barring she wears the breeches, I don’t know what occasion she could have for buttons.”

“That only shows your ignorance,” said Alley; “don’t you know that all ladies wear habit-shirts, and that habit-shirts must have buttons?”

“I never heard of a shirt havin’ buttons anywhere but at the neck,” replied the grazier, who drew the inference in question from his own, which were made upon a very simple and primitive fashion.

“But you don’t know either,” responded Alley, launching nobly into the purest fiction, from an impression that the character of her mistress required it for her defence, “you don’t know that nobody is allowed to make buttons for the queen but a knight o’ the garther.”

“Garther!” exclaimed the grazier, with astonishment. “Why what the dickens has garthers to do wid buttons?”

“More than you think,” replied the redoubtable Alley. “The queen wears buttons to her garthers, and the knight o’ the garther is always obliged to try them on; but always, of course, afore company.”

The stranger was exceedingly amused at this bit of by-play between Alley and the honest grazier, and the more so as it drew the conversation from a point of the subject that was painful to him in the last degree, inasmuch as it directly involved the character of Miss Gourlay.

“How do you know, then,” proceeded Alley, triumphantly, “but the button-maker that Miss Gourlay has fallen in love with may be a knight o’ the garther?”

“Begad, there maybe a great dale in that, too,” replied the unsuspicious grazier, who never dreamt that Alley’s knowledge of court etiquette might possibly be rather limited, and her accounts of it somewhat apocryphal;—“begad, there may. Well,” he added, with an honest and earnest tone of sincerity, “for my part, and from all ever I heard of

that darlin' of a beauty, she deserves a knight o' the shire, let alone a knight o' the garther. They say the good she does among the poor and destitute since they came home is un-tellable. God bless her! And that she may live long and die happy is the worst that I or anybody that knows her wishes her. It's well known that she had her goodness from her angel of a mother at all events, for they say that such another woman for charity and kindness to the poor never lived; and by all accounts she led an unhappy and miserable life wid her Turk of a husband, who, they say, broke her heart, and sent her to an early grave."

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Alley was about to bear fiery and vehement testimony to the truth of all this; but Lucy, whose bosom heaved up strongly two or three times at these affecting allusions to her beloved mother, and who almost sobbed aloud, not merely from sorrow but distress, arising from the whole tenor of the conversation, whispered a few words into her ear, and she was instantly silent. The farmer seemed somewhat startled; for, in truth, as we have said, he was naturally one of those men who wish to hear themselves talk. In this instance, however, he found, after having made three or four colloquial attacks upon the stranger, but without success, that he must only have recourse either to soliloquy or silence. He accordingly commenced to hum over several old Irish airs, to which he ventured to join the words—at first in a very subdued undertone. Whenever the coach stopped, however, to change horses, which it generally did at some public house or inn, the stranger could observe that the grazier always went out, and on his return appeared to be affected with a still stronger relish for melody. By degrees he proceeded from a tolerably distinct undertone to raise his voice into a bolder key, when, at last, throwing aside all reserve, he commenced the song of *Cruiskeen Lawn*, which he gave in admirable style and spirit, and with a rich mellow voice, that was calculated to render every justice to that fine old air. In this manner, he literally sang his way until within a few miles of the metropolis. He was not, however, without assistance, during, at least, a portion of the journey. Our friend Dandy, who was on the outside, finding that the coach came to a level space on the road, placed the dulcimer on his knees, and commenced an accompaniment on that instrument, which produced an effect equally comic and agreeable. And what added to the humor of this extraordinary duet—if we can call it so—was the delight with which each intimated his satisfaction at the performance of the other, as well as with the terms in which it was expressed.

“Well done, Dandy! dang my buttons, but you shine upon the wires. Ah, thin, it’s you that is and ever was the wiry lad—and sure that was what made you take to the dulcimer of course. Dandy, achora, will you give us, ‘Merrily kissed the Quaker?’ and I ask it, Dandy, bekaise we are in a religious way, and have a quakers’ meetn’ in the coach.”

“No,” replied Dandy; “but I’ll give you the ‘Bonny brown Girl,’ that’s worth a thousand of it, you thief.”

“Bravo, Dandy, and so it is; and, as far as I can see in the dark, dang my buttons, but I think we have one here, too.”

“I thank you for the compliment, sir,” said Alley, appropriating it without ceremony to herself. “I feel much obliged to you, sir; but I’m not worthy of it.”

“My darling,” replied the jolly farmer, “you had betther not take me up till I fall. How do you know it was for you it was intended? You’re not the only lady in the coach, avourneen.”

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“And you’re not the only gintleman in the coach, Jemmy Doran,” replied Alley, indignantly. “I know you well, man alive—and you picked up your politeness from your cattle, I suppose.”

“A better chance of getting it from them than from you,” replied, the hasty grazier. “But I tell you at once to take it aisy, achora; don’t get on fire, or you’ll burn the coach—the compliment was not intended for you, at all events. Come, Dandy, give us the ‘Bonny brown Girl,’ and I’ll help you, as well as I’m able.”

In a moment the dulcimer was at work on the top of the coach, and the merry farmer, at the top of his lungs, lending his assistance inside.

When the performance had been concluded, Alley, who was brimful of indignation at the slight which had been put upon her, said, “Many thanks to you, Misther Doran, but if you plaise we’ll dispense wid your music for the rest of the journey. Remember you’re not among your own bullocks and swine—and that this roaring and grunting is and must be very disagreeable to polite company.”

“Troth, whoever you are, you have the advantage of me,” replied the good-natured farmer, “and besides I believe you’re right—I’m afraid I’ve given offince; and as we have gone so far—but no, dang my buttons, I won’t—I was going to try ‘Kiss my Lady,’ along wid Dandy, it goes beautiful on the dulcimer—but—but—ah, not half so well as on a purty pair of lips. Alley, darlin’,” he proceeded now, evidently in a maudlin state, “I never lave you, but I’m in a hurry home to you, for it’s your lips that’s—”

“It’s false, Mr. Doran,” exclaimed Alley; “how dare you, sir, bring my name, or my lips either, into comparishment wid yourself? You want to take away my character, Mr. Doran; but I have friends, and a strong faction at my back, that will make you suffer for this.”

The farmer, however, who was elevated into the seventh heaven of domestic affection, paid no earthly attention to her, but turning to the stranger said:

“Sir, I’ve the best wife that ever faced the sun—”

“I,” exclaimed Alley, “am not to be insulted and calumnied, ay, an’ backbitten before my own face, Misther Doran, and take my word you’ll hear of this to your cost—I’ve a faction.”

“Sir—gintleman—miss, over the way there—for throth, for all so close as you’re veiled, you haven’t a married look—but as I was sayin’, we fell in love wid one another by mistake—for there was an ould matchmaker, by name Biddlety Girtha, a daughter of ould Jemmy Trailcudgel’s—God be good to him—father of the present strugglin’ poor man of that name—and as I had hard of a celebrated beauty that lived about twelve or

fifteen miles down the country that I wished to coort—and she, on the other hand, having hard of a very fine, handsome young fellow in my own neighborhood—what does the ould thief do but brings us together, in the fair of Baltihorum, and palms her off on me as the celebrated beauty, and palms myself on her as the

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fine, handsome young fellow from the parish of Ballytrain, and, as I said, so we fell in love wid one another by mistake, and didn't discover the imposthure that the ould vagabond had put on us until afther the marriage. However, I'm not sorry for it—she turned out a good wife to me, at all events—for, besides bringin' me a stockin' of guineas, she has brought me twelve of as fine childre' as you'd see in the kingdom of Ireland, ay, or in the kingdom of heaven either. Barrin' that she's a little hasty in the temper—and sometimes—do you persave?—has the use of her—there's five of them on each hand at any rate—do you undherstand—I say, barrin' that, and that she often amuses herself—just when she has nothing else to do—and by way of keepin' her hand in—I say, sir, and you, miss, over the way—she now and then amuses herself by turnin' up the little finger of her right hand—but what matter for all that—there's no one widout their little weeny failin's. My own hair's a little sandy, or so—some people say it's red, but I think myself it's only a little sandy—as I said, sir—so out of love and affection for the best of wives, I'll give you her favorite, the 'Red-haired man's wife.' Dandy, you thief, will you help me to do the 'Red-haired man's wife?'"

"Wid pleasure, Misther Doran," replied Dandy, adjusting his dulcimer. "Come now, start, and I'm wid you."

The performance was scarcely finished, when a sob or two was heard from Alley, who, during this ebullition of the grazier's, had been nursing her wrath to keep it warm, as Burns says.

"I'm not without friends and protectors, Mr. Doran—that won't see me rantinized in a mail-coach, and mocked and made little of—whereof I have a strong back, as you'll soon find, and a faction that will make you sup sorrow yet."

All this virtuous indignation was lost, however, on the honest grazier, who had scarcely concluded the "Red-haired man's wife," ere he fell fast asleep, in which state he remained—having simply changed the style and character of his melody, the execution of the latter being equally masterly—until they reached the hotel at which the coach always stopped in the metropolis.

The weather, for the fortnight preceding, had been genial, mild, and beautiful. For some time before they reached the city, that gradual withdrawing of darkness began to take place, which resembles the disappearance of sorrow from a heavy heart, and harbinges to the world the return of cheerfulness and light. The dim, spectral paleness of the eastern sky by degrees received a clearer and healthier tinge, just as the wan cheek of an invalid assumes slowly, but certainly, the glow of returning health. Early as it was, an odd individual was visible here and there, and it may, be observed, that at a very early hour every person visible in the streets is characterized by a chilly and careworn appearance, looking, with scarcely an exception, both solitary and sad, just as if they

had not a single friend on earth, but, on the contrary, were striving to encounter; struggles and difficulties which they were incompetent to meet.

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As our travellers entered the city, that bygone class who, as guardians of the night, were appointed to preserve the public peace, every one of them a half felon and whole accomplice, were seen to pace slowly along, their poles under their left arm, their hands mutually thrust into the capacious cuffs of their watchcoats, and each with a frowzy woollen nightcap under his hat. Here and there a staggering toper might be seen on his way home from the tavern brawl or the midnight debauch, advancing, or attempting to advance, as if he wanted to trace Hogarth's line of beauty. From some quarters the wild and reckless shriek of female profligacy might be heard, the tongue, though loaded with blasphemies, nearly paralyzed by intoxication. Nor can we close here. The fashionable carriage made its appearance filled with beauty shorn of its charms by a more refined dissipation—beauty, no longer beautiful, returning with pale cheeks, languid eyes, and exhausted frame—after having breathed a thickened and suffocating atmosphere, calculated to sap the physical health, if not to disturb the pure elements of moral feeling, principle, and delicacy, without which woman becomes only an object of contempt.

Up until the arrival of the "Fly" at the hotel, the gray dusk of morning, together with the thick black veil to which we have alluded, added to that natural politeness which prevents a gentleman from staring at a lady who may wish to avoid observation—owing to these causes, we say, the stranger had neither inclination nor opportunity to recognize the features of Lucy Gourlay. When the coach drew up, however, with that courtesy and attention that are always due to the sex, and, we may add, that are very seldom omitted with a pretty travelling companion, the stranger stepped quickly out of it in order to offer her assistance, which was accepted silently, being acknowledged only by a graceful inclination of the head. When, however, on leaving the darkness of the vehicle he found her hand and arm tremble, and had sufficient light to recognize her through the veil, he uttered an exclamation expressive at once of delight, wonder, and curiosity.

"Good God, my dear Lucy," said he in a low whisper, so as not to let his words reach other ears, "how is this? In heaven's name, how does it happen that you travel by a common night coach, and are here at such an hour?"

She blushed deeply, and as she spoke he observed that her voice was infirm and tremulous: "It is most unfortunate," she replied, "that we should both have travelled in the same conveyance. I request you will instantly leave me."

"What! leave you alone and unattended at this hour?"

"I am not unattended," she replied; "that faithful creature, though somewhat blunt and uncouth in her manners, is all truth and attachment, so far as I at least am concerned. But I beg you will immediately withdraw. If we are seen holding conversation, or for a moment in each other's society, I cannot tell what the consequences may be to my reputation."

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“But, my dear Lucy,” replied the stranger, “that risk may easily be avoided. This meeting seems providential—I entreat you, let us accept it as such and avail ourselves of it.”

“That is,” she replied, whilst her glorious dark eye kindled, and her snowy temples got red as fire, “that is, that I should elope with you, I presume? Sir,” she added, “you are the last man from whom I should have expected an insult. You forget yourself, and you forget me.”

The high sense of honor that flashed from that glorious eye, and which made itself felt through the indignant tones of her voice, rebuked him at once.

“I have erred,” said he, “but I have erred from an excess of affection—will you not pardon me?”

She felt the difficulty and singular distress of her position, and in spite of her firmness and the unnatural harshness of her father, she almost regretted the step she had taken. As it was, she made no reply to the stranger, but seemed absorbed in thoughts of bitterness and affliction.

“Let me press you,” said the stranger, “to come into the hotel; you require both rest and refreshment—and I entreat and implore you, for the sake both of my happiness and your own, to grant me a quarter of an hour’s conversation.”

“I have reconsidered our position,” she replied. “Alley will fetch in our very slight luggage; she has money, too, to pay the guard and driver—she says it is usual; and I feel that to give you a short explanation now may possibly enable us to avoid much future embarrassment and misunderstanding—Alley, however, must accompany us, and be present in the room. But then,” she added, starting, “is it proper?—is it delicate?—-no, no, I cannot, I cannot; it might compromise me with the world. Leave me, I entreat, I implore, I command you. I ask it as a proof of your love. We will, I trust, have other opportunities. Let us trust, too, to time—let us trust to God—but I will do nothing wrong, and I feel that this would be unworthy of my mother’s daughter.”

“Well,” replied the stranger, “I shall obey you as a proof of my love for you; but will you not allow me to write to you?—will you not give me your address?”

“No,” she returned; “and I enjoin you, as you hope, that we shall ever be happy, not to attempt to trace me. I ask this from you as a man of honor. Of course it may or perhaps it will be discovered that we travelled in the same coach. The accident may be misinterpreted. My father may seek an explanation from you—he may ask if you know where I am. Should I have placed the knowledge of my retreat in your possession, you know that, as a man of honor, you could not tell him a falsehood. Goodby,” she added, “we may meet in better times, but I much fear that our destinies will be separated forever—Come, Alley.”

Her voice softened as she uttered the last words, and the stranger felt the influence of her ascendency over him too strongly to hesitate in manifesting this proof of his obedience to her wishes.

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CHAPTER XIV. Crackenfudge put upon a Wrong Scent

—Miss Gourlay takes Refuge with an Old Friend.

Little did Lucy dream that the fact of their discovery as fellow-travellers would so soon reach her father's ears, and that the provision against that event, and the inferences which calumny might draw from it, as suggested by her prudence and good sense, should render her advice to the stranger so absolutely necessary.

Whilst the brief dialogue which we have recited at the close of the last chapter took place, another, which as a faithful historian we are bound to detail, was proceeding between the redoubtable Crackenfudge and our facetious friend, Dandy Dulcimer. Crackenfudge in following the stranger to the metropolis by the 'Flash of Lightning', in order to watch his movements, was utterly ignorant that Lucy had been that gentleman's fellow-traveller in the Fly. A strong opposition, as we have already said, existed between the two coaches, and so equal was their speed, that in consequence of the mutual delay caused by changing horses, they frequently passed each other on the road, the driver, guard, and outside passengers of both coaches uniformly grimacing at each other amidst a storm of groans, cheers, and banter on both sides. So equal, however, were their relative powers of progress, that no effort on either side was found sufficient to enable any one of them to claim a victory. On the contrary, their contests generally ended in a dead heat, or something very nearly approaching it. On the night in question the 'Fly' had a slight advantage, and but a slight one. Before the coachman had time to descend from his ample seat, the 'Flash of Lightning' came dashing in at a most reckless speed—the unfortunate horses snorting and panting—steaming with smoke, which rose from them in white wreaths, and streaming in such a manner with perspiration that it was painful to look upon them.

Crackenfudge was one of the first out of the 'Flash of Lightning', which, we should say, drew up at a rival establishment, directly opposite that which patronized the 'Fly'. He lost no time in sending in his trunk by "boots," or some other of those harpies that are always connected with large hotels in the metropolis. Having accomplished this, he set himself, but quite in a careless way, to watch the motions of the stranger. For this purpose he availed himself of a position from whence he could see without being himself seen. Judge, then, of his surprise on ascertaining that the female whom he saw with the stranger was no other than Lucy Gourlay, and in conversation with the very individual with whose name, motions, and projects he wished so anxiously to become acquainted. If he watched Miss Gourlay and her companion well however, he himself was undergoing quite as severe a scrutiny. Dandy Dulcimer having observed him, in consequence of some hints that he had already received from a source with which the reader may become ultimately acquainted, approached, and putting his hand to his hat, exclaimed:

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“Why, then, Counsellor Crackenfudge, is it here I find your honor?”

“Don’t you see a’m here, Dandy, my fine fellow?” and this he uttered in a very agreeable tone, simply because he felt a weak and pitiable ambition to be addressed by the title of “Your honor.”

“What does all this mean, Dandy?” asked Crackenfudge; “it looks vary odd to see Miss Gourlay in conversation with an impostor—a’ think it’s an elopement, Dandy. And pray Dandy, what brought you to town?”

“I think your honor’s a friend to Sir Thomas, counsellor?” replied Dandy, answering by another question.

“A’ am, Dandy, a stanch friend to Sir Thomas.”

“Bekaise I know that if you aren’t a friend of his, he is a friend of yours. I was playin’ a tune the other day in the hall, and while I was in the very middle of it I heard him say—-’We must have Counsellor Crackenfudge on the bench;’ and so they had a long palaver about you, and the whole thing ended by Sir Thomas getting the tough old Captain to promise you his support, with some great man that they called *custos rascalorum*.”

“A’ am obliged to Sir Thomas,” said Crackenfudge, “and a’ know he is a true friend of mine.”

“Ay, but will you now be a true friend to him, plaise your honor, counsellor?”

“To be sure I will, Dandy, my fine fellow.”

“Well, then, listen—Sir Thomas got me put into this strange fellow’s sarvice, in ordher to ah—ahem—why, you see in ordher to keep an eye upon him—and, what do you think? but he’s jist afther tellin’ me that he doesn’t think he’ll have any further occasion for my sarvices.”

“Well, a’ think that looks suspicious—it’s an elopement, there’s no doubt about it.”

“I think so, your honor; although I am myself completely in the dark about it, any farther than this, counsellor—listen, now—I know the road they’re goin’, for I heard it by accident—they’ll be off, too, immediately. Now, if your honor is a true friend to Sir Thomas, you’ll take a post chaise and start off a little before them upon the Isaas road. You know that by going before them, they never can suspect that you’re followin’ them. I’ll remain here to watch their motions, and while you keep before them, I’ll keep after them, so that it will be the very sorra if they escape us both. Whisper, counsellor, your honor—I’m in Sir Thomas’s pay. Isn’t that enough? but I want assistance, and if you’re his friend, as you say, you will be guided by me and sarve him.”

Crackenfudge felt elated; he thought of the magistracy, of his privilege to sit on the bench in all the plenitude of official authority; he reflected that he could commit mendicants, impostors, vagrants, and vagabonds of all descriptions, and that he would be entitled to the solemn and reverential designation of “Your worship.” Here, then, was an opening. The very object for which he came to town was accomplished—that is to say, the securing to himself the magistracy through the important services rendered to Sir Thomas Gourlay.

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It occurred to him, we admit, that as it must have been evidently a case of elopement, it might be his duty to have the parties arrested, until at least the parent of the lady could be apprised of the circumstances. There was, however, about Crackenfudge a wholesome regard for what is termed a whole skin, and as he had been, through the key-hole of the Mitre inn, a witness of certain scintillations and flashes that lit up the eye of this most mysterious stranger, he did not conceive that such steps and his own personal safety were compatible. In the meantime, he saw that there was an air of sincerity and anxiety about Dandy Dulcimer, which he could impute to nothing but a wish, if possible, to make a lasting friend of Sir Thomas, by enabling him to trace his daughter.

Dandy's plea and plan both succeeded, and in the course of a few minutes Crackenfudge was posting at an easy rate toward the town of Naas. Many a look did he give out of the chaise, with a hope of being able to observe the vehicle which contained those for whom he was on the watch, but in vain. Nothing of the kind was visible; but notwithstanding this he drove on to the town, where he ordered breakfast in a private room, with the anxious expectation that they might soon arrive. At length, his patience having become considerably exhausted, he determined to return to Dublin, and provided he met them, with Dandy in pursuit, to wheel about and also to join the musician in the chase. Having settled his bill, which he did not do without half an hour's wrangling with the waiter, he came to the hall door, from which a chaise with close Venetian blinds was about to start, and into which he thought the figure of a man entered, who very much resembled that of Corbet, Sir Thomas's house steward and most confidential servant. Of this, however, he could not feel quite certain, as he had not at all got a glimpse of his face. On inquiring, he found that the chaise contained another man also, who was so ill as not to be able to leave it. One of them, however, drank some spirits in the chaise, and got a bottle of it, together with some provisions, to take along with them.

So far had Crackenfudge been most adroitly thrown off the trace of Miss Gourlay and the stranger; and when Dandy joined his master, who, from principles of delicacy and respect for Lucy, went to the opposite inn, he candidly told him of the hoax he had played off on the embryo magistrate.

"I sent him, your honor, upon what they call a fool's errand, and certain I am, he is the very boy will deliver it—not but that he's the divil's own knave on the other. The truth is, sir, it's just one day a knave and the other a fool with him."

The stranger paid little attention to these observations, but walked up and down the room in a state of sorrow and disappointment, that completely abstracted him from every object around him.

"Good. God!" he exclaimed, "she will not even allow me to know the place of her retreat, and she may stand in need of aid and support, and probably of protection, a

thousand ways. Would to heaven I knew how to trace her, and become acquainted with her residence, and that more for her own sake than for mine!”

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“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Dandy, “I see a cousin o’ mine over the way; would your honor give me a couple of hours to spend wid him? I haven’t seen him this—God knows how long.”

Well might Dandy say so—the cousin alluded to having been only conceived and brought forth from his own own fertile fancy at the moment, or rather, while his master was unconsciously uttering his soliloquy. The truth was, that while the latter spoke, Dandy, whom he had ordered to attend him, without well knowing why, observed a hackney-coach draw up at the door of the opposite hotel; but this fact would not have in any particular way arrested his attention, had he not seen Alley Mahon giving orders to the driver.

“You’ll give me a couple of hours, your honor?”

“I’ll give you the whole day, Dandy, if you wish. I shall be engaged, and will not require any further services from you until to-morrow.”

Dandy looked at him very significantly, and with a degree of assurance, for which we can certainly offer no apology, puckered his naturally comic face into a most mysterious grin, and closing one eye, or in other words, giving his master a knowing wink, said—

“Very well, sir, I know how many banes makes five at any rate—let me alone.”

“What do you mean, you varlet,” said his master, “by that impudent wink?”

“Wink?” replied Dandy, with a face of admirable composure. “Oh, you observed it, then? Sure, God help me, it’s a wakeness I have in one of my eyes ever since I had the small-pock.”

“And pray which eye is it in?” asked his master.

“In the left, your honor.”

“But, you scoundrel, you winked at me with the right.”

“Troth, sir, maybe I did, for it sometimes passes from the one to the other wid me—but not often indeed—it’s principally in my left.”

“Very well; but in speaking to me, use no such grimaces in future; and now go see your cousin. I shall sleep for a few hours, for I feel somewhat jaded, paid out of order on many accounts. But before you go, listen to me, and mark me well. You saw me in conversation with Miss Gourlay?”

Dandy, whose perception was quick as lightning, had his finger on his lips immediately. “I understand you, sir,” said he; “and once for all, sir,” he proceeded, “do you listen to

me. You may lay it down as one of the ten commandments, that any secret you may plaise to trust me with, will be undher a tombstone. I'm not the stuff that a traitor or villain is made of. So, once for fill, your honor, make your mind aisy on that point."

"It will be your own interest to prove faithful," said his master. "Here is a month's wages for you in advance."

Dandy, having accepted the money, immediately proceeded to the next hackney station, which was in the same street, where he took a coach by the hour; and having got into it, ordered the driver to follow that which he saw waiting at the door of the hotel aforesaid.

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“Folly that hackney,” said he to the driver, “at what is called a respectful distance, an’ you’ll be no loser by it.”

“Is there a piece of fun in the wind?” asked the driver, with a knowing grin.

“When you go to your Padereens tonight,” replied Dandy, “that is, in case you ever trouble them, you may swear it on them.”

“Whish! More power—I’m the boy will rowl you on.”

“There, they’re off,” said Dandy; “but don’t be in a hurry, for fraid we might seem to folly them—only for your life and sowl, and as you hope to get half-a-dozen gum-ticklers when we come come back—don’t let them out o’ sight. By the rakes o’ Mallow, this jaunt may be the makin’ o’ you. Says his lordship to me, ‘Dandy,’ says he, ’find out where she goes to, and you and every one that helps you to do so, is a made man.’”

“Ha, ha!” exclaimed the driver, with glee, “is that it? Come, then—here’s at you—they’re off.”

It was not yet five o’clock, and the stranger requested to be shown to a bedroom, to which he immediately retired, in order to gain a few hours’ sleep, after the fatigue of his journey and the agitation which he had Undergone.

In the meantime, as Dandy followed Miss Gourlay, so shall we follow him. The chase, we must admit, was conducted with singular judgment and discretion, the second chaise jogging on—but that, in fact, is not the term—we should rather say flogging on, inasmuch as that which contained the fair fugitives went at a rate of most unusual speed. In this manner they proceeded, until they reached a very pretty cottage, about three quarters of a mile from the town of Wicklow, situated some fifty or sixty yards in from the road side. Here they stopped; but Dandy desired his man to drive slowly on. It was evident that this cottage was the destination of the fugitives. Dandy, having turned a corner of the road, desired the driver to stop and observe whether they entered or not; and the latter having satisfied himself that they did—

“Now,” said Dandy, “let us wait where we are till we see whether the chaise returns or not; if it does, all’s right, and I know what I know.”

In a few minutes the empty chaise started once more for Dublin, followed, as before, by the redoubtable Dulcimer, who entered the city a much more important person than when he left it. Knowledge, as Bacon says, is power.

About two o’clock the stranger was dressed, had breakfasted, and having ordered a car, proceeded to Constitution Hill. As he went up the street, he observed the numbers of the houses as well as he could, for some had numbers and some had not. Among the latter was that he sought for, and he was consequently obliged to inquire. At length he

found it, and saw by a glance that it was one of those low lodging-houses to which country folks of humble rank—chapmen, hawkers, pedlers, and others of a, similar character—resort. It was evident, also, that the proprietor dealt in huckstery,

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as he saw a shop in which there was bacon, meal, oats, eggs, potatoes, bread, and such other articles as are usually to be found in small establishments of the kind. He entered the shop, and found an old man, certainly not less than seventy, but rather beyond it, sitting behind the counter. The appearance of this man was anything but prepossessing. His brows were low and heavy; his mouth close, and remarkably hard for his years; the forehead low and narrow, and singularly deficient in what phrenologists term the moral and intellectual qualities. But the worst feature in the whole face might be read in his small, dark, cunning eyes, which no man of any penetration could look upon without feeling that they were significant of duplicity, cruelty, and fraud. His hair, though long, and falling over his neck, was black as ebony; for although Time had left his impress upon the general features of his face, it had not discolored a single hair upon his head; whilst his whiskers, on the contrary, were like snow—a circumstance which, in connection with his sinister look, gave him a remarkable and startling appearance. His hands were coarse and strong, and the joints of his thick fingers were noded either by age or disease; but, at all events, affording indication of a rude and unfeeling character.

“Pray,” said the stranger, “is your name Denis Dunphy?”

The old man fastened his rat-like eyes upon him, compressed his hard, unfeeling lips, and, after surveying him for some time, replied—

“What’s your business, sir, with Denis Dunphy?”

“That, my friend, can be mentioned only to himself; are you the man?”

“Well, and what if I be?”

“But I must be certain that you are.”

There was another pause, and a second scrutiny, after which he replied,

“May be my name in Denis Dunphy.”

“I have no communication to make,” said the stranger, “that you may be afraid of; but, such as it is, it can be made to no person but Denis Dunphy himself. I have a letter for him.”

“Who does it come from?” asked the cautious Denis Dunphy.

“From the parish priest of Ballytrain,” replied the other, “the Rev. Father M’Mahon.”

The old man pulled out a large snuff-box, and took a long pinch, which he crammed with his thumb first into one nostril, then into the other, bending his head at the same! time to each side, in order to enjoy it with greater relish, after which he gave a short deliberative cough or two.

“Well,” said he, “I am Denis Dunphy.”

“In that case, then,” replied the other, “I should very much wish to have a short private conversation with you of some importance. But you had better first read the reverend gentleman’s letter,” he added, “and perhaps we shall then understand each other better;” and as he spoke he handed him the letter.

The man received it, looked at it, and again took a more rapid and less copious pinch, peered keenly at the stranger, and asked—“Pray, sir, do you know the contents of this letter?”

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“Not a syllable of it.”

He then coughed again, and having opened the document, began deliberately to peruse it.

The stranger, who was disagreeably impressed by his whole manner and appearance, made a point to watch the effect which the contents of the document might have on him. The other, in the meantime, read on, and, as he proceeded, it was obvious that the communication was not only one that gave him no pleasure, but filled him with suspicion and alarm. After about twenty minutes—for it took him at least that length of time to get through it—he raised his head, and fastening his small, piercing eyes upon the stranger, said:

“But how do I know that this letter comes from Father M’Mahon?”

“I’d have you to understand, sir,” replied the stranger, nearly losing his temper, “that you are addressing a gentleman and a man of honor.”

“Faith,” said the other, “I don’t know whether I am or not. I have only your word for it—-and no man’s willin’ to give a bad character of himself—but if you will keep the shop here for a minute or two, I’ll soon be able to tell whether it’s Father M’Mahon’a hand-write or not.”

So saying, he deliberately locked both tills of the counter—to wit, those which contained the silver and coppers—then, surveying the stranger with a look of suspicion—a look, by the way, that, after having made his cash safe, had now something of the triumph and confidence of security in it, he withdrew to a little backroom, that was divided from the shop by a partition of boards and a glass door, to which there was a red curtain.

“It is betther,” said the impudent old sinner, alluding to the cash in the tills, “to greet over it than greet afther it—just keep the shop for a couple of minutes, and then we’ll undherstand one another, may be. There’s a great many skamers going in this world.”

Having entered the little room in question, he suddenly popped out his head and asked:

“Could you weigh a stone or a half stone of praties, if they were called for? But, never mind—you’d be apt to give down weight—I’ll come out and do it myself, if they’re wanted;” saying which, he drew the red curtain aside, in order the better, as it would seem, to keep a watchful eye upon the other.

The latter was at first offended, but ultimately began to feel amused by the offensive peculiarities of the old man. He now perceived that he was eccentric and capricious, and that, in order to lure any information out of him, it would be necessary to watch and take advantage of the disagreeable whimsicalities which marked his character. Patience, he saw clearly, was his only remedy.

After remaining in the back parlor for about eight or ten minutes, he put out his thin, sharp face, with a grin upon it, which was intended for a smile—the expression of which, however, was exceedingly disagreeable.

“We will talk this matter over,” he said, “by and by. I have compared the hand-write in this letther wid a certificate of Father M’Mahon’s, that I have for many years in my possession. Step inside in the meantime; the ould woman will be back in a few minutes, and when she comes we’ll go upstairs and speak about it.”

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The stranger complied with this invitation, and felt highly gratified that matters seemed about to take a more favorable turn.

“I trust,” said he, “you are satisfied that I am fully entitled to any confidence you may feel disposed to place in me?”

“The priest speaks well of you,” replied Dunphy; “but then, sure I know him; he’s so kind-hearted a creature, that any one who speaks him fair, or that he happens to take a fancy to, will be sure to get his good word. It isn’t much assistance I can give you, and it’s not on account of his letther altogether that I do it; but bekaise I think the time’s come, or rather soon will be come. Oh, here,” he said, “is the ould woman, and she’ll keep the shop. Now, sir, come upstairs, if you plaise, for what we’re goin’ to talk about is what the very stones oughtn’t to hear so long as that man—”

He paused, and instantly checked himself, as if he felt that he had already gone too far.

“Now, sir,” he proceeded, “what is it you expect from me? Name it at wanst.”

“You are aware,” said the stranger, “that the son of the late Sir Edward Gourlay, and the heir of his property, disappeared very mysteriously and suspiciously—”

“And so did the son of the present man,” replied Dunphy, eying the stranger keenly.

“It is not of him I am speaking,” replied the other; “although at the same time I must say, that if I could find a trace even of him I would leave no stone unturned to recover him.”

The old man looked into the floor, and mused for some time.

“It was a strange business,” he observed, “that both should go—you may take my word, there has been mischief and revenge, or both, at the bottom of the same business.”

“The worthy priest, whose letter I presented to you to-day, led me to suppose, that if any man could put me in a capacity to throw light upon it you could.”

“He didn’t say, surely, that I could throw light upon it—did he?”

“No, certainly not—but that if any man could, you are that man.”

“Ay, ay,” replied old Dunphy; “all bekaise he thinks I have a regard for the Gourlays. That’s what makes him suppose that I know anything about the business; just as if I was in the saicrets of the family. I may have suspicions like other people; but that’s all.”

“Can you throw out no hint, or give no clew, that might aid me in the recovery of this unhappy young man, if he be alive?”

“You did well to add that, for who can tell whether he is or not?—maybe it’s only thrashing the water you are, after all.”

The stranger saw the old fellow had once more grown cautious, and avoided giving a direct reply to him; but on considering the matter, he was, after all, not much surprised at this. The subject involved a black and heinous crime, and if it so happened that Dunphy could in any way have been implicated in or connected with it, even indirectly, it would be almost unreasonable to expect that he should now become his own accuser. Still the stranger could observe that in spite of all his caution, there was a mystery and uneasiness in his manner, when talking of it, which he could not shake off.

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When the conversation had reached this point, the old woman called her husband down in a voice that seemed somewhat agitated, but not, as far as he could guess, disagreeably.

“Denis, come down a minute,” she said, “come down, will you? here’s a stranger that you haven’t seen for some time.”

“What stranger?” he inquired, peevishly. “Who is it? I wish you wouldn’t bother me—-I’m talkin’ with a gentleman.”

“It’s Ginty.”

“Ginty, is it?” said he, musing. “Well, that’s odd, too—to think that she should come at this very moment. Maybe, the hand of G—. I beg your pardon, sir, for a minute or two—I’ll be back immediately.”

He went down stairs, and found in the back parlor the woman named Ginty Cooper, the same fortune-teller and prophetess whom we have already described to the reader.

The old man seemed to consider her appearance not as an incident that stirred up any natural affection in himself, but as one that he looked upon as extraordinary. Indeed, to tell the truth, he experienced a sensation of surprise, mingled with a superstitious feeling, that startled him considerably, by her unexpected appearance at that particular period. He did not resume his conversation with the stranger for at least twenty minutes; but the latter was perfectly aware, from the earnestness of their voices, although their words were not audible, that he and the new-comer were discussing some topic in which they must have felt a very deep interest. At length he came up and apologized for the delay, adding: “With regard to this business, it’s altogether out of my power to give you any assistance. I have nothing but my suspicions, and it wouldn’t be the part of a Christian to lay a crime like that to any man’s door upon mere guess.”

“If you know anything of this dark transaction,” replied the stranger, whose earnestness of manner was increased by his disappointment, as well as by an impression that the old man knew more about it than he was disposed to admit, “and will not enable us to render justice to the wronged and defrauded orphan, you will have a heavy reckoning of it—an awful one when you meet your God. By the usual course of nature that is a reckoning that must soon be made. I advise you, therefore, not to tamper with your own conscience, nor, by concealing your knowledge of this great crime to peril your hopes of eternal happiness. Of one thing you may rest assured, that the justice we seek will not stoop to those who have been merely instruments in the hands of others.”

“That’s all very fine talk,” replied Dunphy, uneasily however, “and from the high-flown language you give me, I take you to be a lawyer; but if you were ten times a lawyer, and a judge to the back of that, a man can’t tell what he doesn’t know.”

“Mark me,” replied the stranger, assailing him through his cupidity, “I pledge you my solemn word that for any available information you may or can give us you shall be most liberally and amply remunerated.”

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“I have money enough,” replied Dunphy; “that is to say, as much as barely does me, for the wealthiest of us cannot bring it to the grave. I’m thankful to you, but I can give you no assistance.”

“Whom do you suspect, then?—whom do you even suspect?”

“Hut!—why, the man that every one suspects—Sir Thomas Gourlay.”

“And upon what grounds, may I ask?”

“Why, simply because no other man had any interest in getting the child removed. Every one knows he’s a dark, tyrannical, bad man, that wouldn’t be apt to scruple at anything. There now,” he added, “that is all I know about it; and I suppose it’s not more than you knew yourself before.”

In order to close the dialogue he stood up, and at once led the way down to the back parlor, where the stranger, on following him, found Ginty Cooper and the old woman in close conversation, which instantly ceased when they made their appearance.

The stranger, chagrined and vexed at his want of success, was about to depart, when Dunphy’s wife said:

“Maybe, sir, you’d wish to get your fortune tould? bekaise, if you would, here’s a woman that will tell it to you, and you may depend upon it she’ll tell you nothing but the truth.”

“I am not in a humor for such nonsense, my good woman; I have much more important matters to think of, I assure you; but I suppose the woman wishes to have her hand crossed with silver; well, it shall be done. Here, my good woman,” he said offering her money, “accept this, and spare your prophecy.”

“I will not have your money, sir,” replied the prophetess; “and I say so to let you know that I’m not an impostor. Be advised, and hear me—show me your hand.”

The startling and almost supernatural appearance of the woman struck him very forcibly, and with a kind of good-humored impatience, he stretched out his hand to her. “Well,” said he, “I will test the truth of what you promise.”

She took it into hers, and after examining the lines for a few seconds said, “The lines in your hand, sir, are very legible—so much so that I can read your name in it—and it’s a name which very few in this country know.”

The stranger started with astonishment, and was about to speak, but she signed to him to be silent.

“You are in love,” she continued, “and your sweetheart loves you dearly. You saw her this morning, and you would give a trifle to know where she will be to-morrow. You traveled with her last night and didn’t know it—and the business that brought you to town will prosper.”

“You say you know my name,” replied the stranger, “if so, write it on a slip of paper.”

She hesitated a moment.

“Will it do,” she asked, “if I give you the initials?”

“No,” he replied, “the name in full—and I think you are fairly caught.”

She gave no reply, but having got a slip of paper and a pen, went to the wall and knocked three times, repeating some unintelligible words with an appearance of great solemnity and mystery. Having knocked, she applied her ear to the wall three times also, after which she seemed satisfied.

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The stranger of course imputed all this to imposture; but when he reflected upon what she had already told him, he felt perfectly confounded with amazement. The prophetess then went to her father's counter and wrote something upon a small fragment of paper, which she handed to him. No earthly language could now express his astonishment, not from any belief he entertained that she possessed supernatural power, but from the almost incredible fact that she could have known so much of a man's affairs who was an utter stranger to her, and to whom she was herself unknown.

"Well, it is odd enough," he added; "but this knocking on the wall and listening was useless jugglery. Did you not say, when first you inspected my hand, that you could read my name in the lines of it? then, of course you knew it before you knocked at the wall—the knocking, therefore, was imposture."

"I knew the name," she replied, "the moment I looked into your hand, but I was obliged to ask permission to reveal it. Your observation, however, was very natural. It may, in the meantime, be a consolation for you to know that I'm not at liberty to mention it to any one but yourself and one other person."

"A man or woman?"

"A woman—she you saw this morning."

"Whether that be true or not," observed the stranger, "the mention of my name at present would place me in both difficulty and danger; so that I hope you'll keep it secret."

She threw the slip of paper into the fire. "There it lies," she replied, "and you might as well read it in those white ashes as extract it from me until the proper time comes. But with respect to it, there is one thing I must tell you before you go."

"What is that, pray?"

"It is a name you will not carry long. Ask me no more questions. I have already said you will succeed in the object of your pursuit, but not without difficulty and danger. Take my advice, and never go anywhere without a case of loaded pistols. I have good reasons for saying so. Now pass on, for I am silent."

There was an air of confidence and superiority about her as she uttered these words—a sense, as it were, of power—of a privilege to command, by which the stranger felt himself involuntarily influenced. He once more offered her money, but, with a motion of her hand, she silently, and somewhat indignantly refused it.

Whilst this singular exhibition took place, the stranger observed the very remarkable and peculiar expression of the old man's countenance. It is indeed very difficult to describe it. He seemed to experience a feeling of satisfaction and triumph at the

revelations the woman had made; added to which was something that might be termed shrewd; ironical, and derisive. In fact, his face bore no bad resemblance to that of Mephistopheles, as represented in Retsch's powerful conception and delineation of it in his illustration of Goethe's "Faust," so inimitably translated by our admirable countryman, Anster.

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The stranger now looked at his watch, bade them good day, and took his leave.

CHAPTER XV. Interview between Lady Gourlay and the Stranger

—Dandy Dulcimer makes a Discovery—The Stranger receives Mysterious Communications.

From Constitution Hill our friend drove directly to Merrion square, the residence of Lady Gourlay, whom he found alone in the drawing-room. She welcomed him with a courtesy that was expressive at once of anxiety, sorrow, and hope. She extended her hand to him and said, after the usual greetings were over:

“I fear to ask what the result of your journey has been—for I cannot, alas! read any expression of success in your countenance.”

“As yet,” replied the stranger, “I have not been successful, madam; but I do not despair. I am, and have been, acting under an impression, that we shall ultimately succeed; and although I can hold out to your ladyship but very slender hopes, if any, still I would say, do not despair.”

Lady Gourlay was about forty-eight, and although sorrow, and the bitter calamity with which the reader is already acquainted, had left their severe traces upon her constitution and features, still she was a woman on whom no one could look without deep I interest and sympathy. Even at that age, her fine form and extraordinary beauty bore up in a most surprising manner against her sufferings. Her figure was tall—its proportions admirable; and her beauty, faded it is true, still made the spectator feel, with a kind of wonder, what it must have been when she was in the prime of youth and untouched by affliction. She possessed that sober elegance of manner that was in melancholy accordance with her fate; and evinced in every movement a natural dignity that excited more than ordinary respect and sympathy for her character and the sorrows she had suffered. Her face was oval, and had been always of that healthy paleness than which, when associated with symmetry and expression—as was the case with her—there is nothing more lovely among women. Her eyes, which were a dark brown, had lost, it is true, much of the lustre and sparkle of early life; but this was succeeded by a mild and mellow light to which an abiding sorrow had imparted an expression that was full of melancholy beauty.

For many years past, indeed, ever since the disappearance of her only child, she had led a secluded life, and devoted herself to the Christian virtues of charity and benevolence; but in such a way as to avoid anything like ostentatious display. Still, such is the structure of society, that it is impossible to carry the virtues for which she was remarkable to any practical extent, without the world by degrees becoming

cognizant of the secret. The very recipients themselves, in the fulness of their heart, will commit a grateful breach of confidence with which it is impossible to quarrel.

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Consoled, as far as any consolation could reach her, by the consciousness of doing good, as well as by a strong sense of religion, she led a life which we regret so few in her social position are disposed to imitate. For many years before the period at which our narrative commences, she had given up all hope of ever recovering her child, if indeed he was alive. Whether he had perished by an accidental death in some place where his body could not be discovered—whether he had been murdered, or kidnapped, were dreadful contingencies that wrung the mother's soul with agony. But as habits of endurance give to the body stronger powers of resistance, so does time by degrees strengthen the mind against the influence of sorrow. A blameless life, therefore, varied only by its unobtrusive charities, together with a firm trust in the goodness of God, took much of the sting from affliction, but could not wholly eradicate it. Had her child died in her arms—had she closed its innocent eyes with her own hands, and given the mother's last kiss to those pale lips on which the smile of affection was never more to sit—had she been able to go, and, in the fulness of her childless heart, pour her sorrow over his grave—she would have felt that his death, compared with the darkness and uncertainty by which she was enveloped, would have been comparatively a mitigated dispensation, for which the heart ought to feel almost thankful.

The death of Corbet, her steward, found her in that mournful apathy under which she had labored for year's. Indeed she resembled a certain class of invalids who are afflicted with some secret ailment, which is not much felt unless when an unexpected pressure, or sudden change of posture, causes them to feel the pang which it inflicts. From the moment that the words of the dying man shed the serenity of hope over her mind, and revived in her heart all those tender aspirations of maternal affection which, as associated with the recovery of her child, had nearly perished out of it—from that moment, we say, the extreme bitterness of her affliction had departed.

She had already suffered too much, however, to allow herself to be carried beyond unreasonable bounds by sanguine and imprudent expectations. Her rule of heart and of conduct was simple, but true—she trusted in God and in the justice of his providence.

On hearing the stranger's want of success, she felt more affected by that than by the faint consolation which he endeavored to hold out to her, and a few bitter tears ran slowly down her cheeks.

"Hope had altogether gone," said she, "and with hope that power in the heart to cherish the sorrow which it sustains; and the certainty of his death had thrown me into that apathy, which qualifies but cannot destroy the painful consequences of reflection. That which presses upon me now, is the fear that although he may still live, as unquestionably Corbet on his death-bed had assured me, yet it is possible we may never recover him. In that case he is dead to me—lost forever."

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“I will not attempt to offer your ladyship consolation,” replied the stranger; “but I would suggest simply, that the dying words of your steward, perhaps, may be looked upon as the first opening—the dawn of a hopeful issue. I think we may fairly and reasonably calculate that your son lives. Take courage, madam. In our efforts to trace him, remember that we have only commenced operations. Every day and every successive attempt to penetrate this painful mystery will, I trust, furnish us with additional materials for success.”

“May God grant it!” replied her ladyship; “for if we fail, my wounds will have been again torn open in vain. Better a thousand times that that hope had never reached me.”

“True, indeed, madam,” replied the stranger; “but still take what comfort you can. Think of your brother-in-law; he also has lost his child, and bears it well.”

“Ah, yes,” she replied, “but you forget that he has one still left, and that I am childless. If there be a solitary being on earth, it is a childless and a widowed mother—a widow who has known a mother’s love—a wife who has experienced the tender and manly affection of a devoted husband.”

“I grant,” he replied, “that it is, indeed, a bitter fate.”

“As for my brother-in-law,” she proceeded, “the child which God, in his love, has spared to him is a compensation almost for any loss. I trust he loves and cherishes her as he ought, and as I am told she deserves. There has been no communication between us ever since my marriage. Edward and he, though brothers, were as different as day and night. Unless once or twice, I never even saw my niece, and only then at a distance; nor has a word ever passed between us. They tell me she is an angel in goodness, as well as in beauty, and that her accomplishments are extraordinary—but—I, alas!—am alone and childless.”

The stranger’s heart palpitated; and had Lady Gourlay entertained any suspicion of his attachment, she might have perceived his agitation. He also felt deep sympathy with Lady Gourlay.

“Do not say childless, madam,” he replied. “Your ladyship must hope for the best.”

“But what have you done?” she asked. “Did you see the young man?”

“I saw him, madam; but it is impossible to get anything out of him. That he is wrapped in some deep mystery is unquestionable. I got a letter, however, from an amiable Roman Catholic clergyman, the parish priest of Ballytrain, to a man named Dunphy, who lives in a street called Constitution Hill, on the north side of the city.”

“He is a relation, I understand, of Edward Corbet, who died in my service,” replied her ladyship, with an interest that seemed instantly to awaken her. “Well,” said she, eagerly, “what was the result? Did you present the letter?”

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“I presented the letter, my lady; and had at first strong hopes—no, not at first—but in the course of our conversation. He dropped unconscious hints that induce me to suspect he knows more about the fate of your son than he wishes to acknowledge. It struck me that he might have been an agent in this black business, and, on that account, that he is afraid to criminate himself. I have, besides,” he added, smilingly, “had the gratification to have heard a prophecy uttered, by which I was assured of ultimate success in my efforts to trace out your son;—a prophecy uttered under and accompanied by circumstances so extraordinary and incomprehensible as to confound and amaze me.”

He then detailed to her the conversation he had had with old Dunphy and the fortune-teller, suppressing all allusion to what tha latter had said concerning Lucy and himself. After which, Lady Gourlay paused for some time, and seemed at a loss what construction to put upon it.

“It is very strange,” she at length observed; “that woman has been here, I think, several times, visiting her late brother, who left her some money at his death. Is she not extremely pale and wild-looking?”

“So much so, madam, that there is something awful and almost supernatural-looking in the expression of her eyes and features. I have certainly never seen such a face before on a denizen of this life.”

“It is strange,” replied her ladyship, “that she should have taken upon her the odious character of a fortune-teller. I was not aware of that. Corbet, I know, had a sister, who was deranged for some time; perhaps this is she, and that the gift of fortune-telling to which she pretends may be a monomania or some other delusion that her unhappy malady has left behind it.”

“Very likely, my lady,” replied the other; “nothing more probable. The fact you mention accounts both for her strange appearance and conduct. Still I must say, that so far as I had an opportunity of observing, there did not appear to be any obvious trace of insanity about her.”

“Well,” she exclaimed, “we know to foretell future events is not now one of the privileges accorded to mortals. I will place my assurance in the justice of God’s goodness and providence, and not in the delusions of a poor maniac, or, perhaps, of an impostor. What course do you propose taking now?”

“I have not yet determined, madam. I think I will see this old Dunphy again. He told me that he certainly suspected your brother-in-law, but assured me that he had no specific grounds for his suspicions—beyond the simple fact, that Sir Thomas would be the principal gainer by the child’s removal. At all events, I shall see him once more to-morrow.”

“What stay will you make in town?”

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“I cannot at the present moment say, my lady. I have other matters, of which your ladyship is aware, to look after. My own rights must be vindicated; and I dare say you will not regret to hear that everything is in a proper train. We want only one link of the chain. An important document is wanting; but I think it will soon be in our hands. Who knows,” he added, smiling, “but your ladyship and I may ere long be able to congratulate each other upon our mutual success? And now, madam, permit me to take my leave. I am not without hope on your account; but of this you may rest assured, that my most strenuous exertions shall be devoted to the object nearest your heart.”

“Alas,” she replied, as she stood up, “it is neither title nor wealth that I covet. Give me my child—restore me my child—and I shall be happy. That is the simple ambition of his mother’s heart. I wish Sir Thomas to understand that I shall allow him to enjoy both title and estates during his life, if, knowing where my child is, he will restore him to my heart. I will bind, myself by the most solemn forms and engagements to this. Perhaps that might satisfy him.”

They then shook hands and separated, the stranger involuntarily influenced by the confident predictions of Ginty Cooper, although he was really afraid to say so; whilst Lady Gourlay felt her heart at one time elevated by the dawn of hope that had arisen, and again depressed by the darkness which hung over the fate of her son.

His next visit was to his attorney, Birney, who had been a day or two in town, and whom he found in his office in Gloucester street.

“Well, Mr. Birney,” he inquired, “what advance are you making?”

“Why,” replied Birney, “the state of our case is this: if Mrs. Norton could be traced we might manage without the documents you have lost;—by the way, have you any notion where the scoundrel might be whom you suspect of having taken them?”

“What! M’Bride? I was told, as I mentioned before, that he and the Frenchwoman went to America, leaving his unfortunate wife behind him. I could easily forgive the rascal for the money he took; but the misfortune was, that the documents and the money were both in the same pocket-book. He knew their value, however, for unfortunately he was fully in my confidence. The fellow was insane about the girl, and I think it was love more than dishonesty that tempted him to the act. I have little doubt that he would return me the papers if he knew where to send them.”

“Have you any notion where the wife is?”

“None in the world, unless that she is somewhere in this country, having set out for it a fortnight before I left Paris.”

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“As the matter stands, then,” replied Birney, “we shall be obliged, to go to France in order to get a fresh copy of the death and the marriage properly attested—or, I should rather say, of the marriage and the death. This will complete our documentary evidence; but, unfortunately, Mrs. Norton, who was her maid at the time, and a witness of both the death and marriage, cannot be found, although she was seen in Dublin about three months ago. I have advertised several times for her in the papers, but to no purpose. I cannot find her whereabouts at all. I fear, however, and so does the Attorney-General, that we shall not be able to accomplish our purpose without her.”

“That is unfortunate,” replied the stranger. “Let us continue the advertisements; perhaps she may turn up yet. As to the other pursuit, touching the lost child, I know not what to say. There are but slight grounds for hope, and yet I am not at all disposed to despair, although I cannot tell why.”

“It cannot be possible,” observed Bimey, “that that wicked old baronet could ultimately prosper in his villainy. I speak, of course, upon the supposition that he is, or was, the bottom of the business. Your, safest and best plan is to find out his agents in the business, if it can be done.”

“I shall leave nothing unattempted,” replied the other; “and if we fail, we shall at least have the satisfaction of having done our duty. The lapse of time, however, is against us; —perhaps the agents are dead.”

“If this man is guilty,” said the attorney, “he is nothing more nor less than a modern Macbeth. However, go on, and keep up your resolution; effort will do much. I hope in this case—in both cases—it will do all.”

After some further conversation upon the matter in question, which it is not our intention to detail here, the stranger made an excursion to the country, and returned about six o’clock to his hotel. Here he found Dandy Dulcimer before him, evidently brimful of some important information on which he (Dandy) seemed to place a high value, and which gave to his naturally droll countenance such an expression of mock gravity as was ludicrous in the extreme.

“What is the matter, sir?” asked his master; “you look very big and important just now. I hope you have not been drinking.”

Dandy compressed his lips as if his master’s fate depended upon his words, and pointing with his forefinger in the direction of Wicklow, replied:

“The deed is done, sir—the deed is done.”

“What deed, sirra?”

“Weren’t you tould the stuff that was in me?” he replied. “But God has gifted me, and sure that’s one comfort, glory be to his name. Weren’t—”

“Explain yourself, sir!” said his master, authoritatively. “What do you mean by the deed is done?’ You haven’t got married, I hope. Perhaps the cousin you went to see was your sweetheart?”

“No, sir, I haven’t got married. God keep me a little while longer from sich a calamity? But I have put you in the way of being so.”

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“How, sirra—put me into a state of calamity? Do you call that a service?”

“A state of repentance, sir, they say, is a state of grace; an’ when one’s in a state of grace they can make their soul; and anything, you know, that enables one to make his soul, is surely for his good.”

“Why, then, say ‘God forbid,’ when I suppose you had yourself got married?”

“Bekaise I’m a sinner, sir,—a good deal hardened or so,—and haven’t the grace even to wish for such a state of grace.”

“Well, but what deed is this you have done? and no more of your gesticulations.”

“Don’t you undherstand, sir!” he replied, extending the digit once more in the same direction, and with the same comic significance.

“She’s safe, sir. Miss Gourlay—I have her.”

“How, you impudent scoundrel, what kind of language is this to apply to Miss Gourlay?”

“Troth, an’ I have her safe,” replied the pertinacious Dandy. “Safe as a hare in her form; but it is for your honor I have her. Cousin! oh, the divil a cousin has Dandy widin the four walls of Dublin town; but well becomes me, I took a post-chaise, no less, and followed her hot foot—never lost sight of her, even while you’d wink, till I seen her housed.”

“Explain yourself, sirra.”

“Faith, sir, all the explanation I have to give you’ve got, barrin’ where she lives.”

The stranger instantly thought of Lucy’s caution, and for the present determined not to embarrass himself with a knowledge of her residence; “lest,” as she said, “her father might demand from him whether he was aware of it.” In that case he felt fully the truth and justness of her injunctions. Should Sir Thomas put the question to him he could not betray her, nor could he, on the other hand, stain his conscience by a deliberate falsehood; for, in truth, he was the soul of honor itself.

“Harkee, Dandy,” said he, not in the slightest degree displeased with him, although he affected to be so, “if you wish to remain in my service keep the secret of Miss Gourlay’s residence—a secret not only from me, but from every human being that lives. You have taken a most unwarrantable and impudent liberty in following her as you did. You know not, sirra, how you may have implicated both her and me by such conduct, especially the young lady. You are known to be in my service; although, for certain reasons, I do not intend, for the present at least, to put you into livery; and you ought to know, sir,

also, that it will be taken for granted that you acted by my orders. Now, sir, keep that secret to yourself, and let it not pass your lips until I may think proper to ask you for it."

One evening, on the second day after this, he reached his hotel at six o'clock, and was about to enter, when a young lad, dancing up to him, asked in a whisper if that was for him, at the same time presenting a note. The other, looking at it, saw that it was addressed to him only by his initials.

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“I think it is, my boy,” said he; “from whom did it come, do you know?”

The lad, instead of giving him any reply, took instantly to his heels, as if he had been pursued for life and death, without even waiting to solicit the gratuity which is usually expected on such occasions. Our friend took it for granted that it had come from the fortune-teller, Ginty Cooper; but on opening it he perceived at a glance that he must have been mistaken, as the writing most certainty was not that of this extraordinary sibyl. The hand in which she had written his name was precisely such as one would expect from such a woman—rude and vulgar —whereas, on the contrary, that in the note was elegant and lady-like. The contents were as follows:

“Sir,—On receipt of this you will, if you wish to prosper in that which you have undertaken to accomplish, hasten to Ballytrain, and secure the person of a young man named Fenton, who lives in or about the town. You will claim him as the lawful heir of the title and property of Red Hall, for such in fact he is. Go then to Sir Thomas Gourlay, and ask him the following questions:

“1st. Did he not one night, about sixteen years ago, engage a man who was so ingeniously masked that the child neither perceived the mask, nor knew the man’s person, to lure, him from Red Hall, under the pretence of bringing him to see a puppet show?

“2d. Did not Sir Thomas give instructions to this man to take him out of his path, out of his sight, and out of his hearing?

“3d. Was not this man well rewarded by Sir Thomas for that act?

“There are other questions in connection with the affair that could he put, but at present they would be unseasonable. The curtain of this dark drama is beginning to rise; truth will, ere long, be vindicated, justice rendered to the defrauded orphan, and guilt punished.

“A Lover of Justice.”

It is very difficult to describe the feelings with which the stranger perused this welcome but mysterious document. To him, it was one of great pleasure, and also of exceedingly great pain. Here was something like a clew, to the discovery which he was so deeply interested in making. But, then, at whose expense was this discovery to be made? He was betrothed to Lucy Gourlay, and here he was compelled by a sense of justice to drag her father forth to public exposure, as a criminal of the deepest dye. What would Lucy say to this? What would she say to the man who should entail the heavy ignominy with which a discovery of this atrocious crime must blacken her father’s name. He knew the high and proud principles by which she was actuated, and he knew how deeply the disgrace of a guilty parent would affect her sensitive spirit. Yet what was he to do? Was

the iniquity of this ambitious and bad man to deprive the virtuous and benevolent woman—the friend of the poor and destitute, the loving mother, the affectionate wife who had enshrined her departed husband in the

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sorrowful recesses of her pure and virtuous heart, was this coldblooded and cruel tyrant to work out his diabolical purposes without any effort being made to check him in his career of guilt, or to justify her pious trust in that God to whom she looked for protection and justice? No, he knew Lucy too well; he knew that her extraordinary sense of truth and honor would justify him in the steps he might be forced to take, and that whatever might be the result, he at least was the last man whom she could blame for rendering justice to the widow of her father's brother. But, then again, what reliance could be placed upon anonymous information—information which, after all, was but limited and obscure? Yet it was evident that the writer—a female beyond question—whoever she was, must be perfectly conversant with his motives and his objects. And if in volunteering him directions how to proceed, she had any purpose adversative to his, her note was without meaning. Besides, she only reawakened the suspicion which he himself had entertained with respect to Fenton. At all events, to act upon the hints contained in the note, might lead to something capable of breaking the hitherto impenetrable cloud under which this melancholy transaction lay; and if it failed to do this, he (the stranger) could not possibly stand worse in the estimation of Sir Thomas Gourlay than he did already. In God's name, then, he would make the experiment; and in order to avoid mail-coach adventures in future, he would post it back to Ballytrain as quietly, and with as little observation as possible.

He accordingly ordered Dandy to make such slight preparations as were necessary for their return to that town, and in the meantime he determined to pay another visit to old Dunphy of Constitution Hill.

On arriving at the huckster's, he found him in the backroom, or parlor, to which we have before alluded. The old man's manner was, he thought, considerably changed for the better. He received him with more complacency, and seemed as if he felt something like regret for the harshness of his manner toward him during his first visit.

"Well, sir," said he, "is it fair to ask you, how you have got on in ferritin' out this black business?"

There are some words so completely low and offensive in their own nature, that no matter how kind and honest the intention of the speaker may be, they are certain to vex and annoy those to whom they are applied.

"Ferreting out!" thought the stranger—"what does the old scoundrel mean?" Yet, on second consideration, he could not for the soul of him avoid admitting that, considering the nature of the task he was engaged in, it was by no means an inappropriate illustration.

“No,” said he, “we have made no progress, but we still trust that you will enable us to advance a step. I have already told you that we only wish to come at the principals. Their mere instruments we overlook. You seem to be a poor man—but listen to me—if you can give us any assistance in this affair, you shall be an independent one during the remainder of your life. Provided murder has not been committed I guarantee perfect safety to any person who may have only acted under the orders of a superior.”

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“Take your time,” replied the old man, with a peculiar expression. “Did you ever see a river?”

“Of course,” replied the other; “why do you ask?”

“Well, now, could you, or any livin’ man, make the strame of that river flow faster than its natural course?”

“Certainly not,” replied the stranger.

“Well, then—I’m an ould man and be advised by me—don’t attempt to hurry the course o’ the river. Take things as they come. If there’s a man on this earth that’s a livin’ divil in flesh and blood, it’s Sir Thomas Gourlay, the Black Barrownight; and if there’s a man livin’ that would go half way into hell to punish him, I’m that man. Now, sir, you said, the last day you were here, that you were a gentleman and a man of honor, and I believe you. So these words that have spoken to you about him you will never mention them—-you promise that?”

“Of course I can, and do. To what purpose should I mention them?”

“For your own sake, or, I should say, for the sake of the cause you are engaged in, don’t do it.”

The bitterness of expression which darkened the old man’s features, while he spoke of the Baronet, was perfectly diabolical, and threw him back from the good opinion which the stranger was about to form of him, notwithstanding his conduct on the previous day’s visit.

“You don’t appear to like Sir Thomas,” he said. “He is certainly no favorite of yours.”

“Like him,” replied the old man, bitterly. “He is supposed to be the best friend I have; but little you know the punishment he will get in his heart, sowl, and spirit—little you know what he will be made to suffer yet. Of course now you undherstand, that if I could help you, as you say, to advance a single step in finding the right heir of this property I would do it. As matthers stand now, however, I can do nothing—but I’ll tell you what I will do—I’ll be on the lookout—I’ll ask, seek, and inquire from them that have been about him at the time of the child’s disappearance, and if I can get a single particle worth mentionin’ to you, you shall have it, if I could only know where a letther would find you.”

The cunning, the sagacity, the indefinable twinkle that scintillated from the small, piercing eyes, were too obvious to be overlooked. The stranger instantly felt himself placed, as it were, upon his guard, and he replied,

“It is possible that I may not be in town, and my address is uncertain; but the moment you are in a capacity to communicate any information that may be useful, go to the proper quarter—to Lady Gourlay herself. I understand that a relation of yours lived and died in her service?”

“That’s true,” said the man, “and a betther mistress never did God put breath in, nor a betther masther than Sir Edward. Well, I will follow your advice, but as for Sir Thomas—no matther, the time’s comin’—the river’s flowin—and if there’s a God in heaven, he will be punished for all his misdeeds—for other things as well as takin’ away the child—-that is, if he has taken him away. Now, sir, that’s all I can say to you at present—for I know nothing about this business. Who can tell, however, but I may ferret out something? It won’t be my heart, at any rate, that will hinder me.”

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There was nothing further now to detain the stranger in town. He accordingly posted it at a rapid rate to Ballytrain, accompanied by Dandy and his dulcimer, who, except during the evenings among the servants in the hotel, had very little opportunity of creating a sensation, as he thought he would have done as an amateur musician in the metropolis.

“Musha, you’re welcome back, sir,” said Pat Sharpe, on seeing the stranger enter the Mitre; “troth, we were longin’ for you, sir. And where is herself, your honor?”

“Whom do you mean, Pat?” said the stranger, sharply.

Pat pointed with his thumb over his shoulder toward Red Hall. “Ah!” he exclaimed, with a laugh, “by my soul I knew you’d manage it well. And troth, I’ll drink long life an’ happiness an’ a sweet honeymoon to yez both, this very night, till the eyes stand in my head. Ah, thin, but she is the darlin’, God bless her!”

If a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet, the stranger could not have felt more astonishment; but that is not the word—sorrow—agony—indignation.

“Gracious heaven!” he exclaimed, “what is this? what villanous calumny has gone abroad?”

Here Dandy saw clearly that his master was in distress, and generously resolved to step in to his assistance.

“Paudeen,” said he, “you know nothing about this business, my hurler. You’re a day before the fair. They’re not married yet—but it’s as good—so hould your prate about it till the knot’s tied—then trumpet it through the town if you like.”

The stranger felt that to enter into an altercation with two such persons would be perfect madness, and only make what now appeared to be already too bad, much worse. He therefore said, very calmly,

“Pat, I assure you, that my journey to Dublin had nothing whatsoever to do with Miss Gourlay’s. The whole matter was accidental. I know nothing about her; and if any unfortunate reports have gone abroad they are unfounded, and do equal injustice to that lady and to me.”

“Divil a thing else, now, Paudeen,” said Dandy, with a face full of most villanous mystery—that had runaway and elopement in every line of it—and a tone of voice that would have shamed a couple-beggar—“bad scran to the ha’p’orth happened. So don’t be puttin’ bad constructions on things too soon. However, there’s a good time comin’, plaise God—so now, Paudeen, behave yourself, can’t you, and don’t be vexin’ the masther.”

“Pat,” said the stranger, feeling that the best way to put an end to this most painful conversation was to start a fresh topic, “will you send for Fenton, and say I wish to see him?”

“Fenton, sir!—why, poor Mr. Fenton has been missed out of the town and neighborhood ever since the night you and Miss Gour—I beg pardon—”

“Upon my soul, Paudeen,” said Dandy, “I’ll knock you down if you say that agin now, afther what the masther an’ I said to you. Hang it, can’t you have discretion, and keep your tongue widin your teeth, on this business at any rate?”

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“Is not Fenton in town?” asked the stranger.

“No, sir; he has neither been seen nor heard of since that night, and the people’s beginin’ to wonder what has become of him.”

Here was a disappointment; just at the moment when he had determined, by seizing upon Fenton, with a view to claim him as the son of the late Sir Edward Gourlay, and the legitimate heir of Red Hall, in order, if it were legally possible, to bring about an investigation into the justice of those claims, it turned out that, as if in anticipation of his designs, the young man either voluntarily disappeared, or else was spirited forcibly away. How to act now he felt himself completely at a loss, but as two heads he knew were better than one, he resolved to see Father M’Mahon, and ask his opinion and advice upon this strange and mysterious occurrence. In the mean time, while he is on the way to visit that amiable and benevolent priest, we shall so far gratify the reader as to throw some light upon the unaccountable disappearance of the unfortunate Fenton.

CHAPTER XVI.

Conception and Perpetration of a Diabolical Plot against Fenton.

Sir Thomas Gourlay was a man prompt and inexorable in following up his resolutions. On the night of Lucy’s flight from Red Hall, he had concocted a plan which it was not his intention to put in execution for a day or two, as he had by no means made up his mind in what manner to proceed with it. On turning over the matter, however, a second time in his thoughts, and comparing the information which he had received from Crackenfudge respecting the stranger, and the allusion to the toothpick manufacturer, he felt morally certain that Fenton was his brother’s son, and that by some means or other unknown to him he had escaped from the asylum in which he had been placed, and by some unaccountable fatality located himself in the town of Ballytrain, which, in fact, was a portion of his inheritance.

“I am wrong,” thought he, “in deferring this project. There is not a moment to be lost. Some chance incident, some early recollection, even a sight of myself—for he saw me once or twice, to his cost—may awaken feelings which, by some unlucky association, might lead to a discovery. Curse on the cowardly scoundrel, Corbet, that did not take my hint, and put him at once and forever out of my path, sight, and hearing. But he had scruples, forsooth; and here now is the serpent unconsciously crossing my path. This is the third time he has escaped and broken out of bounds. Upon the two former I managed him myself, without a single witness; and, but that I had lost my own child—-and there is a mystery I cannot penetrate—I would have—”

Here he rang the bell, and a servant entered.

“Send up Gillespie.”

The servant, as usual, bowed, and Gillespie entered.

“Gillespie, there is a young fellow in Ballytrain, named—Fenton, I think?”

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“Yes, your honor; he is half-mad, or whole mad, as a good many people think.”

“I am told he is fond of liquor.”

“He is seldom sober, Sir Thomas.”

“Will you go into Ballytrain, and try to see him? But first see the butler, and desire him, by my orders, to give you a bottle of whiskey. I don’t mean this moment, sirra,” he said, for Gillespie was proceeding to take him instantly at his word.

“Listen, sir. See Fenton—lure him as quietly and secretly as you can out of town—bring him into some remote nook—”

“Sir Thomas, I beg your pardon,” exclaimed Gillespie, getting pale; “if you mean that I should—”

“Silence, sir,” replied the baronet, in his sternest and deepest voice; “hear me; bring him, if you can, to some quiet place, where you will both be free from observation; then produce your bottle and glass, and ply him with liquor until you have him drunk.”

“It’s very likely that I’ll find him drunk as it is, sir; he is seldom otherwise.”

“So much the better; you will have the less trouble. Well, when you have him sufficiently drunk, bring him to the back gate of the garden, which you will find unlocked; lodge him in the tool-house, ply him with more liquor, until he becomes helpless. In the meantime, lock the back gate after you—here is the key, which you can keep in your pocket. Having left him in the tool-house—in a sufficiently helpless state, mark—lock him in, put that key in your pocket, also; then get my travelling carriage ready, put to the horses, and when all this is done, come to me here; I shall then instruct you how and where to proceed. I shall also accompany you myself to the town of ------, after which you shall take a post-chaise, and proceed with this person to the place of his destination. Let none of the servants see you; and remember we are not to start from the garden gate until about twelve o’clock, or later.”

Gillespie promised compliance, and, in fact, undertook the business with the greater alacrity, on hearing that there was to be a bottle of whiskey in the case. As he was leaving the room, however, Sir Thomas called him back, and said, with a frown which nobody could misunderstand, “Harkee, Gillespie, keep yourself strictly sober, and—oh yes, I had nearly forgotten it—try if there is a hard scar, as if left by a wound, under his chin, to the left side; and if you find none, have nothing to do with him. You understand, now, all I require of you?”

“Perfectly, your honor. But I may not be able to find this Fenton.”

“That won’t be your own fault, you must only try another time, when you may have better success. Observe, however, that if there is no scar under the left side of his chin, you are to let him pass—he is not the person in whom I feel interested, and whom I am determined to serve, if I can—even against his wishes. He is, I believe, the son of an old friend, and I will endeavor to have him restored to the perfect use of his reason, if human skill can effect it.”

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“That’s very kind of you, Sir Thomas, and very few would do it,” replied Gillespie, as he left the apartment, to fulfil his execrable mission.

Gillespie having put the bottle of strong spirits into his pocket, wrapped a great coat about him, and, by a subsequent hint from Sir Thomas, tied a large handkerchief across his face, in order the better to conceal his features, and set out on his way to Ballytrain.

It may be remarked with truth, that the projects of crime are frequently aided by those melancholy but felicitous contingencies, which, though unexpected and unlooked for, are calculated to enable the criminal to effect his wicked purposes with more facility and less risk. Gillespie, on the occasion in question, not only met Fenton within a short distance of the town, and in a lonely place, but also found him far advanced in a state of intoxication.

“Is this Mr. Fenton?” said he. “How do you do, Mr. Fenton? A beautiful night, sir.”

“Yes, sir,” replied the unfortunate young man; “it is Mr. Fenton, and you are a gentleman. Some folks now take the liberty of calling me Fenton, which is not only impudently familiar and ridiculous, but a proof that they do not know how to address a gentleman.”

“You are leaving the town, it seems, Mr. Fenton?”

“Yes, there’s a wake down in Killyfaddy, where there will be a superfluity, sir, of fun; and I like to see fun and sorrow associated. They harmonize, my friend—they concatenate.”

“Mr. Fenton,” proceeded Gillespie, “you are a young gentleman—”

“Yes, sir, that’s the term. I am a gentleman. What can I do for you? I have rare interest among the great and powerful.”

“I don’t at all doubt it,” replied Gillespie; “but I was go in’ to say, sir, that you are a young gentleman that I have always respected very highly.”

“Thanks, my friend, thanks.”

“If it wouldn’t be takin’ a liberty, I’d ask a favor of you.”

“Sir, you are a gentleman, and it should be granted. Name it.”

“The night, sir, although a fine enough night, is a little sharp, for all that. Now, I happen to have a sup of as good liquor in my pocket as ever went down the red lane, and if we could only get a quiet sheltering spot, behind one of these ditches, we could try its pulse between us.”

“The project is good and hospitable,” replied poor Fenton, “and has my full concurrence.”

“Well, then, sir,” said the other, “will you be so good as to come along with me, and we’ll make out some snug spot where I’ll have the pleasure of drinkin’ your honor’s health.”

“Good again,” replied the unlucky dupe; “upon my soul you’re an excellent fellow; Proceed, I attend you. The liquor’s good, you say?”

“Betther was never drank, your honor.”

“Very well, sir, I believe you. We shall soon, however, put the truth of that magnificent assertion to the test; and besides, sir, it will be an honor for you to share your bottle with a gentleman.”

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In a few minutes they reached a quiet little dell, by which there led a private pathway, open only to the inmates of Red Hall when passing to or from the town, and which formed an agreeable and easy shortcut when any hurried message was necessary. This path came out upon an old road which ran behind the garden, and joined the larger thoroughfare, about a quarter of a mile beyond it.

In a sheltered little cul de sac, between two white-thorn hedges, they took their seats; and Gillespie having pulled out his bottle and glass, began to ply the luckless young man with the strong liquor. And an easy task he found it; for Fenton resembled thousands, who, when the bounds of moderation are once passed, know not when to restrain themselves. It would be both painful and disagreeable to dwell upon the hellish iniquity of this merciless and moral murder; it is enough to say that, having reduced the young man to the precise condition which was necessary for his purpose, this slavish and unprincipled ruffian, as Delahunt did with his innocent victim, deliberately put his hand to his throat, or, rather, to the left side of his neck, and there found beyond all doubt a large welt, or cicatrice, precisely as had been described by Sir Thomas. After the space of about two hours—for Gillespie was anxious to prolong the time as much as possible—he assisted Fenton, now unable to walk without support, and completely paralyzed in his organs of speech, along the short and solitary path to the back gate of the garden.. He opened it, dragged Fenton in like a dog whom he was about to hang, but still the latter seemed disposed to make some unconscious and instinctive resistance. It was to no purpose, however. The poor young man was incapable of resistance, either by word or deed. In a short time they reached the tool-house, where he threw Fenton on a heap of apples, like a bag, and left him to lie in cold and darkness, as if he were some noxious animal, whom it would be dangerous to set at large. He then locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and went to acquaint the baronet with the success of his mission.

The latter, on understanding from Gillespie that Fenton was not only secured, but that his suspicions as to his identity were correct, desired him to have the carriage ready in the course of about an hour. He had already written a letter, containing a liberal enclosure, to the person into whose merciless hands he was about to commit him. In the meantime, it is impossible to describe the confused character of his feelings—the tempest, the tornado of passions, that swept through his dark and ambitious spirit.

“This is the third time,” he thought to himself, as he paced the room in such a state of stormy agitation as reacted upon himself, and tilled him with temporary alarm. His heart beat powerfully, his pulsations were strong and rapid, and his brain felt burning and tumultuous. Occasional giddiness also seized him, accompanied by weakness about the knee-joints, and hoarseness in the throat. In fact, once or twice he felt as if he were about to fall. In this state he hastily gulped down two or three large glasses of Madeira, which was his favorite wine, and he felt his system more intensely strung.

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“That woman,” said he, alluding to Lady Gourlay, “has taken her revenge by destroying my son. There can be no doubt of that. And what now prevents me from crushing this viper forever? If my daughter were not with me, it should be done; yes, I would do it silently and secretly, ay, and surely, with my own hand. I would have blood for blood. What, however, if the mur—if the act came to light! Then I must suffer; my daughter is involved in my infamy, and all my dreams for her aggrandizement come to worse than nothing. But I know not how it is, I fear that girl. Her moral ascendency, as they call it, is so dreadful to me, that I often feel as if I hated her. What right has she to subjugate a spirit like mine, by the influence of her sense of honor and her virtuous principles? or to school me to my face by her example? I am not a man disposed to brook inferiority, yet she sometimes makes me feel as if I were a monster. However, she is a fool, and talks of happiness as if it were anything but a chimera or a dream. Is she herself happy? I would be glad to see the mortal that is. Do her virtues make her happy? No. Then where is the use of this boasted virtue, if it will not procure that happiness after which all are so eager in pursuit, but which none has ever yet attained? Was Christ, who is said to have been spotless, happy? No; he was a man of sorrows. Away, then, with this cant of virtue. It is a shadow, a deception; a thing, like religion, that has no existence, but takes our senses, our interests, and our passions, and works with them under its own mask. Yet why am I afraid of my daughter? and why do I, in my heart, reverence her as a being so far superior to myself? Why is it that I could murder—ay, murder—-this worthless object that thrust himself, or would thrust himself, or might thrust himself, between me and the hereditary honors of my name, were it not that her very presence, if I did it, would, I feel, overpower and paralyze me with a sense of my guilt? Yet I struck her—I struck her; but her spirit trampled mine in the dust—she humiliated me. Away! I am not like other men. Yet for her sake this miserable wretch shall live. I will not imbrue my hands in his blood, but shall place him where he will never cross me more. It is one satisfaction to me, and security besides, that he knows neither his real name nor lineage; and now he shall enter this establishment under a new one. As for Lucy, she shall be Countess of Cullamore, if she or I should die for it.”

He then swallowed another glass of wine, and was about to proceed to the stables, when a gentle tap came to the door, and Gillespie presented himself.

“All’s ready, your honor.”

“Very well, Gillespie. I shall go with you to see that all is right, In the course of a few minutes will you bring the carriage round to the back gate? The horses are steady, and will remain there while we conduct him down to it. Have you a dark lantern?”

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“I have, your honor.”

Both then proceeded toward the stables. The baronet perceived that everything was correct; and having seen Gillespie, who was his coachman, mount the seat, he got into the carriage, and got out again at the door of the tool-house, where poor Fenton lay. After unlocking the door, for he had got the key from Gillespie, he entered, and cautiously turning the light of the lantern in the proper direction, discovered his unhappy victim, stretched cold and apparently lifeless.

Alas, what a melancholy picture lay before him! Stretched upon some apples that were scattered over the floor, he found the unhappy young man in a sleep that for the moment resembled the slumber of the dead. His hat had fallen off, and on his pale and emaciated temples seemed indeed to dwell the sharp impress of approaching death. It appeared, nevertheless, that his rest had not been by any means unbroken, nor so placid as it then appeared to be; for the baronet could observe that he must have been weeping in his sleep, as his eyelids were surcharged with tears that had not yet had time to dry. The veins in his temples were blue, and as fine as silk; and over his whole countenance was spread an expression of such hopeless sorrow and misery as was sufficient to soften the hardest heart that ever beat in human bosom. One touch of nature came over even that of the baronet. “No,” said he, “I could not take his life. The family likeness is obvious, and the resemblance to his cousin Lucy is too strong to permit me to shed his blood; but I will secure him so that he shall never cross my path again. He will not, however, cross it long,” he added to himself, after another pause, “for the stamp of death is upon his face.”

Gillespie now entered, and seizing Fenton, dragged him up upon his legs, the baronet in the meantime turning the light of |the lantern aside. The poor fellow, being properly neither asleep nor awake, made no resistance, and without any trouble they brought him down to the back gate, putting him into the coach, Sir Thomas entering with him, and immediately drove off, about half-past twelve at night, their victim having fallen asleep again almost as soon as he entered the carriage.

The warmth of the carriage, and the comfort of its cushioned sides and seat occasioned his sleep to become more natural and refreshing. The consequence was, that he soon began to exhibit symptoms of awakening. At first he groaned deeply, as if under the influence of physical pain, or probably from the consciousness of some apprehension arising from the experience of what he had already suffered. By and by the groan subsided to a sigh, whose expression was so replete with misery and dread, that it might well have touched and softened any heart. As yet, however, the fumes of intoxication had not departed, and his language was so mingled with the feeble delirium resulting from it, and the terrors arising from the situation in which he felt himself placed, that it was not only wild and melancholy by turns, but often scarcely intelligible. Still it was evident that one great apprehension absorbed all his other thoughts and sensations, and seemed, whilst it lasted, to bury him in the darkness of despair.

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“Hold!” he exclaimed; “where am I?—what is this? Let me see, or, rather, let me feel where I am, for that is the more appropriate expression, considering that I am in utter obscurity. What is this, I ask again? Is my hospitable friend with me? he with whom I partook of that delicious liquor under ’the greenwood-tree’?”

He then searched about, and in doing so his hands came necessarily in contact with the bulky person of the baronet. “What!” he proceeded, supposing still that it was Gillespie, “is this you, my friend?—but I take that fact for granted. Sir, you are a gentleman, and know how to address a gentleman with proper respect; but how is this, you have on your hat? Sir, you forget yourself—uncover, and remember you are in my presence.”

As he uttered the words, he seized the baronet’s hat, tore it forcibly off, and, in doing so, accidentally removed a mask which that worthy gentleman had taken the precaution to assume, in order to prevent himself from being recognized.

“Ha!” exclaimed Fenton, with something like a shriek—“a mask! Oh, my God! This mysterious enemy is upon me! I am once more caught in his toils! What have I done to deserve this persecution? I am innocent of all offence—all guilt. My life has been one of horror and of suffering indescribable, but not of crime; and although they say I am insane, I know there is a God above who will render me justice, and my oppressor justice, and who knows that I have given offence to none.

> There is a bird that sings alone—heigh ho!
> And every note is but a tone of woe.
> Heigh ho!”

The baronet grasped his wrist tightly with one hand—and both feeble and attenuated was that poor wrist—the baronet, we say, grasped it, and in an instant had regained possession of the mask, which he deliberately replaced on his face, after which he seized the unfortunate young man by the neck, and pressed it with such force as almost to occasion suffocation. Still he (Sir Thomas) uttered not a syllable, a circumstance which in the terrified mind of his unhappy victim caused his position as well as that of his companion to assume a darker, and consequently a more terrible mystery.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, in a low and trembling voice, “I know you now. You are the stranger who came to stop in the ‘Mitre.’ Yes, you came down to stop in the ‘Mitre.’ I know you by your strong grasp. I care not, however, for your attempt to strangle me. I forgive you—I pardon you; and I will tell you why—treat me as violently as you may—I feel that there is goodness in your face, and mercy in your heart. But I did see a face, one day, in the inn,” he added, in a voice that gradually became quite frantic—“a face that was dark, damnable, and demoniac—oh, oh! may God of heaven ever preserve me from seeing that face again!” he exclaimed, shuddering wildly. “Open me up the shrouded graves, my friend; I will call you so notwithstanding what has happened,

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for I still think you are a gentleman; open me up, I say, the shrouded graves—set me among the hideous dead, in all their ghastly and loathsome putrefaction—lay me side by side with the sweltering carcass of the gibbeted murderer—give me such a vision, and expose me to the anger of the Almighty when raging in his vengeance; or, if there be a pitch of horror still beyond this, then I say—mark me, my friend—then I say, open me up all hell at full work—hissing, boiling, bubbling, scalding, roasting, frying, scorching, blazing, burning, but ever-consuming hell, sir, I say, in full operation—the whole dark and penal machinery in full play—open it up—there they are—the yell, the scream, the blasphemy, the shout, the torture, the laughter of despair—with the pleasing consciousness that all this is to be eternal; hark ye, sir, open me up a view of this aforesaid spectacle upon the very brow of perdition, and having allowed me time to console myself by a contemplation of it, fling me, soul and body, into the uttermost depths of its howling tortures; do any or all of these things, sooner than let me have a sight of that face again—it bears such a terrible resemblance to that which blighted me."

He then paused for a little, and seemed as if about to sink into a calmer and more thoughtful mood—at least the baronet inferred as much from his silence. The latter still declined to speak, for he felt perfectly aware, from this incoherent outburst, that although Fenton had seen him only two or three times, many years ago, when the unfortunate young man was scarcely a boy, yet he had often heard his voice, and he consequently avoided every possibility of giving the former a clew to his identity. At length Fenton broke silence.

"What was I saying?" he asked. "Did I talk of that multitudinous limbo called hell? Well, who knows, perhaps there may be a general jail delivery there yet; but talking of the thing, I assure you, sir, I feel a portion of its tortures. Like Dives—no, not like the rich and hardened glutton—I resemble him in nothing but my sufferings. Oh! a drink, a drink—water, water—my tongue, my mouth, my throat, my blood, my brain, are all on fire?"

Oh, false ambition, to what mean and despicable resources, to what low and unscrupulous precautions dost thou stoop in order to accomplish thy selfish, dishonest, and heartless designs! The very gratification of this expected thirst had been provided for and anticipated. As Fenton spoke, the baronet took from one of the coach pockets a large flask of spirits and water, which he instantly, but without speaking, placed in the scorching wretch's hands, who without a moment's hesitation, put it to his lips and emptied it at one long, luxurious draught.

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“Thanks, friend,” he then exclaimed; “I have been agreeably mistaken in you, I find. You are—you must be—no other than my worthy host of the ‘Hedge.’ Poor Dives! D—n the glutton; after all, I pity him, and would fain hope that he has got relief by this time. As for Lazarus, I fear that his condition in life was no better than it deserved. If he had been a trump, now, and anxious to render good for evil, he would have dropped a bottle of aquapura to the suffering glutton, for if worthy Dives did nothing else, he fed the dogs that licked the old fellow’s sores. Fie, for shame, old Lazarus, d—n me, if I had you back again, but we’d teach you sympathy for Dives; and how so, my friend of the hawthorn—why, we’d send him to the poor-house,* or if that wouldn’t do, to the mad-house—to the mad-house. Oh, my God—my God! what is this? Where are you bringing me, sir? but I know—I feel it—this destiny that’s over me!”

* It is to be presumed, that Fenton speaks here from his English experience. We find no poor-houses at the time.

He again became silent for a time, but during the pause, we need scarcely say, that the pernicious draught began to operate with the desired effect.

“That mask,” he then added, as if speaking to himself, “bodes me nothing but terror and persecution, and all this in a Christian country, where there are religion and laws—at least, they say so—as for raypart, I could never discover them. However, it matters not, let us clap a stout heart to a steep brae, and we may jink them and blink them yet; that’s all.

There was a little bird, a very little bird,
And a very little bird was he;
And he sang his little song all the summer day long,
On a branch of the fair green-wood tree.
Heigh ho!”

This little touch of melody, which he sang to a sweet and plaintive air, seemed to produce a feeling of mournfulness and sorrow in his spirit, for although the draught he had taken was progressing fast in its operations upon his intellect, still it only assumed a new and more affecting shape, and occasioned that singular form and ease of expression which may be observed in many under the influence of similar stimulants.

“Well,” he proceeded, “I will soon go home; that is one consolation! There is a sickness, my friend, whoever you are, at my heart here, and in what does that sickness consist? I will tell you—in the memory of some beautiful dreams that I had when a child or little-boy: I remember something about green fields, groves, dark mountains, and summer rivers flowing sweetly by. This now, to be sure, is a feeling which but few can understand. It is called homesickness, and assumes different aspects, my worthy friend. Sometimes it is a yearning after immortality, which absorbs and consumes the

spirit, and then we die and go to enjoy that which we have pined for. Now, my worthy mute friend, mark me, in my case the malady is not

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so exalted. I only want my green fields, my dark mountains, my early rivers, with liberty to tread them for a brief space. There lies over them in my imagination—there does, my worthy and most taciturn friend, upon my soul there does—a golden light so clear, so pure, so full of happiness, that I question whether that of heaven itself will surpass it in radiance. But now I am caged once more, and will never see anything even like them again."

The poor young man then wept for a couple of minutes, after which he added, "Yes, sir, this is at once my malady and my hope. You see, then, I am not worth a plot, nor would it be a high-minded or honorable act for any gentleman to conspire against one who is nobody's enemy, but appears to have all the world against him. Yes, and they thought when I used to get into my silent moods that I was mad. No, but I was in heaven, enjoying, as I said, my mountains, my rivers, and my green fields. I was in heaven, I say, and walked in the light of heaven, for I was a little boy once more, and saw its radiance upon them, as I used to do long ago. But do you know what occurs to me this moment, most taciturn?" He added, after a short pause, being moved, probably, by one of those quick and capricious changes to which both the intoxicated and insane are proverbially liable: "It strikes me, that you probably are descended from the man in the iron mask—ha—ha—ha! Or stay, was there ever such a thing in this benevolent and humane world of ours as a man with an iron heart? If so, who knows, then, but you may date your ancestry from him? Ay, right enough; we are in a coach, I think, and going—-going—going to—to—to—ah, where to? I know—oh, my God—we are going to—to—to ——" and here poor Fenton once more fell asleep, as was evident by his deep but oppressive breathing.

Now the baronet, although he maintained a strict silence during their journey, a silence which it was not his intention to break, made up for this cautious taciturnity by thought and those reflections which originated from his designs upon Fenton. He felt astonished, in the first place, at the measures, whatever they might have been, by which the other must have obtained means of escaping from the asylum to which he had been committed with such strict injunctions as to his secure custody. It occurred to him, therefore, that by an examination of his pockets he might possibly ascertain some clew to this circumstance, and as the man was not overburdened with much conscience or delicacy, he came to the determination, as Fenton was once more dead asleep, to search for and examine whatever papers he should find about him, if any. For this purpose he ignited a match—such as they had in those days—and with this match lit up a small dark lantern, the same to which we have already alluded. Aided by its light, he examined the sleeping young man's pockets, in which he felt very little, in the shape of either money or papers, that could

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compensate him for this act of larceny. In a breast-pocket, however, inside his waistcoat, he found pinned to the lining a note—a pound note—on the back of which was jotted a brief memorandum of the day on which it was written, and the person from whom he had received it. To this was added a second memorandum, in the following words: "Mem. This note may yet be useful to myself if I could get a sincere friend that would find out the man whose name—Thomas Skipton—is written here upon it. He is the man I want, for I know his signature."

No sooner had the baronet read these lines, than he examined the several names on the note, and on coming to one which was underlined evidently by the same ink that was used by Fenton in the memoranda, his eyes gleamed with delight, and he waved it to and fro with a grim and hideous triumph, such as the lurid light of his foul principles flashing through such eyes, and animating such features as his, could only express.

"Unhappy wretch," thought he, looking upon his unconscious victim, "it is evident that you are doomed; this man is the only individual living over whom I have no control, that could give any trace of you; neither of the other two, for their own sakes, dare speak. Even fate is against you; that fate which has consigned this beggarly representative of wealth to my hands, through your own instrumentality. I now feel confident; nay, I am certain that my projects will and must succeed. The affairs of this world are regulated unquestionably by the immutable decrees of destiny. What is to be will be; and I, in putting this wretched, drunken, mad, and besotted being out of my way, am only an instrument in the hands of that destiny myself. The blame then is not mine, but that of the law which constrains—forces me to act the part I am acting, a part which was allotted to me from the beginning; and this reflection fills me with consolation."

He then re-examined the note, put it into a particular fold of his pocket-book which had before been empty, in order to keep it distinct, and once more thrusting it into his pocket, buttoned it carefully up, extinguished the lantern, and laid himself back in the corner of the carriage, in which position he reclined, meditating upon the kind partiality of destiny in his favor, the virtuous tendencies of his own ambition, and the admirable, because successful, means by which he was bringing them about.

In this manner they proceeded until they reached the entrance of the next town, when the baronet desired Gillespie to stop. "Go forward," said he, "and order a chaise and pair without delay. I think, however, you will find them ready for you; and if Corbet is there, desire him to return with you. He has already had his instructions. I am sick of this work, Gillespie; and I assure you it is not for the son of a common friend that I would forego my necessary rest, to sit at such an hour with a person who is both mad and drunk. What is friendship, however, if we neglect its duties? Care and medical skill may enable this unfortunate young man to recover his reason, and take a respectable position in the world yet. Go now and make no delay. I shall take charge of this poor

fellow and the horses until you return. But, mark me, my name is not to be breathed to mortal, under a penalty that you will find a dreadful one, should you incur it."

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“Never fear, your honor,” replied Gillespie; “I am not the man to betray trust; and indeed, few gentlemen of your rank, as I said, would go so far for the son of an auld friend. I’ll lose no time, Sir Thomas.” Sir Thomas, we have had occasion to say more than once, was quick and energetic in all his resolutions, and beyond doubt, the fact that Gillespie found Corbet ready and expecting him on this occasion, fully corroborates our opinion.

Indeed, it was his invariable habit, whenever he found that more than one agent or instrument was necessary, to employ them, as far as was possible, independently of each other. For instance, he had not at all communicated to Gillespie the fact of his having engaged Corbet in the matter, nor had the former any suspicion of it until he now received the first hint from Sir Thomas himself. A chaise and pair in less than five minutes drove gently, but with steady pace, back to the spot where the baronet stood at the head of his horses, watching the doors of the carriage on each side every quarter of a minute, lest by any possible chance his victim might escape him. Of this, however, there was not the slightest danger; poor Fenton’s sleep, like that of almost all drunken men, having had in it more of stupor than of ordinary and healthful repose.

We have informed our readers that the baronet was not without a strong tinge of superstition, notwithstanding his religious infidelity, and his belief in the doctrine of fate and necessity. On finding himself alone at that dead and dreary hour of the night—half-past two—standing under a shady range of tall trees that met across the road, and gave a character of extraordinary gloom and solitude to the place, he began to experience that vague and undefined terror which steals over the mind from an involuntary apprehension of the supernatural. A singular degree of uneasiness came over him: he coughed, he hemmed, in order to break the death-like stillness in which he stood. He patted the horses, he rubbed his hand down their backs, but felt considerable surprise and terror on finding that they both trembled, and seemed by their snorting and tremors to partake of his own sensations. Under such terrors there is nothing that extinguishes a man’s courage so much as the review of an ill-spent life, or the reproaches of an evil conscience. Sir Thomas Gourlay could not see and feel, for the moment, the criminal iniquity of his black and ungodly ambition, and the crimes into which it involved him. Still, the consciousness of the flagitious project in which he was engaged against the unoffending son of his brother, the influence of the hour, and the solitude in which he stood, together with the operation upon his mind of some unaccountable fear apart from that of personal violence—all, when united, threw him into a commotion that resulted from such a dread as intimated that something supernatural must be near him. He was seized by a violent shaking

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of the limbs, the perspiration burst from every pore; and as he patted the horses a second time for relief, he again perceived that their terrors were increasing and keeping pace with his own. At length, his hair fairly stood, and his excitement was nearly as high as excitement of such a merely ideal character could go, when he thought he heard a step—a heavy, solemn, unearthly step—that sounded as if there was something denouncing and judicial in the terrible emphasis with which it went to his heart, or rather to his conscience. Without having the power to restrain himself, he followed with his eyes this symbolical tread as it seemed to approach the coach door on the side at which he stood. This was the more surprising and frightful, as, although he heard the tramp, yet he could for the moment see nothing in the shape of either figure or form, from which he could resolve what he had heard into a natural sound. At length, as he stood almost dissolved in terror, he thought that an indistinct, or rather an unsubstantial figure stood at the carriage-door, looked in for a moment, and then bent his glance at him, with a severe and stem expression; after which, it began to rub out or efface a certain portion of the armorial bearings, which he had added to his heraldic coat in right of his wife. The noise of the chaise approaching now reached his ears, and he turned as a relief to ascertain if Gillespie and Corbet were near him. As far as he could judge, they were about a couple of hundred yards off, and this discovery recalled his departed courage; he turned his eyes once more to the carriage-door, but to his infinite relief could perceive nothing. A soft, solemn, mournful blast, however, somewhat like a low moan, amounting almost to a wail, crept through the trees under which he stood; and after it had subsided—whether it was fact or fancy cannot now be known—he thought he heard the same step slowly, and, as it were with a kind of sorrowful anger, retreating in the distance.

“If mortal spirit,” he exclaimed as they approached, “ever was permitted to return to this earth, that form was the spirit of my mortal brother. This, however,” he added, but only in thought, when they came up to him, and after he had regained his confidence by their presence, “this is all stuff—nothing but solitude and its associations acting upon the nerves; thus enabling us, as we think, to see the very forms created only by our fears, and which, apart from them, have no existence.”

The men and the chaise were now with him—Gillespie on horseback, that is to say, he was to bring back the same animal on which Sir Thomas had secretly despatched Corbet from Red Hall to the town of ------, for the purpose of having the chaise ready, and conducting Fenton to his ultimate destination. The poor young man’s transfer from the carriage to the chaise was quickly and easily effected. Several large flasks of strong spirits and water were also transferred along with him.

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“Now, Corbet,” observed Sir Thomas apart to him, “you have full instructions how to act; and see that you carry them out to the letter. You will find no difficulty in keeping this person in a state of intoxication all the way. Go back to ------, engage old Bradbury to drive the chaise, for, although deaf and stupid, he is an excellent driver. Change the chaise and horses, however, as often as you can, so as that it may be difficult, if not impossible, to trace the route you take. Give Benson, who, after all, is the prince of mad doctors, the enclosure which you have in the blank cover; and tell him, he shall have an annuity to the same amount, whether this fellow lives or dies. Mark me, Corbet—-whether his charge lives or dies. Repeat these words to him twice, as I have done to you. Above all things, let him keep him safe—safe—safe. Remember, Corbet, that our family have been kind friends to yours. I, therefore, have trusted you all along in this matter, and calculate upon your confidence as a grateful and honest man, as well as upon your implicit obedience to every order I have given you. I myself shall drive home the carriage; and when we get near Red Hall, Gillespie can ride forward, have his horse put up, and the stable and coachhouse doors open, so that everything tomorrow morning may look as if no such expedition had taken place.”

They then separated; Corbet to conduct poor Fenton to his dreary cell in a mad-house, and Sir Thomas to seek that upon which, despite his most ambitious projects, he had been doomed all his life to seek after in vain—rest on an uneasy pillow.

CHAPTER XVII. A Scene in Jemmy Trailcudgel’s

—Retributive Justice, or the Robber robbed.

In the days of which we write, travelling was a very different process from what it is at present. Mail-coaches and chaises were the only vehicles then in requisition, with the exception of the awkward gingles, buggies, and other gear of that nondescript class which were peculiar to the times, and principally confined to the metropolis. The result of this was, that travellers, in consequence of the slow jog-trot motion of those curious and inconvenient machines, were obliged, in order to transact their business with something like due dispatch, to travel both by night and day. In this case, as in others, the cause produced the effect; or rather, we should say, the temptation occasioned the crime. Highway-robbery was frequent; and many a worthy man—fat farmer and wealthy commoner—was eased of his purse in despite of all his armed precautions and the most sturdy resistance. The poorer classes, in every part of the country, were, with scarcely an exception, the friends of those depredators; by whom, it is true, they were aided against oppression, and assisted in their destitution, as a compensation for connivance and shelter whenever the executive authorities were in pursuit of them.

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Most of these robberies, it is true, were the result of a loose and disorganized state of society, and had their direct origin from oppressive and unequal laws, badly or partially administered. Robbery, therefore, in its general character, was caused, not so much by poverty, as from a desperate hatred of those penal statutes which operated for punishment but not for protection. Our readers may not feel surprised, then, when we assure them that the burgler and highway-robber looked upon this infamous habit as a kind of patriotic and political profession, rather than a crime; and it is well known that within the last century the sons of even decent farmers were bound apprentices to this flagitious craft, especially to that of horse stealing, which was then reduced to a system of most extraordinary ingenuity and address. Still, there were many poor wretches who, sunk in the deepest destitution, and contaminated by a habit which familiarity had deprived in their eyes of much of its inherent enormity, scrupled not to relieve their distresses by having recourse to the prevalent usage of the country.

Having thrown out these few preparatory observations, we request our readers to follow us to the wretched cabin of a man whose *nom de guerre* was that of Jemmy Trailcudgel—a name that was applied to him, as the reader may see, in consequence of the peculiar manner in which he carried the weapon aforesaid. Trailcudgel was a man of enormous personal strength and surprising courage, and had distinguished himself as the leader of many a party and faction fight in the neighboring fairs and markets. He had been, not many years before, in tolerably good circumstances, as a tenant under Sir Thomas Gourlay; and as that gentleman had taken it into his head that his tenantry were bound, as firmly as if there had been a clause to that effect in their leases, to bear patiently and in respectful silence, the imperious and ribald scurrility which in a state of resentment, he was in the habit of pouring upon them, so did he lose few opportunities of making them feel, for the most-trivial causes, all the irresponsible insolence of the strong and vindictive tyrant. Now, Jemmy Trailcudgel was an honest man, whom every one liked; but he was also a man of spirit, whom, in another sense, most people feared. Among his family he was a perfect child in affection and tenderness—loving, playful, and simple as one of themselves. Yet this man, affectionate, brave, and honest, because he could not submit in silence and without vindication, to the wanton and overbearing violence of his landlord, was harassed by a series of persecutions, under the pretended authority of law, until he and his unhappy family were driven to beggary—almost to despair.

“Trailcudgel,” said Sir Thomas to him one day that he had sent for him in a fury, “by what right and authority, sirra, did you dare to cut turf on that part of the bog called Berwick’s Bank?”

“Upon the right and authority of my lease, Sir Thomas,” replied Trailcudgel; “and with great respect, sir, you had neither right nor authority for settin’ my bog, that I’m payin’ you rent for, to another tenant.”

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The baronet grew black in the face, as he always did when in a passion, and especially when replied to.

“You are a lying scoundrel, sirra,” continued the other; “the bog does not belong to you, and I will set it to the devil if I like.”

“I know nobody so fit to be your tenant,” replied Trailcudgel. “But I am no scoundrel, Sir Thomas,” added the independent fellow, “and there’s very few dare tell me so but yourself.”

“What, you villain! do you contradict me? do you bandy words and looks with me?” asked the baronet, his rage deepening at Trailcudgel’s audacity in having replied at all.

“Villain!” returned his gigantic tenant, in a voice of thunder. “You called me a scoundrel, sirra, and you have called me a villain, sirra, now I tell you to your teeth, you’re a liar—I am neither villain nor scoundrel; but you’re both; and if I hear another word of insolence out of your foul and lying mouth, I’ll thrash you as I would a shafe of whate or oats.”

The black hue of the baronet’s rage changed to a much modester tint; he looked upon the face of the sturdy yeoman, now flushed with honest resentment; he looked upon the eye that was kindled at once into an expression of resolution and disdain; and turning on his toe, proceeded at a pace by no means funereal to the steps of the hall-door, and having ascended them, he turned round and said, in a very mild and quite a gentlemanly tone,

“Oh, very well, Mr. Trailcudgel; very well, indeed. I have a memory, Mr. Trailcudgel—I have a memory. Good morning!”

“Betther for you to have a heart,” replied Trailcudgel; “what you never had.”

Having uttered these words he departed, conscious at the same time, from his knowledge of his landlord’s unrelenting malignity, that his own fate was sealed, and his ruin accomplished. And he was right. In the course of four years after their quarrel, Trailcudgel found himself, and his numerous family, in the scene of destitution to which we are about to conduct the indulgent reader.

We pray you, therefore, gentle reader, to imagine yourself in a small cabin, where there are two beds—that is to say, two scanty portions of damp straw, spread out thinly upon a still damper foot of earth, in a portion of which the foot sinks when walking over it. The two beds—each what is termed a shake down—have barely covering enough to preserve the purposes of decency, but not to communicate the usual and necessary warmth. In consequence of the limited area of the cabin floor they are not far removed from each other. Upon a little three-legged stool, between them, burns a dim rush candle, whose light is so exceedingly feeble that it casts ghastly and death-like shadows

over the whole inside of the cabin. That family consists of nine persons, of whom five are lying ill of fever, as the reader, from the nature of their bedding, may have already anticipated—for we must observe here, that the epidemic was rife at

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the time. Food of any description has not been under that roof for more than twenty-four hours. They are all in bed but one. A low murmur, that went to the heart of that one, with a noise which seemed to it louder and more terrible than the deepest peal that ever thundered through the firmament of heaven—a low murmur, we say, of this description, arose from the beds, composed of those wailing sounds that mingle together as they proceed from the lips of weakness, pain, and famine, until they form that many-toned, incessant, and horrible voice of multiplied misery, which falls upon the ear with the echoes of the grave, and upon the heart as something wonderful in the accents of God, or, as we may suppose the voice of the accusing angel to be, whilst recording before His throne the official inhumanity of councils and senates, who harden their hearts and shut their ears to “the cry of the poor.”

Seated upon a second little stool was a man of huge stature, clothed, if we can say I so, with rags, contemplating the misery around him, and having no sounds to listen to but the low, ceaseless wail of pain and suffering which we have described. His features, once manly and handsome, are now sharp and hollow; his beard is grown; his lips are white; and his eyes without I speculation, unless when lit up into an occasional blaze of fire, that seemed to proceed as much from the paroxysms of approaching insanity as from the terrible scene which surrounds him, as well as from his own I wolfish desire for food. His cheek bones project fearfully, and his large temples seem, by the ghastly skin which is drawn tight about them, to remind one of those of a skeleton, were it not that the image is made still more appalling by the existence of life. Whilst in this position, motionless as a statue, a voice from one of the beds called out “Jemmy,” with a tone so low and feeble that to other ears it would probably not have been distinctly audible. He went to the bedside, and taking the candle in his hand, said, in a voice that had lost its strength but not its tenderness:

“Well, Mary dear?”

“Jemmy,” said she, for it was his wife who had called him, “my time has come. I must lave you and them at last.”

“Thanks be to the Almighty,” he exclaimed, fervently; “and don’t be surprised, darlin’ of my life, that I spake as I do. Ah, Mary dear,” he proceeded, with, a wild and bitter manner, “I never thought that my love for you would make me say such words, or wish to feel you torn out of my breakin’ heart; but I know how happy the change will be for you, as well as the sufferers you are lavin’ behind you. Death now is our only consolation.”

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“It cannot be that God, who knows the kind and affectionate heart you have, an’ ever had,” replied his dying wife, “will neglect you and them long,”—but she answered with difficulty. “We were very happy,” she proceeded, slowly, however, and with pain; “for, hard as the world was of late upon us, still we had love and affection among ourselves; and that, Jemmy, God in his goodness left us, blessed be his—his—holy name—an’ sure it was betther than all he took from us. I hope poor Alley will recover; she’s now nearly a girl, an’ will be able to take care of you and be a mother to the rest. I feel that my tongue’s gettin’ wake; God bless you and them, an’, above all, her—for she was our darlin’ an’ our life, especially yours. Raise me up a little,” she added, “till I take a last look at them before I go.” He did so, and after casting her languid eyes mournfully over the wretched sleepers, she added: “Well, God is good, but this is a bitther sight for a mother’s heart. Jemmy,” she proceeded, “I won’t be long by myself in heaven; some of them will be with me soon—an’ oh, what a joyful meeting will that be. But it’s you I feel for most—it’s you I’m loath to lave, light of my heart. Howsomever, God’s will be done still. He sees we can’t live here, an’ He’s takin’ us to himself. Don’t, darlin’, don’t kiss me, for fraid you might catch this fav——”

She held his hand in hers during this brief and tender dialogue, but on attempting to utter the last word he felt a gentle pressure, then a slight relaxation, and on holding the candle closer to her emaciated face—which still bore those dim traces of former beauty, that, in many instances, neither sickness nor death can altogether obliterate—he stooped and wildly kissed her now passive lips, exclaiming, in words purposely low, that the other inmates of the cabin might not hear them:

“A million favers, my darlin’ Mary, would not prevent me from kissin’ your lips, that will never more be opened with words of love and kindness to my heart. Oh, Mary, Mary! little did I drame that it would be in such a place, and in such a way, that you’d lave me and them.”

[Illustration: PAGE 409— He stooped and wildly kissed her now passive lips]

He had hardly spoken, when one of the little ones, awaking, said:

“Daddy, come here, an’ see what ails Alley; she won’t spake to me.”

“She’s asleep, darlin’, I suppose,” he replied; “don’t spake so loud, or you’ll waken her.”

“Ay, but she’s as could as any tiling,” continued the little one; “an’I can’t rise her arm to put it about me the way it used to be.”

Her father went over, and placing’ the dim light close to her face, as he had done to that of her mother, perceived at a glance, that when the spirit of that affectionate mother—of that faithful wife—went to happiness, she had one kindred soul there to welcome her.

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The man, whom we need not name to the reader, now stood in the centre of his "desolate hearth," and it was indeed a fearful thing to contemplate the change which the last few minutes had produced on his appearance. His countenance ceased to manifest any expression of either grief or sorrow; his brows became knit, and fell with savage and determined gloom, not unmingled with fury, over his eyes, that now blazed like coals of lire. His lips, too, became tight and firm, and were pressed closely together, unconsciously and without effort. In this mood, we say, he gazed about him, his heart smote with sorrow and affliction, whilst it boiled with indignation and fury. "Thomas Gourlay," he exclaimed—"villain—oppressor—murdherer—devil—this is your work! but I here entreat the Almighty God "—he droppe'd on his knees as he spoke—-"never to suffer you to lave this world till he taches you that he can take vengeance for the poor." Looking around him once more, he lit a longer rushlight, and placed it in the little wooden candlestick, which had a slit at the top, into which the rush was pressed. Proceeding then to the lower corner of the cabin, he put up his hand to the top of the side wall, from which he took down a large stick, or cudgel, having a strong leathern thong in the upper part, within about six inches of the top. Into this thong he thrust his hand, and twisting it round his wrist, in order that no accident or chance blow might cause him to lose his grip of it, he once more looked upon this scene of unexampled wretchedness and sorrow, and pulling his old caubeen over his brow, left the cabin.

It is altogether impossible to describe the storm of conflicting passions and emotions that raged and jostled against each other within him. Sorrow—a sense of relief—on behalf of those so dear to him, who had been rescued from such misery; the love which he bore them now awakened into tenfold affection and tenderness by their loss; the uncertain fate of his other little brood, who were ill, but still living; then the destitution—-the want of all that could nourish or sustain them—the furious ravenings of famine, which he himself felt—and the black, hopeless, impenetrable future—all crowded, upon his heart, swept through his frantic imagination, and produced those maddening but unconscious impulses, under the influence of which great crimes are frequently committed, almost before their perpetrator is aware of his having committed them.

Trailcudgel, on leaving his cabin, cared not whither he went; but, by one of those instincts which direct the savage to the peculiar haunts where its prey may be expected, and guides the stupid drunkard to his own particular dwelling, though unconscious even of his very existence at the time—like either, or both, of these, he went on at as rapid a pace as his weakness would permit, being quite ignorant of his whereabouts until he felt himself on the great highway. He looked at the sky now with an interest he had never felt before. The night was exceedingly dark, but calm and warm. An odd star here and there presented itself, and he felt glad at this, for it removed the monotony of the darkness.

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“There,” said he to himself, “is the place where Mary and Alley live now. Up there, in heaven. I am glad of it; but still, how will I enther the cabin, and not hear their voices? But the other poor creatures! musn’t I do something for them, or they will go too? Yes, yes,—but whisht! what noise is that? Ha! a coach. Now for it. May God support me! Here comes the battle for the little ones—for the poor weak hand that’s not able to carry the drink to its lips. Poor darlins! Yes, darlins, your father is now goin’ to fight your battle—to put himself, for your sakes, against the laws of man, but not against the laws of nature that God has put into my heart for my dying childre. Either the one funeral will carry three corpses to the grave, or I will bring yez relief. It’s comin’ near, and I’ll stand undher this tree.”

In accordance with this resolution, he planted himself under a large clump of trees where, like the famished tiger, he awaited the arrival of the carriage. And, indeed, it is obvious that despair, and hunger, and sorrow, had brought him down to the first elements of mere animal life; and finding not by any process of reasoning or inference, but by the agonizing pressure of stern reality, that the institutions of social civilization were closed against him and his, he acted precisely as a man would act in a natural and savage state, and who had never been admitted to a participation in the common rights of humanity—we mean, the right to live honestly, when willing and able to contribute his share of labor and industry to the common stock.

Let not our readers mistake us. We are not defending the crime of robbery, neither would we rashly palliate it, although there are instances of it which deserve not only palliation, but pardon. We are only describing the principles upon which this man acted, and, considering his motives, we question whether this peculiar act, originating as it did in the noblest virtues and affections of our nature, was not rather an act of heroism than of robbery. This point, however, we leave to metaphysicians, and return to our narrative.

The night, as we said, was dark, and the carriage in question was proceeding at that slow and steady pace which was necessary to insure safety. Sir Thomas, for it was he, sat on the dickey; Gillespie having proceeded in advance of him, in order to get horses, carriage, and everything safely put to rights without the possibility of observation.

We may as well mention here that his anxiety to keep the events of the night secret had overcome his apprehensions of the supernatural, and indeed, it may not be impossible that he made acquaintance with one of the flasks that had been destined for poor Fenton. Of this, however, we are by no means certain; we only throw it out, therefore, as a probability.

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It is well known that the stronger and more insupportable passions sharpen not only the physical but the mental faculties in an extraordinary degree. The eye of the bird of prey, which is mostly directed by the savage instincts of hunger, can view its quarry at an incredible distance; and, instigated by vengeance, the American Indian will trace his enemy by marks which the utmost ingenuity of civilized man would never enable him to discover. Quickened by something of the kind, Trailcudgel instantly recognized his bitter and implacable foe, and in a moment an unusual portion of his former strength returned, with the impetuous and energetic resentment which the appearance of the baronet, at that peculiar crisis, had awakened. When the carriage came nearly opposite where he stood, the frantic and unhappy man was in an instant at the heads of the horses, and, seizing the reins, brought them to a stand-still.

“What’s the matter there?” exclaimed the baronet, who, however, began to feel very serious alarm. “Why do you stop the horses, my friend? All’s right, and I’m much obliged—pray let them go.”

“All’s wrong,” shouted the other in a voice so deep, hoarse, and terrible in the wildness of its intonations, that no human being could recognize it as that of Trailcudgel; “all’s wrong,” he shouted; “I demand your money! your life or your money—quick!”

“This is highway-robbery,” replied Sir Thomas, in a voice of expostulation, “think of what you are about, my friend.”

But, as he spoke, Trailcudgel could observe that he put his hand behind him as if with the intent of taking fire-arms out of his pocket. Like lightning was the blow which tumbled him from his seat upon the two horses, and a fortunate circumstance it proved, for there is little doubt that his neck would have been broken, or the fall proved otherwise fatal to so heavy a man, had he been precipitated directly, and from such a height, upon the hard road. As it was, he found himself instantly in the ferocious clutches of Trailcudgel, who dragged him from the horses, as a tiger would a bull, and ere he could use hand or word in his own defence, he felt the muzzle of one of his own pistols pressed against his head.

“Easy, mfriend!” he exclaimed, in a voice that was rendered infirm by terror; “do not take my life—don’t murder me—you shall have my money.”

“Murdher!” shouted the other. “Ah, you black dog of hell, it is on your red sowl that many a murdher lies. Murdher!” he exclaimed, in words that were thick, vehement, and almost unintelligible with rage. “Ay, murdher is it? It was a just God that put the words into your guilty heart—and wicked lips—prepare, your last moment’s come—your doom is sealed—are you ready to die, villain?”

The whole black and fearful tenor of the baronet's life came like a vision of hell itself over his conscience, now fearfully awakened to the terrible position in which he felt himself placed.

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“Oh, no!” he replied, in a voice whose tremulous tones betrayed the full extent of his agony and terrors. “Oh, no!” he exclaimed. “Spare me, whoever you are—spare my life, and if you will come to mo to-morrow, I promise, in the presence of God, to make you independent as long as you live. Oh, spare me, for the sake of the living God—for I am not fit to die. If you kill me now, you will have the perdition of my soul to answer for at the bar of judgment. If you spare me, I will reform my life—I will become a virtuous man.”

“Well,” replied the other, relaxing—“for the sake of the name you have used, and in the hope that this may be a warnin’ to you for your good, I will leave your wicked and worthless life with you. No, I’ll not be the man that will hurl you into perdition—but it is on one condition—you must hand me out your money before I have time to count ten. Listen now—if I haven’t every farthing that’s about you before that reckonin’s made, the bullet that’s in this pistol will be through your brain.”

The expedition of the baronet was amazing, for as Jemmy went on with this disastrous enumeration, steadily and distinctly, but not quickly, he had only time to get as far as eight when he found himself in possession of the baronet’s purse.

“Is it all here?” he asked. “No tricks—no lyin’—the truth? for I’ll search you.”

“You may,” replied the other, with confidence; “and you may shoot me, too, if you find another farthing in my possession.”

“Now, then,” said Trailcudgel, “get home as well as you can, and reform your life as you promised—as for me, I’ll keep the pistols; indeed, for my own sake, for I have no notion of putting them into your hands at present.”

He then disappeared, and the baronet, having with considerable difficulty gained the box-seat, reached home somewhat lighter in pocket than he had left it, convinced besides that an unexpected visit from a natural apparition is frequently much more to be dreaded than one from the supernatural.

The baronet was in the general affairs of life, penurious in money matters, but on those occasions where money was necessary to enable him to advance or mature his plans, conceal his proceedings, or reward his instruments, he was by no means illiberal. This, however, was mere selfishness, or rather, we should say, self-preservation, inasmuch as his success and reputation depended in a great degree upon the liberality of his corruption. On the present occasion he regretted, no doubt, the loss of the money, but we are bound to say, that he would have given its amount fifteen times repeated, to get once more into his hands the single pound-note of which he had treacherously and like a coward robbed Fenton while asleep in the carriage. This loss, in connection With the robbery which occasioned it, forced him to retrace to a considerable extent the process

of ratiocination on the subject of fate and destiny, in which he had so complacently indulged not long before.

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No matter how deep and hardened any villain may be, the most reckless and unscrupulous of the class possess some conscious principle within, that tells them of their misdeeds, and acquaints them with the fact that a point in the moral government of life has most certainly been made against them. So was it now with the baronet. He laid himself upon his gorgeous bed a desponding, and, for the present, a discomfited man; nor could he for the life of him, much as he pretended to disregard the operations of a Divine Providence, avoid coming to the conclusion that the highway robbery committed on him looked surprisingly like an act of retributive justice. He consoled himself, it is true, with the reflection, that it was not for the value of the note that he had committed the crime upon Fenton, for to him the note, except for its mere amount, was in other respects valueless. But what galled him to the soul, was the bitter reflection that he did not, on perceiving its advantage to Fenton, at once destroy it—tear it up—-eat it—swallow it—and thus render it utterly impossible to ever contravene his ambition or his crimes. In the meantime slumber stole upon him, but it was neither deep nor refreshing. His mind was a chaos of dark projects and frightful images. Fenton—the ragged and gigantic robber, who was so much changed by famine and misery that he did not know him—the stranger—his daughter—Ginty Cooper, the fortune-teller—Lord Cullamore—the terrible pistol at his brain—Dunroe—and all those who were more or less concerned in or affected by his schemes, flitted through his disturbed fancy like the figures in a magic lantern, rendering his sleep feverish, disturbed, and by many degrees more painful than his waking reflections.

It has been frequently observed, that violence and tyranny overshoot their mark; and we may add, that no craft, however secret its operations, or rather however secret they are designed to be, can cope with the consequences of even the simplest accident. A short, feverish attack of illness having seized Mrs. Morgan, the housekeeper, on the night of Fenton's removal, she persuaded one of the maids to sit up with her, in order to provide her with whey and nitre, which she took from time to time, for the purpose of relieving her by cooling the system. The attack though short was a sharp one, and the poor woman was really very ill. In the course of the night, this girl was somewhat surprised by hearing noises in and about the stables, and as she began to entertain apprehension from robbers, she considered it her duty to consult the sick woman as to the steps she ought to take.

"Take no steps," replied the prudent housekeeper, "till we know, if we can, what the noise proceeds from. Go into that closet, but don't take the candle, lest the light of it might alarm them—it overlooks the stable-yard—open the window gently; you know it turns upon hinges—and look out cautiously. If Sir Thomas is disturbed by a false alarm, you might fly at once; for somehow of late he has lost all command of his temper."

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“But we know the reason of that, Mrs. Morgan,” replied the girl. “It’s because Miss Gourlay refuses to marry Lord Dunroe, and because he’s afraid that she’ll run away with a very handsome gentleman that stops in the Mitre. That’s what made him lock her up.”

“Don’t you breathe a syllable of that,” said the cautious Mrs. Morgan, “for fear you might get locked up yourself. You know, nothing that happens in this family is ever to be spoken of to any one, on pain of Sir Thomas’s severest displeasure; and you have not come to this time of day without understanding what what means. But don’t talk to me, or rather, don’t expect me to talk to you. My head is very ill, and my pulse going at a rapid rate. Another drink of that whey, Nancy; then see, if you can, what that noise means.”

Nancy, having handed her the whey, went to the closet window to reconnoitre; but the reader may judge of her surprise on seeing Sir Thomas himself moving about with a dark lantern, and giving directions to Gillespie, who was putting the horses to the carriage. She returned to the housekeeper on tip-toe, her face brimful of mystery and delight.

“What do you think, Mrs. Morgan? If there isn’t Sir Thomas himself walking about with a little lantern, and giving orders to Gillespie, who is yoking the coach.”

Mrs. Morgan could not refrain from smiling at this comical expression of yoking the coach; but her face soon became serious, and she said, with a sigh, “I hope in God this is no further act of violence against his angel of a daughter. What else could he mean by getting out a carriage at this hour of the night? Go and look again, Nancy, and see whether you may not also get a glimpse of Miss Gourlay.”

Nancy, however, arrived at the window only in time to see her master enter the carriage, and the carriage disappear out of the yard; but whether Miss Gourlay was in it along with him, the darkness of the night prevented her from ascertaining. After some time, however, she threw out a suggestion, on which, with the consent of the patient, she immediately acted. This was to discover, if possible, whether Miss Gourlay with her maid was in her own room or not. She accordingly went with a light and stealthy pace to the door; and as she knew that its fair occupant always slept with a night-light in her chamber, she put her pretty eye to the keyhole, in order to satisfy herself on this point. All, however, so far as both sight and hearing could inform her, was both dark and silent. This was odd; nay, not only odd, but unusual. She now felt her heart palpitate; she was excited, alarmed. What was to be done? She would take a bold step—she would knock—she would whisper through the key-hole, and set down the interruption to anxiety to mention Mrs. Morgan’s sudden and violent illness. Well, all these remedies for curiosity were tried, all these, steps taken, and, to a certain extent, they were successful; for there could indeed be little doubt that Miss Gourlay and her maid were not in the apartment. Everything now pertaining to the mysterious motions of Sir Thomas and his coachman was as clear as crystal. He had spirited her away

somewhere—“placed her, the old brute, under some she-dragon or other, who would make her feed on raw flesh and cobwebs, with a view of reducing her strength and breaking her spirit.”

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Mrs. Morgan, however, with her usual good sense and prudence, recommended the lively girl to preserve the strictest silence on what she had seen, and to allow the other servants to find the secret out for themselves if they could. To-morrow might disclose more, but as at present they had nothing stronger than suspicion, it would be wrong to speak of it, and might, besides, be prejudicial to Miss Gourlay's reputation. Such was the love and respect which all the family felt for the kind-hearted and amiable Lucy, who was the general advocate with her father when any of them had incurred his displeasure, that on her account alone, even if dread of Sir Thomas did not loom like a gathering storm in the background, not one of them ever seemed to notice her absence, nor did the baronet himself until days had elapsed. On the morning of the third day he began to think, that perhaps confinement might have tamed her down into somewhat of a more amenable spirit; and as he had in the interval taken all necessary steps to secure the person of the man who robbed him, and offered a large reward for his apprehension, he felt somewhat satisfied that he had done all that could be done, and was consequently more at leisure, and also more anxious to ascertain the temper of mind in which he should find her.

In the meantime, the delicious scandal of the supposed elopement was beginning to creep abroad, and, in fact, was pretty generally rumored throughout the redoubtable town of Ballytrain on the morning of the third or fourth day. Of course, we need scarcely assure our intelligent readers, that the friends of the parties are the very last to whom such a scandal would be mentioned, not only because such an office is always painful, but because every one takes it for granted that they are already aware of it themselves. In the case before us, such was the general opinion, and Sir Thomas's silence on the subject was imputed by some to the natural delicacy of a father in alluding to a subject so distressing, and by others to a calm, quiet spirit of vengeance, which he only restrained until circumstances should place him in a condition to crush the man who had entailed shame and disgrace upon his name and family.

Such was the state of circumstances upon the third or fourth morning after Lucy's disappearance, when Sir Thomas called the footman, and desired him to send Miss Gourlay's maid to him; he wished to speak with her.

By this, time it was known through the whole establishment that Lucy and she had both disappeared, and, thanks to Nancy—to pretty Nancy—"that her own father, the hard-hearted old wretch, had forced her off—God knows where—in the dead of night."

The footman, who had taken Nancy's secret for granted; and, to tell the truth, he had it in the most agreeable and authentic shape—to wit, from her own sweet lips—and who could be base enough to doubt any communication so delightfully conveyed?—the footman, we say, on hearing this command from his master, started a little, and in the confusion or forgetfulness of the moment, almost stared at him.

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“What, sirrah,” exclaimed the latter; “did you hear what I said?”

“I did, sir,” replied the man, still more confused; “but, I thought, your honor, that—”

“You despicable scoundrel!” said his master, stamping, “what means this? You thought! What right, sir, have you to think, or to do anything but obey your orders from me. It was not to think, sir, I brought you here, but to do your duty as footman. Fetch Miss Gourlay’s maid, sir, immediately. Say I desire to speak with her.”

“She is not within, sir,” replied the man trembling.

“Then where is she, sir? Why is she absent from her charge?”

“I cannot tell, sir. We thought, sir—”

“Thinking again, you scoundrel!—speak out, however.”

“Why, the truth is, your honor, that neither Miss Gourlay nor she has been here since Tuesday night last.”

The baronet had been walking to and fro, as was his wont, but this information paralyzed him, as if by a physical blow on the brain. He now went, or rather tottered over, to his arm-chair, into which he dropped rather than sat, and stared at Gibson the footman as if he had forgotten the intelligence just conveyed to him. In fact, his confusion was such—so stunning was the blow—that it is possible he did forget it.

“What is that, Gibson?” said he; “tell me; repeat what you said.”

“Why, your honor,” replied Gibson, “since last Tuesday night neither Miss Gourlay nor her maid has been in this house.”

“Was there no letter left, nor any verbal information that might satisfy us as to where they have gone?”

“Not any, sir, that I am aware of.”

“Was her room examined?”

“I cannot say, sir. You know, sir, I never enter it unless when I am rung for by Miss Gourlay; and that is very rarely.”

“Do you think, Gibson, that there is any one in the house that knows more of this matter than you do?”

Gibson shook his head, and replied, “As to that, Sir Thomas, I cannot say.”

The baronet was not now in a rage. The thing was impossible; not within the energies of nature. He was stunned, stupefied, rendered helpless.

“I think,” he proceeded, “I observed a girl named Nancy—I forget what else, Nancy something—that Miss Gourlay seemed to like a good deal. Send her here. But before you do so, may I beg to know why her father, her natural guardian and protector, was kept so long in ignorance of her extraordinary disappearance? Pray, Mr. Gibson, satisfy me on that head?”

“I think, sir,” replied Gibson, most un-gallantly shifting the danger of the explanation from his own shoulders to the pretty ones of Nancy Forbes—“I think, sir, Nancy Forbes, the girl you speak of, may know more about the last matter than I do.”

“What do you mean by the last matter?”

“Why, sir, the reason why we did not tell your honor of it sooner—”

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Sir Thomas waved his hand. "Go," he added, "send her here."

"D—n the old scoundrel," thought Gibson to himself; "but that's a fine piece of acting. Why, if he hadn't been aware of it all along he would have thrown me clean out of the window, even as the messenger of such tidings. However, he is not so deep as he thinks himself. We know him—see through him—on this subject at least."

When Nancy entered, her master gave her one of those stern, searching looks which often made his unfortunate menials tremble before him.

"What's your name, my good girl?"

"Nancy Forbes, sir."

"How long have you been in this family?"

"I'm in the first month of my second quarter, your honor," with a courtesy.

"You are a pretty girl."

Nancy, with another courtesy, and a simper, which vanity, for the life of her, could not suppress, "Oh la, sir, how could your honor say such a thing of a humble girl like me? You that sees so many handsome great ladies."

"Have you a sweetheart?"

Nancy fairly tittered. "Is it me, sir—why, who would think of the like of me? Not one, sir, ever I had."

"Because, if you have," he proceeded, "and that I approve of him, I wouldn't scruple much to give you something that might enable you and your husband to begin the world with comfort."

"I'm sure it's very kind, your honor, but I never did anything to desarve so much goodness at your honor's hands."

"The old villain wants to bribe me for something," thought Nancy.

"Well, but you may, my good girl. I think you are a favorite with Miss Gourlay?"

"Ha, ha!" thought Nancy, "I am sure of it now."

"That's more than I know, sir," she replied. "Miss Gourlay—God bless and protect her—was kind to every one; and not more so to me than to the other servants."

“I have just been informed by Gibson, that she and her maid left the Hall on Tuesday night last. Now, answer me truly, and you shall be the better for it. Have you any conception, any suspicion, let us say, where they have gone to?”

“La, sir, sure your honor ought to know that better than me.”

“How so, my pretty girl? How should I know it? She told me nothing about it.”

“Why, wasn’t it your honor and Tom Gillespie that took her away in the carriage on that very night?”

Here now was wit against wit, or at least cunning against cunning. Nancy, the adroit, hazarded an assertion of which she was not certain, in order to probe the baronet, and place him in a position by which she might be able by his conduct and manner to satisfy herself whether her suspicions were well-founded or not.

“But how do you know, my good girl, that I and Gillespie were out that night?”

It is unnecessary to repeat here circumstances with which the reader is already acquainted. Nancy gave him the history of Mrs. Morgan’s sudden illness, and all the other facts already mentioned.

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“But there is one thing that I still cannot understand,” replied the baronet, “which is, that the disappearance of Miss Gourlay was never mentioned to me until I inquired for her maid, whom I wished to speak with.”

“But sure that’s very natural, sir,” replied Nancy; “the reason we didn’t speak to you upon the subject was because we thought that it was your honor who brought her away; and that as you took such a late hour in the night for it, you didn’t wish that we should know anything about it.”

The baronet’s eye fell upon her severely, as if he doubted the truth of what she said. Nancy’s eye, however, neither avoided his nor quailed before it. She now spoke the truth, and she did so, in order to prevent herself and the other servants from incurring his resentment by their silence.

“Very well,” observed Sir Thomas, calmly, but sternly. “I think you have spoken what you believe to be the truth, and what, for all you know, may be the truth. But observe my words: let this subject be never breathed nor uttered by any domestic in my establishment. Tell your fellow-servants that such are my orders; for I swear, if I find that any one of you shall speak of it, my utmost vengeance shall pursue him or her to death itself. That will do.” And he signed to her to retire.

CHAPTER XVIII. Dunphy visits the County Wicklow

—Old Sam and his Wife.

It was about a week subsequent to the interview which the stranger had with old Dunphy, unsuccessful as our readers know it to have been, that the latter and his wife were sitting in the back parlor one night after their little shop had been closed, when the following dialogue took place between them:

“Well, at all events,” observed the old man, “he was the best of them, and to my own knowledge that same saicret lay hot and heavy on his conscience, especially to so good a master and mistress as they were to him. The truth is, Polly, I’ll do it.”

“But why didn’t he do it himself?” asked his wife.

“Why?—why?” he replied, looking at her with his keen ferret eyes—“why, don’t you know what a weak-minded, timorsome creature he was, ever since the height o’ my knee?”

“Oh, ay,” she returned; “and I hard something about an oath, I think, that they made him take.”

“You did,” said her husband; “and it was true, too. They swore him never to breathe a syllable of it until his dying day—an’ although they meant by that that he should never reveal it at all, yet he always was of opinion that he might tell it on that day, but on no other one. And it was his intention to do so.”

“Wasn’t it an unlucky thing that she happened to be out when he could do it with a safe conscience?” observed his wife.

“They almost threatened the life out of the poor creature,” pursued her husband, “for Tom threatened to murder him if he betrayed them; and Ginty to poison him, if Tom didn’t keep his word—and I believe in my sowl that the same devil’s pair would a’ done either the one or the other, if he had broken his oath. Of the two, however, Ginty’s the worst, I think; and I often believe, myself, that she deals with the devil; but that, I suppose, is bekaise she’s sometimes not right in her head still.”

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“If she doesn’t dale with the devil, the devil dales with her at any rate,” replied the other. “They’ll be apt to gain their point, Tom and she.”

“Tom, I know, is just as bitther as she is,” observed the old man, “and Ginty, by her promises as to what she’ll do for him, has turned his heart altogether to stone; and yet I know a man that’s bittherer against the black fellow than either o’ them. She only thinks of the luck that’s before her; but, afther all, Tom acts more from hatred to him than from Ginty’s promises. He has no bad feelin’ against the young man himself; but it’s the others he’s bent on punishing. God direct myself, I wish at any rate that I never had act or hand in it. As for your time o’ life and mine, Polly, you know that age puts it out of our power ever to be much the betther one way or the other, even if Ginty does succeed in her devilry. Very few years now will see us both in our graves, and I don’t know but it’s safer to lave this world with an aisy conscience, than to face God with the guilt of sich a black saicret as that upon us.”

“Well, but haven’t you promised them not to tell?”

“I have—an’ only that I take sich delight in waitin’ to see the black scoundrel punished till his heart ’ll burst—I think I’d come out with it. That’s one raison; and the other is, that I’m afraid of the consequences. The law’s a dangerous customer to get one in its crushes, an’ who can tell how we’d be dealt with?”

“Troth, an’ that’s true enough,” she replied.

“And when I promised poor Edward on his death-bed,” proceeded the old man, “I made him give me a sartin time; an’ I did this in ordher to allow Ginty an opportunity of tryin’ her luck. If she does not manage her point within that time, I’ll fulfil my promise to the dyin’ man.”

“But, why,” she asked, “did he make you promise to do it when he could—ay, but I forgot. It was jist, I suppose, in case he might be taken short as he was, and that you wor to do it for him if he hadn’t an opportunity? But, sure, if Ginty succeeds, there’s an end to your promise.”

“Well, I believe so,” said the old man; “but if she does succeed, why, all I’ll wondher at will be that God would allow it. At any rate she’s the first of the family that ever brought shame an’ disgrace upon the name. Not but she felt her misfortune keen enough at the time, since it turned her brain almost ever since. And him, the villain—but no matter—-he, must be punished.”

“But,” replied the wife, “wont Ginty be punishin’ him?”

“Ah, Polly, you know little of the plans—the deep plans an’ plots that he’s surrounded by. We know ourselves that there’s not such a plotter in existence as he is, barin’ them

that's plottin' aginst him. Lord bless us! but it's a quare world—here is both parties schamin' an' plottin' away—all bent on risin' themselves higher in it by pride and dishonesty. There's the high rogue and the low rogue—the great villain and the little villain—musha! Polly, which do you think is worst, eh?"

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“Faith, I think it’s six o’ one and half-a-dozen of the other with them. Still, a body would suppose that the high rogue ought to rest contented; but it’s a hard thing they say to satisfy the cravin’s of man’s heart when pride, an’ love of wealth an’ power, get into it.”

“I’m not at all happy in my mind, Polly,” observed her husband, meditatively; “I’m not at aise—and I won’t bear this state of mind much longer. But, then, again, there’s my pension; and that I’ll lose if I spake out. I sometimes think I’ll go to the country some o’ these days, and see an ould friend.”

“An where to, if it’s a fair question?”

“Why,” he replied, “maybe it’s a fair-question to ask, but not so fair to answer. Ay! I’ll go to the country—I’ll start in a few days—in a few days! No, savin’ to me, but I’ll start to-morrow. Polly, I could tell you something if I wished—I say I have a secret that none o’ them knows—ay, have I. Oh, God pardon me! The d——d thieves, to make me, me above all men, do the blackest part of the business—an’ to think o’ the way they misled Edward, too—who, after all, would be desavin’ poor Lady Gourlay, if he had tould her all as he thought, although he did not know that he would be misleadin’ her. Yes, faith, I’ll start for the country tomorrow, plaise God; but listen, Polly, do you know who’s in town?”

“Arra, no!—how could I?”

“Kate M’Bride, so Ginty tells me; she’s livin’ with her.”

“And why didn’t she call to see you?” asked his wife. “And yet God knows it’s no great loss; but if ever woman was cursed wid a step-daughter, I was wid her.”

“Don’t you know very well that we never spoke since her runaway match with M’Bride. If she had married Cummins, I’d a’ given her a purty penny to help him on; but instead o’ that she cuts off with a sojer, bekaise he was well faced, and starts with him to the Aist Indies. No; I wouldn’t spake to her then, and I’m not sure I’ll spake to her now either; and yet I’d like to see her—the unfortunate woman. However, I’ll think of it; but in the mane time, as I said, I’ll start for the country in the mornin’.”

And to the country he did start the next morning; and if, kind reader, it so happen that you feel your curiosity in any degree excited, all you have to do is to take a seat in your own imagination, whether outside or in, matters not, the fare is the same, and thus you will, at no great cost, be able to accompany him. But before we proceed further we shall, in the first place, convey you in ours to the ultimate point of his journey.

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There was, in one of the mountain districts of the county Wicklow, that paradise of our country, a small white cottage, with a neat flower plot before, and a small orchard and garden behind. It stood on a little eminence, at the foot of one of those mountains, which, in some instances, abut from higher ranges. It was then bare and barren; but at present presents a very different aspect, a considerable portion of it having been since reclaimed and planted. Scattered around this rough district were a number of houses that could be classed with neither farm-house nor cabin, but as humble little buildings that possessed a feature of each. Those who; dwelt in them held in general four or five acres of rough land, some more, but very few less; and we allude to these small tenements, because, as our readers are aware, the wives of their proprietors were in the habit of eking out the means of subsistence, and paying their rents, by nursing illegitimate children or foundlings, which upon a proper understanding, and in accordance with the usual arrangements, were either transmitted to them from the hospital of that name in Dublin, or taken charge of by these women, and conveyed home from that establishment itself. The children thus nurtured were universally termed parisheens, because it was found more convenient and less expensive to send a country foundling to the hospital in Dublin, than to burden the inhabitants of the parish with its maintenance. A small sum, entitling it to be received in the hospital, was remitted, and as this sum, in most instances, was levied off the parish, these wretched creatures were therefore called parisheens, that is, creatures! aided by parish allowance.

The very handsome little cottage into which we are about to give the reader admittance, commanded a singularly beautiful and picturesque view. From the little elevation on which it stood could be seen the entrancing vale of Ovoca, winding in its inexpressible loveliness toward Arklow, and diversified with green meadows, orchard gardens, elegant villas, and what was sweeter! than all, warm and comfortable homesteads, more than realizing our conceptions of Arcadian happiness and beauty. Its precipitous sides were clothed with the most enchanting variety of plantation; whilst, like a stream of liquid light, the silver Ovoca shone sparkling to the sun, as it followed, by the harmonious law of nature, that graceful line of beauty which characterizes the windings of this unrivalled valley. The cottage which commanded this rich prospect we have partially described. It was white as snow, and had about it all those traits of neatness and good taste which are, we regret! to say, so rare among, and so badly understood by, our humbler countrymen. The front walls were covered by honeysuckles, rose trees, and wild brier, and the flower plot in front was so well stocked, that its summer bloom would have done credit to the skill of an ordinary florist. The inside of this cottage was equally neat, clean, and cheerful. The floor, an unusual thing then, was tiled, which gave it a look of agreeable warmth; the wooden vessels in the kitchen were white with incessant scouring, whilst the pewter, brass, and tin, shone in becoming rivalry. The room you entered was the kitchen, off which was a parlor and two bedrooms, besides one for the servant.

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As may be inferred from what we have said, the dresser was a perfect treat to look at, and as the owners kept a cow, we need hardly add that the delightful fragrance of milk which characterizes every well-kept dairy, was perfectly ambrosial here. The chairs were of oak, so were the tables; and a large arm-chair, with a semicircular back, stood at one side of the clean hearth, whilst over the chimney-piece hung a portrait of General Wolfe, with an engraving of the siege of Quebec. A series of four silver medals, enclosed in red morocco cases, having the surface of each protected by a glass cover, hung from a liliputian rack made of mahogany, at once bearing testimony to the enterprise and gallantry of the owner, as well as to the manly pride with which he took such especial pains to preserve these proud rewards of his courage, and the ability with which he must have discharged his duty as a soldier. On the table lay a large Bible, a Prayer-book, and the “Whole Duty of Man,” all neatly and firmly, but not ostentatiously bound. Some works of a military character lay upon a little hanging shelf beside the dresser. Over this shelf hung a fishing-rod, unscrewed and neatly tied up; and upon the top of the other books lay one bound with red cloth, in which he kept his flies. On one side of the window sills lay a backgammon box, with which his wife and himself amused themselves for an hour or two every evening; and fixed in recesses intended for the purpose, Sam Roberts, for such was his name, having built the house himself, were comfortable cupboards filled with a variety of delft, several curious and foreign ornaments, an ostrich’s egg, a drinking cup made of the polished shell of a cocoanut, whilst crossed saltier-wise over a portrait of himself and of his wife, were placed two feathers of the bird of paradise, constituting, one might imagine, emblems significant of the happy life they led. But we cannot close our description here. Upon the good woman’s bosom, fastened to her kerchief, was a locket which contained a portion of beautiful brown hair, taken from the youthful head of a deceased son, a manly and promising boy, who died at the age of seventeen, and whose death, although it did not and could not throw a permanent gloom over two lives so innocent and happy, occasioned, nevertheless, periodical recollections of profound and bitter sorrow. Old Sam had his locket also, but it was invisible; its position being on that heart whose affections more resembled the enthusiasm of idolatry than the love of a parent. His wife was a placid, contented looking old woman, with a complexion exceedingly hale and fresh for her years; a shrewd, clear, benevolent eye, and a general air which never fails to mark that ease and superiority of manner to be found only in those who have had an enlarged experience in life, and seen much of the world. There she sits by the clear fire and clean, comfortable hearth, knitting a pair of stockings for her husband, who has gone

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to Dublin. She is tidily and even, for a woman of her age, tastefully dressed, but still with a sober decency that showed her good sense. Her cap is as white as snow, with which a well-fitting brown stuff gown, that gave her a highly respectable appearance, admirably contrasted. She wore an apron of somewhat coarse muslin, that seemed, as it always did, fresh from the iron, and her hands were covered with a pair of thread mittens that only came half-way down the fingers. Hanging at one side was a three-cornered pincushion of green silk, a proof at once of a character remarkable for thrift, neatness, and industry. Whilst thus employed, she looks from time to time through a window that commanded a prospect of the road, and seems affected by that complacent expression of uneasiness which, whilst it overshadows the features, never disturbs their benignity. At length, a good-looking, neat girl, their servant, enters the cottage with a can of new milk, for she had been to the fields a-milking; her name is Molly Byrne.

“Molly,” said her mistress, “I wonder the master has not come yet. I am getting uneasy. The coach has gone past, and I see no appearance of him.”

“I suppose, then, he didn’t come by the coach, ma’am.”

“Yes, but he said he would.”

“Well, ma’am, something must ’a prevented him.”

“Molly,” said her mistress, smiling, “you are a good hand at telling us John Thompson’s news; that is, any thing we know ourselves.”

“Well, ma’am, but you know many a time he goes to Dublin, an’ doesn’t come home by the coach.”

“Yes, whenever he visits Rilmainham Hospital, and gets into conversation with some of his old comrades; however, that’s natural, and I hope he’s safe.”

“Well, ma’am,” replied Molly, looking out, “I have betther news for you than Jenny Thompson’s now.”

“Attention, Molly; John Thompson’s the word,” said her mistress, with the slightest conceivable air of professional form; for if she had a foible at all, it was that she gave all her orders and exacted all obedience from her servant in a spirit of military discipline, which she, had unconsciously borrowed from her husband, whom she imitated as far as she could. “Where, Molly? Fall back, I say, till I get a peep at dear old Sam.”

“There he is, ma’am,” continued Molly, at the same time obeying her orders, “and some other person along with him.”

“Yes, sure enough; thank God, thank God!” she exclaimed. “But who can the other person be, do you think?”

“I don’t know, ma’am,” replied Molly. “I only got a glimpse of them, but I knew the master at once. I would know him round a corner.”

“Advance, then, girl; take another look; reconnoitre, Molly, as Sam says, and see if you can make out who it is.”

“I see him now well enough, ma’am,” replied the girl, “but I don’t know him; he’s a stranger. What can bring a stranger here, ma’am, do you think?” she inquired.

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“Why your kind master, of course, girl; isn’t that sufficient? Whoever comes with my dear old Sam is welcome, to be sure.”

Her clear, cloudless face was now lit up with a multiplicity of kind and hospitable thoughts, for dear old Sam and his friend were not more than three or four perches from the house, and she could perceive that her husband was in an extraordinary state of good humor.

“I know, Molly, who the strange man is now,” she said. “He’s an old friend of my husband’s, named Dunphy; he was once in the same regiment with him; and I know, besides, our own good man has heard some news that has delighted him very much.”

She had scarcely uttered the words when Sam and old Dunphy entered.

“Beck, my girl, here I am, safe and sound, and here’s an old friend come to see us, and you know how much we are both indebted to him; I felt, Beck, and so did you, old girl, that we must have something to love and provide for, and to keep the heart moving, but that’s natural, you know—quite natural—it’s all the heart of man.”

“Mr. Dunphy,” said Beck—a curtailment of Rebecca—“I am glad to see you; take a seat; how is the old woman?”

“As tough as ever, Mrs. Roberts. ’Deed I had thought last winter that she might lave me a loose leg once more; but I don’t know how it is, she’s gatherin’ strength on my hands, an’ a young wife, I’m afraid, isn’t on the cards—ha—ha—ha! And how are you yourself, Mrs. Roberts?—but, indeed, one may tell with half an eye—fresh and well you look, thank God!”

“Doesn’t she, man?” exclaimed Sam, slapping him with delight on the shoulder; “a woman that travelled half the world, and improved in every climate. Molly, attention!—-let us turn in to mess as soon as possible. Good news, Beck—good news, but not till after mess; double-quick, Molly.”

“Come, Molly, double-quick,” added her mistress; “the master and his friend must be hungry by this time.”

Owing to the expeditious habits to which Mrs. Roberts had disciplined Molly, a smoking Irish stew, hot and savory, was before them in a few minutes, which the two old fellows attacked with powers of demolition that would have shamed younger men. There was for some time a very significant lull in the conversation, during which Molly, by a hint from her mistress, put down the kettle, an act which, on being observed by Dunphy, made his keen old eye sparkle with the expectation of what it suggested. Shovelful after shovelful passed from dish to plate, until a very relaxed action on the part of each was evident.

“Dunphy,” said Sam, “I, believe our fire is beginning to slacken; but come, let us give the enemy another round, the citadel is nearly won—is on the point of surrender.”

“Begad,” replied Dunphy, who was well acquainted with his friend’s phraseology, and had seen some service, as already intimated, in the same regiment, some fifty years before. “I must lay down my arms for the present.”

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“No matter, friend Dunphy, we’ll renew the attack at supper; an easy mind brings a good appetite, which is but natural; it’s all the heart of man.”

“Well, I don’t know that,” said Dunphy, replying to, the first of the axioms; “I have often aiten a hearty dinner enough when my mind was, God knows, anything but aisy.”

“Well, then,” rejoined Sam, “when the heart’s down, a glass of old stingo, mixed stiff, will give it a lift; so, my old fellow, if there’s anything wrong with you, we’ll soon set it to rights.”

The table was now cleared, and the word “Hot wate-r-r,” was given, as if Molly had been on drill, as in fact, she may be considered to have been every day in the week; then the sugar and whiskey in the same tone. But whilst she is preparing and producing the materials, as they have been since termed, we shall endeavor to give an outline of old Sam.

Old Sam, then, was an erect, square-built, fine-looking old fellow, with firm, massive, but benevolent features; not, however, without a dash of determination in them that added very considerably to their interest. His eyes were gray, kind, and lively; his eyebrows rather large, but their expression was either stern or complacent, according to the mood of the moment. That of complacency, however, was their general character. Upon the front part of his head he had received a severe wound, which extended an inch or so down the side of his forehead, he had also lost the two last fingers of his left hand, and received several other wounds that were severe and dangerous when inflicted, but as their scars were covered by his dress, they were consequently invisible. Sam was at this time close upon seventy, but so regular had been his habits of life, so cheerful and kind his disposition, and so excellent his constitution, that he did not look more than fifty-five. It was utterly impossible not to read the fine old soldier in every one of his free, but well-disciplined, movements. The black stock, the bold, erect head, the firm but measured step, and the existence of something like military ardor in the eye and whole bearing; or it might be the proud consciousness of having bravely and faithfully discharged his duty to his king and his country; all this, we say, marked the man with an impress of such honest pride and frank military spirit, as, taken into consideration with his fine figure, gave the very *beau ideal* of an old soldier.

When each had mixed his tumbler, Sam, brimful of the good news to which he had alluded, filled a small glass, as was his wont, and placing it before Beck, said:

“Come, Beck, attention!—’The king, God bless him!’ Attention, Dunphy!—off with it.”

“The king, God bless him!” having been duly honored, Sam proceeded:

“Beck, my old partner, I said I had good news for you. Our son and his regiment—three times eleven, eleven times three—the gallant thirty-third, are in Dublin.”

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Beck laid down her stocking, and her eyes sparkled with delight.

“But that’s not all, old girl, he has risen from the ranks—his commission has been just made out, and he is now a commissioned officer in his majesty’s service. But I knew it would come to that. Didn’t I say so, old comrade, eh?”

“Indeed you did, Sam,” replied his wife; “and I thought as much myself. There was something about that boy beyond the common.”

“Ay, you may say that, girl; but who found it out first? Why, I did; but the thing was natural; it’s all the heart of man—when that’s in the right place nothing will go wrong. What do you say, friend Dunphy? Did you think it would ever come to this?”

“Troth, I did not, Mr. Roberts; but it’s you he may thank for it.”

“God Almighty first, Dunphy, and me afterwards. Well, he shan’t want a father, at all events; and so long as I have a few shiners to spare, he shan’t want the means of supporting his rank as a British officer and gentleman should. There’s news for you, Dunphy. Do you hear that, you old dog—eh?”

“It’s all the heart of man, Sam,” observed his wife, eying him with affectionate admiration. “When the heart’s in the right place, nothing will go wrong.”

Now, nothing gratified Sam so much as to hear his own apothegms honored by repetition.

“Eight, girl,” he replied; “shake hands for that. Dunphy, mark the truth of that. Isn’t she worth gold, you sinner?”

“Troth she is, Mr. Roberts, and silver to the back o’ that.”

“What?” said Sam, looking at him with comic surprise. “What do you mean by that, you ferret? Why don’t you add, and ‘brass to the back of that?’ By fife and drum, I won’t stand this to Beck. Apologize instantly, sir.” Then breaking into a hearty laugh—“he meant no offence, Beck,” he added; “he respects and loves you—I know he does—as who doesn’t that knows you, my girl?”

“What I meant to say, Mr. Roberts—”

“Mrs. Roberts, sir; direct the apology to herself.”

“Well, then, what I wanted to say, Mrs. Roberts, was, that all the gold, silver, and brass in his majesty’s dominions—(God bless him! parenthetice, from Sam)—couldn’t purchase you, an’ would fall far short of your value.”

“Well done—thank you, Dunphy—thank you, honest old Dunphy; shake hands. He’s a fine old fellow, Beck, isn’t he, eh?”

“I’m very much obliged to you, Mr. Dunphy; but you overrate me a great deal too much,” replied Mrs. Roberts.

“No such thing, Beck; you’re wrong there, for once; the thing couldn’t be done—by fife and drum! it couldn’t; and no man has a better right to know that than myself—and I say it.”

Sam, like all truly brave men, never boasted of his military exploits, although he might well have done so. On the contrary, it was a subject which he studiously avoided, and on which those who knew his modesty as well as his pride never ventured. He usually cut short such as referred to it, with:

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“Never mind that, my friend; I did my duty, and that was all; and so did every man in the British army, or I wouldn’t be here to say so. Pass the subject.”

Sam and Dunphy, at all events, spent a pleasant evening; at least, beyond question, Sam did. As for Dunphy, he seemed occasionally relieved by hearing Sam’s warm and affectionate allusions to his son; and, on the other hand, he appeared, from time to time, to fall into a mood that indicated a state of feeling between gloom and reflection.

“It’s extraordinary, Mr. Roberts,” he observed, after awakening from one of these reveries; “it looks as if Providence was in it.”

“God Almighty’s in it, sir,—didn’t I say so? and under him, Sam Roberts. Sir, I observed that boy closely from the beginning. He reminded me, and you too, Beck, didn’t he, of him that—that—we lost”—here he paused a moment, and placed his hand upon his heart, as if to feel for something there that awoke touching and melancholy remembrances; whilst his wife, on the other hand, unpinned the locket, and having kissed it, quietly let fall a few tears; after which she restored it to its former position. Sam cleared his voice a little, and then proceeded:

“Yes; I could never look at the one without thinking of the other; but ’twas all the heart of man. In a week’s time he could fish as well as myself, and in a short time began to teach me. ’Gad! he used to take the rod out of my hand with so much kindness, so gently and respectfully—for, I mark me, Dunphy, he respected me from the beginning—-didn’t lie, Beck?”

“He did, indeed, Sam.”

“Thank you, Beck; you’re a good creature. So gently and respectfully, as I was saying, and showed me in his sweet words, and with his smiling eyes—yes, and his hair, too, was the very color of his brother’s—I was afraid I might forget that. Well—yes, with such smiling eyes that it was impossible not to love him—I couldn’t but love him—but, sure, it was only natural—all the heart of man, Dunphy. ‘Ned,’ said I to him one day, ‘would you like to become a soldier—a soldier, Ned?’” And as the old man repeated the word “soldier” his voice became full and impressive, his eyes sparkled with pride, and his very form seemed to dilate at the exulting reminiscences and heroic associations connected with it.

“Above all things in this life,” replied the boy; “but you know I’m too young.”

“‘Never mind, my boy,’ said I, ’that’s a fault that every day will mend; you’ll never grow less;’ so I consulted with Beck there, and with you, Dunphy, didn’t I?”

“You did, indeed, Mr. Roberts, and wouldn’t do anything till you had spoken to me on the subject.”

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“Eight, Dunphy, right—well, you know the rest. ‘Education’s the point,’ said I to Beck—-ignorance is a bad inheritance. What would I be to-day if I didn’t write a good hand, and was a keen accountant! But no matter, off he went with a decent outfit to honest Mainwairing—thirty pounds a-year—five years—lost no time—was steady, but always showed a spirit. Couldn’t get him a commission then, for I hadn’t come in for my Uncle’s legacy, which I got the other day.—dashed him into the ranks though—and here he is—a commissioned officer—eh, old Dunphy! Well, isn’t that natural? but it’s all the heart of man.”

“It’s wonderful,” observed Dunphy, ruminating, “it’s wonderful indeed. Well, now, Mr. Roberts, it really is wonderful. I came down here to spake to you about that very boy, and see the news I have before me. Indeed, it is wonderful, and the hand o’ God is surely in it.”

“Right, Dunphy, that’s the word; and under him, in the capacity of agent in the business, book down Sam Roberts, who’s deeply thankful to God for making him, if I may say so, his adjutant in advancing the boy’s fortunes.”

“Did you see him to-day, Sam?” asked Mrs. Roberts.

“No,” replied Sam, “he wasn’t in the barracks, but I’ll engage we’ll both see him tomorrow, if he has life, that is, unless he should happen to be on duty. If he doesn’t come to-morrow, however, I’ll start the day after for Dublin.”

“Well, now, Mr. Roberts,” said Dunphy, “if you have no objection, I didn’t care if I turned into bed; I’m not accustomed to travelin’, and I’m a thrifle fatigued; only tomorrow morning, plaise God, I have something to say to you about that boy that may surprise you.”

“Not a syllable, Dunphy, nothing about him that could surprise me.”

“Well,” replied the hesitating and cautious old man, “maybe I will surprise you for all that.”

This he said whilst Mrs. Roberts and Molly Byrne were preparing his bed in one of the neat sleeping rooms which stood off the pleasant kitchen where they sat; “and listen, Mr. Roberts, before I tell it, you must pledge your honor as a soldier, that until I give you lave, you’ll never breathe a syllable of what I have to mention to any one, not even to Mrs. Roberts.”

“What’s that? Keep a secret from Beck? Come, Dunphy, that’s what I never did, unless the word and countersign when on duty, and, by fife and drum, I never will keep your secret then; I don’t want it, for as sure as I hear it, so shall she. And is it afraid of old Beck you are? By fife and drum, sir, old Beck has more honor than either of us, and

would as soon take a fancy to a coward as betray a secret. You don't know her, old Dunphy, you don't know her, or you wouldn't spake as if you feared that she's not truth and honesty to the backbone."

"I believe it, Mr. Roberts, but they say, afther all, that once a woman gets a secret, she thinks herself in a sartin way, until she's delivered of it'."

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Sam, who liked a joke very well, laughed heartily at this, bad as it was, or rather he laughed at the shrewd, ludicrous, but satirical grin with which old Dunphy's face was puckered whilst he uttered it.

"But, sir," said he, resuming his gravity, "Beck, I'd have you to know, is not like other women, by which I mean that no other woman could be compared to her. Beck's the queen of women, upon my soul she is; and all I have to say is, that if you tell me the secret, in half an hour's time she'll be as well acquainted with it as either of us. I have no notion, Dunphy, at this time of life, to separate my mind from Beck's; my conscience, sir, is my store-room; she has a key for it, and, by fife and drum, I'm not going to take it from her now. Do you think Beck would treat old Sam so? No. And my rule is, and ever has been, treat your wife with confidence if you respect her, and expect confidence in your turn. No, no; poor Beck must have it if I have it. The truth is, I have no secrets, and never had. I keep none, Dunphy, and that's but natural; however, it's all the heart of man."

The next morning the two men took an early walk, for both were in the habit of rising betimes. Dunphy, it would appear, was one of those individuals, who, if they ever perform a praiseworthy act, do it rather from weakness of character and fear, than from a principle of conscientious rectitude. After having gone to bed the previous night he lay awake for a considerable time debating with himself the purport of his visit, pro and con, without after all, being able to accomplish a determination on the subject. He was timid, cunning, shrewd, avaricious, and possessed, besides, a large portion of that peculiar superstition which does not restrain from iniquity, although it renders the mind anxious and apprehensive of the consequences. Now the honest fellow with whom he had to deal was the reverse of all this in every possible phase of his character, being candid, conscientious, fearless, and straightforward. Whatever he felt to be his duty, that he did, regardless of all opinion and all consequences. He was, in fact, an independent man, because he always acted from right principles, or rather from right impulses; the truth being, that the virtuous action was performed before he had allowed himself time to reason upon it. Every one must have observed that there is a rare class of men whose feelings, always on the right side, are too quick for their reason, which they generously anticipate, and have the proposed virtue completed before either reason or prudence have had time to argue either for or against the act. Old Sam was one of the latter, and our readers may easily perceive the contrast which the two individuals presented.

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After about an hour's walk both returned to breakfast, and whatever may have been the conversation that took place between them, or whatever extent of confidence Dunphy reposed in old Sam, there can be little doubt that his glee this morning was infinitely greater than on the preceding-evening, although, at Dunphy's earnest request, considerably more subdued. Nay, the latter had so far succeeded with old Sam as to induce him to promise, that for the present at least, he would forbear to communicate it to his wife. Sam, however, would under no circumstances promise this until he should first hear the nature of it, upon which, he said, he would then judge for himself. After hearing it, however, he said that on Dunphy's own account he would not breathe it even to her without his permission.

"Mind," said Dunphy, at the conclusion of their dialogue, and with his usual caution, "I am not sartin of what I have mentioned; but I hope, plaise God, in a short time to be able to prove it; and, if not, as nobody knows it but yourself an' me, why there's no harm done. Dear knows, I have a strong reason for lettin' the matter lie as it is, even if my suspicions are true; but my conscience isn't aisy, Mr. Eoberts, an' for that raison' I came to spake to you, to consult with you, and to have your advice."

"And my advice to you is, Dunphy, not to attack the enemy until your plans are properly laid, and all your forces in a good position. The thing can't be proved now, you say; very well; you'd be only a fool for attempting to prove it."

"I'm not sayin'," said the cautious old sinner again, "that it can be proved at any time, or proved at all—that is, for a sartinty; but I think, afther a time, it may. There's a person not now in the country, that will be back shortly, I hope; and if any one can prove what I mentioned to you, that person can. I know we'd make a powerful friend by it, but—"

Here he squirted his thin tobacco spittle "out owre his beard," but added nothing further.

"Dunphy, my fine old fellow," said Sam, "it was very kind of you to come to me upon this point. You know the affection I have for the young man; thank you, Dunphy; but it's natural—it's all the heart of man. Dunphy, how long is it, now, since you and I messed together in the gallant eleven times three? Fifty years, I think, Dunphy, or more. You were a smart fellow then, and became servant, I think, to a young captain—what's this his name was? oh! I remember—Gourlay; for, Dunphy, I remember the name of every officer in our regiment, since I entered it; when they joined, when they exchanged, sold out, or died like brave men in the field of battle. It's upwards of fifty. By the way, he left us—sold out immediately after his father's death."

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“Ay, ould Sir Edward—a good man; but he had a woman to his wife, and if ever there was a divil—Lord bless us!—in any woman, there was one, and a choice bad one, too, in her. The present barrownight, Sir Thomas, is as like her as if she had spat him out of her mouth. The poor ould man, Sir Edward, had no rest night or day, because he wouldn’t get himself made into a lord, or a peer, or some high-flown title of the kind; and all that she herself might rank as a nobleman’s lady, although she was a ‘lady,’ by title, as it was, which, God knows, was more than she desarved, the thief.”

“Ah, she was different from Beck, Dunphy. Talking of wives, have I not a right to feel thankful that God in his goodness gifted me with such a blessing? You don’t know what I owe to her, Dunphy. When I was sick and wounded—I bear the marks of fifteen severe wounds upon me—when I was in fever, in ague, in jaundice, and several other complaints belonging to the different countries we were in, there she was—there she was, Dunphy; but enough said; ay, and in the field of battle, too,” he added, immediately forgetting himself, “lying like a log, my tongue black and burning. Oh, yes, Beck’s a great creature; that’s all, now—that’s all. Come in to breakfast, and now you shall know what a fresh egg means, for we have lots of poultry.”

“Many thanks to you, Mr. Roberts, I and my ould woman know that.”

“Tut—nonsense, man; lots of poultry, I say—always a pig or two, and never without a ham or a flitch, you old dog. Except the welfare of that boy, we have nothing on earth, thank God, to trouble us; but that’s natural—it’s all the heart of man, Dunphy”

After having made a luxurious breakfast, Dunphy, who felt that he could not readily remain away from his little shop, bade this most affectionate and worthy couple good-by and proceeded on his way home.

This hesitating old man felt anything but comfortable since the partial confidence he had placed in old Sam. It is true, he stated the purport of his disclosure to him as a contingency that might or might not happen; thus, as he imagined, keeping himself on the safe side. But in the meantime, he felt anxious, apprehensive and alarmed, even at the lengths to which his superstitious fears had driven him; for he felt now that one class of terrors had only superinduced another, without destroying the first. But so must it ever be with those timid and pusillanimous villains who strive to impose upon their consciences, and hesitate between right and wrong.

On his way home, however, he determined to visit the barracks in which the thirty-third regiment lay, in order, if possible, to get a furtive glance at the young ensign. In this he was successful. On entering the barrack, square, he saw a group of officers chatting together on the north side, and after inquiring from a soldier if Ensign Roberts was among them, he was answered in the affirmative.

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“There he is,” said the man, “standing with a whip in his hand—that tall, handsome young fellow.”

Dunphy, who was sufficiently near to get a clear view of him, was instantly struck by his surprising resemblance to Miss Gourlay, whom he had often seen in town.

CHAPTER XIX. Interview between Trailcudgel and the Stranger

—A Peep at Lord Dunroe and His Friend.

It was on the morning that Sir Thomas Gourlay had made the disastrous discovery of the flight of his daughter—for he had not yet heard the spreading rumor of the imaginary elopement—that the stranger, on his way from Father M’Mahon’s to the Mitre, was met in a lonely part of the road, near the priest’s house, by a man of huge stature and savage appearance. He was literally in rags; and his long beard, gaunt features, and eyes that glared as if with remorse, distraction, or despair, absolutely constituted him an alarming as well as a painful spectacle. As he approached the stranger, with some obvious and urgent purpose, trailing after him a weapon that resembled the club of Hercules, the latter paused in his step and said,

“What is the matter with you, my good fellow? You seem agitated. Do you want anything with me? Stand back, I will permit you to come no nearer, till I know your purpose. I am armed.”

The wretched man put his hand upon his eyes, and groaned as if his heart would burst, and for some moments was unable to make any reply.

“What can this mean?” thought the stranger; “the man’s features, though wild and hollow, are not those of a ruffian.”

“My good friend,” he added, speaking in a milder tone, “you seem distressed. Pray let me know what is the matter with you?”

“Don’t be angry with me,” replied the man, addressing him with dry, parched lips, whilst his Herculean breast heaved up and down with agitation; “I didn’t intend to do it, or to break in upon it, but now I must, for it’s life or death with the three that’s left me; and I durstn’t go into the town to ask it there. I have lost four already. Maybe, sir, you could change this pound note for me? For the sake of the Almighty, do; as you hope for mercy don’t refuse me. That’s all I ask. I know that you stop in the inn in the town there above—that you’re a friend of our good priest’s—and that you are well spoken of by every one.”

Now, it fortunately happened that the stranger had, on leaving the inn, put thirty shillings of silver in his pocket, not only that he might distribute through the hands of Father M'Mahon some portion of assistance to the poor whom that good man had on his list of distress, but visit some of the hovels on his way back, in order personally to witness their condition, and, if necessary, relieve them. The priest, however, was from home, and he had not an opportunity of carrying the other portion of his intentions into effect, as he was only a quarter of a mile from the good man's residence, and no hovels of the description he wished to visit had yet presented themselves.

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“Change for a pound!” he exclaimed, with a good deal of surprise. “Why, from your appearance, poor fellow, I should scarcely suspect to find such a sum in your possession. Did you expect to meet me here?”

“No, sir, I was on my way to the priest, to open my heart to him, for if I don’t, I know I’ll be ragin’ mad before forty-eight hours. Oh, sir, if you have it, make haste; every minute may cost me a life that’s dearer to me a thousand times than my own. Here’s the note, sir.”

The stranger took the note out of his hand, and on looking at the face of it made no observation, but, upon mechanically turning up the back, apparently without any purpose of examining it, he started, looked keenly at the man, and seemed sunk in the deepest possible amazement, not unrelieved, however, by an air of satisfaction. The sudden and mysterious disappearance of Fenton, taken in connection with the discovery of the note which he himself had given him, and now in the possession of a man whose appearance was both desperate and suspicious, filled him with instant apprehensions for the safety of Fenton.

His brow instantly became stern, and in a voice full of the most unequivocal determination, he said,

“Pray, sir, how did you come by this note?”

“By the temptation of the devil; for although it was in my possession, it didn’t save my two other darlins from dying. A piece of a slate would be as useful as it was, for I couldn’t change it—I durstn’t.”

“You committed a robbery for this note, sir?”

The man glared at him with something like incipient fury, but paused, and looking on him with a more sorrowful aspect, replied,

“That is what the world will call it, I suppose; but if you wish to get anything out of me, change the tone of your voice. I haven’t at the present time, much command over my temper, and I’m now a desperate man, though I wasn’t always so. Either give me the change or the note back again.”

The stranger eyed him closely. Although desperate, as he said, still there were symptoms of an honest and manly feeling, even in the very bursts of passion which he succeeded with such effort in restraining.

“I repeat it, that this note came into your hands by an act of robbery—perhaps of murder.”

“Murder!” replied the man, indignantly. “Give me back the note, sir, and provoke me no farther.”

“No,” replied the other, “I shall not; and you must consider yourself my prisoner. You not only do not deny, but seem to admit, the charge of robbery, and you shall not pass out of my hands until you render me an account of the person from whom you took this note. You see,” he added, producing a case of pistols—for, in accordance with the hint he had received in the anonymous note, he resolved never to go out without them—“I am armed, and that resistance is useless.”

The man gave a proud but ghastly smile, as he replied—dropping his stick, and pulling from his bosom a pair of pistols much larger, and more dangerous than those of the stranger,

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“You see, that if you go to that I have the advantage of you.”

“Tell me,” I repeat, “what has become of Mr. Fenton, from whom you took it.”

“Fenton!” exclaimed the other, with surprise; “is that the poor young man that’s not right in his head?”

“The same.”

“Well, I know nothing about him.”

“Did you not rob him of this note?”

“No.”

“You did, sir; this note was in his possession; and I fear you have murdered him I besides. You must come with me,”—and as he spoke, our friend, Trailcudgel, saw two pistols, one in each hand, levelled at him. “Get on before me, sir, to the town of Ballytrain, or, resist at your peril.”

Almost at the same moment the two pistols, taken from Sir Thomas Gourlay, were levelled at the stranger.

“Now,” said the man, whilst his eyes shot fire and his brow darkened, “if it must be, it must; I only want the sheddin’ of blood to fill up my misery and guilt; but it seems I’m doomed, and I can’t help it. Sir,” said he, “think of yourself. If I submit to become your prisoner, my life’s gone. You don’t know the villain you are goin’ to hand me over to. I’m not afraid of you, nor of anything, but to die a disgraceful death through his means, as I must do.”

“I will hear no reasoning on the subject,” replied the other; “go on before me.”

The man kept his pistols presented, and there they stood, looking sternly into each other’s faces, each determined not to yield, and each, probably, on the brink of eternity.

At length the man dropped the muzzles of the weapons, and holding them reversed, approached the stranger, saying, in a voice and with an expression of feeling that smote the other to the heart,

“I will be conqueror still, sir! Instead of goin’ with you, you will come with me. There are my pistols. Only come to a house of misery and sorrow and death, and you will know all.”

“This is not treachery,” thought the stranger. “There can be no mistaking the anguish—-the agony—of that voice; and those large tears bear no testimony to the crime of murder or robbery.”

“Take my pistols, sir,” the other repeated, “only follow me.”

“No,” replied the stranger, “keep them: I fear you not—and what is more, I do not now even suspect you. Here are thirty shillings in silver—but you must allow me to’ keep this note.”

We need not describe anew the scene to which poor Trailcudgel introduced him. It is enough to say, that since his last appearance in our pages he had lost two more of his children, one by famine and the other by fever; and that when the stranger entered his hovel—that libel upon a human habitation—that disgrace to landlord inhumanity—he saw stretched out in the stillness of death the emaciated bodies of not less than four human beings—to wit, this wretched man’s wife, their daughter, a sweet girl nearly grown,—and two little ones.

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The husband and father looked at them for a little, and the stranger saw a singular working or change, taking place on his features. At length he clasped his hands, and first smiled—then laughed outright, and exclaimed, “Thank God that they,” pointing to the dead, “are saved from any more of this,”—but the scene—the effort at composure—the sense of his guilt—the condition of the survivors—exhaustion from want of food, all combined, overcame him, and he fell senseless on the floor.

The stranger got a porringer of water, bathed his temples, opened his teeth with an old knife, and having poured some of it down his throat, dragged him—and it required all his strength to do so, although a powerful man—over to the cabin-door, in order to get him within the influence of the fresh air. At length he recovered, looked wildly about him, then gazed up in the face of the stranger, and made one or two deep respirations.

“I see,” said he, “I remember—set me sittin’ upon this little ditch beside the door—but no, no—” he added, starting—“come away—I must get them food—come—quick, quick, and I will tell you as we go along.”

He then repeated the history of his ruin by Sir Thomas Gourlay, of the robbery, and of the scene of death and destitution which drove him to it.

“And was it from Sir Thomas you got this note?” asked the stranger, whose interest was now deeply excited.

“From him I got it, sir; as I tould you,” he replied, “and I was on my way to the priest to give him up the money and the pistols, when the situation of my children, of my family of the livin’ and the dead, overcame me, and I was tempted to break in upon one pound of it for their sakes. Sir, my life’s in your hands, but there is something in your face that tells my heart that you won’t betray me, especially afther what you have seen.”

The stranger had been a silent and attentive listener to this narrative, and after he had ceased he spoke not for some time. He then added, emphatically but quickly, and almost abruptly:

“Don’t fear me, my poor fellow. Your secret is as safe as if you had never disclosed it. Here are other notes for you, and in the meantime place yourself in the hands of your priest, and enable him to restore Sir Thomas Gourlay his money and his pistols, I shall see you and your family again.”

The man viewed the money, looked at him for a moment, burst into tears, and hurried away, without saying a word, to procure food for himself and his children.

Our readers need not imagine for a moment that the scenes with which we have endeavored to present them, in,the wretched hut of Trailcudgel, are at all overdrawn. In

point of fact, they fall far short of thousands which might have been witnessed, and were witnessed, during the years of ’47, ’48, ’49, and this present one of ’50. We are aware that so many as twenty-three human beings, of all ages and sexes, have been found by public officers,

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all lying on the same floor, and in the same bed—if bed it can be termed—nearly one-fourth of them stiffened and putrid corpses. The survivors weltering in filth, fever, and famine, and so completely maddened by despair, delirium, and the rackings of intolerable pain, in its severest shapes—aggravated by thirst and hunger—that all the impulses of nature and affection were not merely banished from the heart, but superseded by the most frightful peals of insane mirth, cruelty, and the horrible appetite of the ghoul and vampire. Some were found tearing the flesh from the bodies of the carcasses that were stretched beside them. Mothers tottered off under the woful excitement of misery and frenzy, and threw their wretched children on the sides of the highways, leaving them there, with shouts of mirth and satisfaction, to perish or be saved, as the chances might turn out—whilst fathers have been known to make a wolfish meal upon the dead bodies of their own offspring. We might, therefore, have carried on our description up to the very highest point of imaginable horror, without going beyond the truth.

It is well for the world that the schemes and projects of ambition depend not in their fulfilment upon the means and instruments with which they are sought to be accomplished. Had Sir Thomas Gourlay, for instance, not treated his daughter with such brutal cruelty, an interview must have taken place between her and Lord Cullamore, which would, as a matter of course, have put an end forever to her father's hopes of the high rank for which he was so anxious to sacrifice her. The good old nobleman, failing of the interview he had expected, went immediately to London, with a hope, among other objects, of being in some way useful to his son, whom he had not seen for more than two years, the latter having been, during that period, making the usual tour of the Continent.

On the second day of his arrival, and after he had in some degree recovered from the effects of the voyage—by which, on the whole, he was rather improved—he resolved to call upon Dunroe, in pursuance of a note which he had written to him to that effect, being unwilling besides to take him unawares. Before he arrives, however, we shall take the liberty of looking in upon his lordship, and thus enable ourselves to form some opinion of the materials which constituted that young nobleman's character and habits.

The accessories to these habits, as exponents of his life and character, were in admirable keeping with both, and a slight glance at them will be sufficient for the reader.

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His lordship, who kept a small establishment of his own, now lies in a very elegantly furnished bedroom, with a table beside his bed, on which are dressings for his wound, phials of medicines, some loose comedies, and a volume still more objectionable in point both of taste and morals. Beside him is a man, whether young or of the middle age it is difficult to say. At the first glance, his general appearance, at least, seemed rather juvenile, but after a second—and still more decidedly after a third—it was evident to the spectator that he could not be under forty. He was dressed in quite a youthful style, and in the very extreme of fashion. This person's features were good, regular, absolutely symmetrical; yet was there that in his countenance which you could not relish. The face, on being examined, bespoke the life of a battered rake; for although the complexion was or had been naturally good, it was now set in too high a color for that of a young man, and was hardened into a certain appearance which is produced on some features by the struggle that takes place between dissipation and health. The usual observation in such cases is—"with what a constitution has that man been blessed on whose countenance the symptoms of a hard life are so slightly perceptible." The symptoms, however, are there in every case, as they were on his. This man's countenance, we say, at the first glance, was good, and his eye seemed indicative of great mildness and benignity of heart—yet here, again, was a drawback, for, upon a stricter examination of that organ, there might be read in it the expression of a spirit that never permitted him to utter a single word that was not associated with some selfish calculation. Add to this, that it was unusually small and feeble, intimating duplicity and a want of moral energy and candor. In the mere face, therefore, there was something which you could not like, and which would have prejudiced you, as if by instinct, against the man, were it not that the pliant and agreeable tone of his conversation, in due time, made you forget everything except the fact that Tom Norton was a most delightful fellow, with not a bit of selfishness about him, but a warm and friendly wish to oblige and serve every one of his acquaintances, as far as he could, and with the greatest good-will in the world. But Tom's excellence did not rest here. He was disinterested, and frequently went so far as almost actually to quarrel with some of his friends on their refusing to be guided by his advice and experience. Then, again, Tom was generous and delicate, for on finding that his dissuasions against some particular course had been disregarded, and the consequences he had predicted had actually followed, he was too magnanimous ever to harass them by useless expostulations or vain reproofs; such as —"I told you how it would happen"—"I advised you in time"—"you would not listen to reason"—and other posthumous apothegms of the same character. No, on the contrary,

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he maintained a considerate and gentlemanly silence on the subject—a circumstance which saved them from the embarrassment of much self-defence, or a painful admission of their error—and not only satisfied them that Tom was honest and unselfish, but modest and forbearing. It is true, that an occasional act or solecism of manner, somewhat at variance with the conventional usages of polite society, and an odd vulgarism of expression, were slight blemishes which might be brought to his charge, and would probably have told against any one else. But it was well known that Mr. Norton admitted himself to be a Connaught gentleman, with some of the rough habits of his country, as well of manner as of phraseology, about him; and it was not to be expected that a Connemara gentleman, no matter how high his birth and connection, could at once, or at all, divest himself of these piquant and agreeable peculiarities.

So much for Tom, who had been for at least a couple of years previous to his present appearance fairly domesticated with his lordship, acting not only as his guide, philosopher, and friend, but actually as major-domo, or general steward of the establishment, even condescending to pay the servants, and kindly undertaking to rescue his friend, who was ignorant of business, from the disagreeable trouble of coming in contact with tradesmen, and making occasional disbursements in matters of which Lord Dunroe knew little or nothing. Tom was indeed a most invaluable friend, and his lordship considered it a very fortunate night on which they first became acquainted; for, although he lost to the tune of five hundred pounds to him in one of the most fashionable gaming-houses of London, yet, as a compensation—and more than a compensation—for that loss, he gained Tom in return.

His lordship was lying on one side in bed, with the Memoirs of ------ on the pillow beside him, when Tom, who had only entered a few minutes before, on looking at the walls of the apartment, exclaimed, “What the deuce is this, my lord? Are you aware that your father will be here in a couple of hours from this time?” and he looked at his watch.

“Oh, ay; the old peer,” replied his lordship, in a languid voice, “coming as a missionary to reform the profane and infidel. I wish he would let me alone, and subscribe to the Missionary Society at once.”

“But, my dear Dunroe, are you asleep?”

“Very nearly, I believe. I wish I was.”

“But what’s to be done with certain of these pictures? You don’t intend his lordship should see them, I hope?”

“No; certainly not, Tom. We must have them removed. Will you see about it, Tom, like a good fellow? Stow them, however, in some safe place, where they won’t be injured.”

“Those five must go,” said Norton.

“No,” replied his lordship, “let the Magdalen stay; it will look like a tendency to repentance, you know, and the old peer may like it.”

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“Dunroe, my dear fellow, you know I make no pretence to religion; but I don’t relish the tone in which you generally speak of that most respectable old nobleman, your father.”

“Don’t you, Tom? Well, but, I say, the idea of a most respectable old nobleman is rather a shabby affair. It’s merely the privilege of age, Tom. I hope I shall never live to be termed a most respectable old nobleman. Pshaw, my dear Tom, it is too much. It’s a proof that he wants character.”

“I wish, in the mean time, Dunroe, that you and I had as much of that same commodity as the good old peer could spare us.”

“Well, I suppose you do, Tom; I dare say. My sister is coming with him too.”

“Yes; so he says in the letter.”

“Well, I suppose I must endure that also; an aristocratic lecture on the one hand, and the uncouth affections of a hoiden on the other. It’s hard enough, though.”

Tom now rang the bell, and in a few moments a servant entered.

“Wilcox,” said Norton, “get Taylor and M’Intyre to assist you in removing those five pictures; place them carefully in the green closet, which you will lock.”

“Yes, carefully, Wilcox,” said his lordship; “and afterwards give the key to Mr. Norton.”

“Yes, my lord.”

In a few minutes the paintings were removed, and the conversation began where it had been left off.

“This double visit, Tom, will be a great bore. I wish I could avoid it—philosophized by the father, beslobbered by the sister—faugh!”

“These books, too, my lord, had better be put aside, I think.”

“Well, I suppose so; lock them in that drawer.”

Norton did so, and then proceeded. “Now, my dear Dunroe—”

“Tom,” said his lordship, interrupting him, “I know what you are going to say—try and put yourself into something like moral trim for the old peer—is not that it? Do you know, Tom, I have some thoughts of becoming religious? What is religion, Tom? You know we were talking about it the other day. You said it was a capital thing for the world—that it sharpened a man, and put him up to anything, and so on.”

“What has put such a notion into your head now, my lord?”

“I don’t know—nothing, I believe. Can religion be taught, Tom? Could one, for instance, take lessons in it?”

“For what purpose do you propose it, my lord?”

“I don’t know—for two or three purposes, I believe.”

“Will your lordship state them?”

“Why, Tom, I should wish to do the old peer; and touching the baronet’s daughter, who is said to be very conscientious—which I suppose means the same thing as religion—I should wish to—”

“To do her too,” added Norton, laughing.

“Yes, I believe so; but I forget. Don’t the pas’ns teach it?”

“Yes, my lord, by precept, most of them do; not so many by example.”

“But it’s the theory only I want. You don’t suppose I intend to practice religion, Tom, I hope?”

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“No, my lord, I have a different opinion of your principles.”

“Could you hire me a pas’n, to give lessons in it—say two a week—I shall require to know something of it; for, my dear Tom, you are not to be told that twelve thousand a year, and a beautiful girl, are worth making an effort for. It is true she—Miss Gourlay, I mean—is not to be spoken of in comparison with the cigar-man’s daughter; but then, twelve thousand a year, Tom—and the good old peer is threatening to curtail my allowance. Or stay, Tom, would hypocrisy do as well as religion?”

“Every bit, my lord, so far as the world goes. Indeed, in point of fact, it requires a very keen eye to discover the difference between them. For one that practises religion, I there are five thousand who practise hypocrisy.”

“Could I get lessons in hypocrisy? Are there men set apart to teach it? Are there, for instance, professors of hypocrisy as there are of music and dancing?”

“Not exactly, my lord; but many of the professors of religion come very nearly to the same point.”

“How is that, Tom? Explain it, like a good fellow.”

“Why a great number of them deal in both—that is to say, they teach the one by their doctrine, and the other by their example. In different words, they inculcate religion to others, and practise hypocrisy themselves.”

“I see—that is clear. Then, Tom, as they—the pas’ns I mean—are the best judges of the matter, of course hypocrisy must be more useful than religion, or they—and such! an immense majority as you say—would not practise it.”

“More useful it unquestionably is, my lord.”

“Well, in that case, Tom, try and find me out a good hypocrite, a sound fellow, who properly understands the subject, and I will take lessons from him. My terms will be! liberal, say—”

“Unfortunately for your lordship, there are no professors to be had; but, as I said, it comes to the same thing. Engage a professor of religion, and whilst you pretend to study his doctrine, make a point also to study his life, and ten to one but you will close! your studies admirably qualified to take a degree in hypocrisy, if there were such an honor, and that you wish to imitate your teacher. Either that, my lord, or it may tend to cure you of a leaning toward hypocrisy as long as you live.”

“Well, I wish I could make some progress in either one or the other, it matters not which, provided it be easier to learn, and more useful. We must think about it, Tom. You will remind me, of course. Was Sir George here to-day?”

“No, my lord, but he sent to inquire.”

“Nor Lord Jockeyville?”

“He drove tandem to the door, but didn’t come in. The other members of our set have been tolerably regular in their inquiries, especially since they were undeceived as to the danger of your wound.”

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“By the way, Norton, that was a d——d cool fellow that pinked me; he did the thing in quite a self-possessed and gentlemanly way, too. However it was my own fault; I forced him into it. You must know I had reason to suppose that he was endeavoring to injure me in a certain quarter; in short, that he had made some progress in the affections of Lucy Gourlay. I saw the attentions he paid to her at Paris, when I was sent to the right about. In short—but hang it—there—that will do—let us talk no more about it—I escaped narrowly—that is all.”

“And I must leave you, my lord, for I assure you I have many things to attend to. Those creditors are unreasonable scoundrels, and must be put off with soft words and hard promises for some time longer. That Irish wine-merchant of yours, however, is a model to every one of his tribe.”

“Ah, that is because he knows the old peer. Do you know, Tom, after all, I don’t think it so disreputable a thing to be termed a respectable old nobleman; but still it indicates want of individual character. Now Tom, I think I have a character. I mean an original character. Don’t every one almost say—I allude, of course, to every one of sense and penetration—Dunroe’s a character—quite an original—an enigma—a sphinx—an inscription that cannot be deciphered—an illegible dog—eh—don’t they, Tom?”

“Not a doubt of it, my lord. Even I, who ought to know you so well, can make nothing of you.”

“Well, but after all, Tom, my father’s name overshadows a great number of my venialities. Dunroe is wild, they say, but then he is the son of a most respectable old nobleman; and so, many of them shrug and pity, when they would otherwise assail and blame.”

“And I hope to live long enough to see you a most respectable old ‘character’ yet, my dear Dunroe. I must go as your representative to these d-----d ravenous duns. But mark me, comport yourself in your father’s and sister’s presence as a young man somewhat meditating upon the reformation of his life, so that a favorable impression may be made here, and a favorable report reach the baronet’s fair daughter. *Au revoir*.”

CHAPTER XX. Interview between Lords Cullamore, Dunroe, and Lady Emily

—Tom Norton’s Aristocracy fails Him—His Reception by Lord Cullamore.

At the hour appointed, Lord Dunroe’s father and sister arrived. The old peer, as his son usually, but not in the most reverential spirit, termed him, on entering his sleeping chamber, paused for a moment in the middle of the room, as if to ascertain his precise state of health; but his sister, Lady Emily, with all the warmth of a young and affectionate

heart, pure as the morning dew-drop, ran to his bedside, and with tears in her eyes, stooped down and kissed him, exclaiming at the same time,

“My dear Dunroe; but no—I hate those cold and formal titles—they are for the world, but not for brother and sister. My dear John, how is your wound? Thank God, it is not dangerous, I hear. Are you better? Will you soon be able to rise? My dear brother, how I was alarmed on hearing it; but there is another kiss to help to cure you.”

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“My dear Emily, what the deuce are you about? I tell you I have a prejudice against kissing female relations. It is too tame, and somewhat of a bore, child, especially to a sick man.”

His father now approached him with a grave, but by no means an unfeeling countenance, and extending his hand, said, “I fear, John, that this has been a foolish business; but I am glad to find that, so far as your personal danger was concerned, you have come off so safely. How do you find yourself?”

“Rapidly recovering, my lord, I thank you. At first they considered the thing serious; but the bullet only grazed the rib slightly, although the flesh wound was, for a time, troublesome enough. I am now, however, free from fever, and the wound is closing fast.”

“Whilst this brief dialogue took place, Lady Emily sat on a chair by the bedside, her large, brilliant eyes no longer filled with tears, but open with astonishment, and we may as well add with pain, at the utter indifference with which her brother received her affectionate caresses. After a few moments’ reflection, however, her generous heart supposed it had discovered his apology.

“Ah,” thought the sweet girl, “I had forgotten his wound, and of course I must have occasioned him great pain, which his delicacy placed to a different motive. He did not wish to let me know that I had hurt him.” And her countenance again beamed with the joy of an innocent and unsuspecting spirit.

“But, Dunroe,” she said—“John, I mean, won’t you soon be able to get up, and to walk about, or, at all events, to take an airing with us in the carriage? Will you not, dear John?”

“Yes, I hope so, Emily. By the way, Emily, you have grown quite a woman since I saw you last. It is now better than two years, I think, since then.”

“How did you like the Continent, John?”

“Why, my dear girl, how is this? What sympathy can you feel with the experience of a young fellow like me on the Continent? When you know the world better, my dear girl, you will feel the impropriety of asking such a question. Pray be seated, my lord.”

Lord Cullamore sat, as if unconsciously, in an arm-chair beside the table on which were placed his son’s dressings and medicines, and resting his head on his hand for a moment, as if suffering pain, at length raised it, and said,

“No, Dunroe; no. I trust my innocent girl will never live to feel the impropriety of asking a question so natural?”

“I’m sure I hope not, my lord, with all my heart,” replied Dunroe. “Have you been presented, Emily? Have you been brought out?”

“She has been presented,” said her father, “but not brought out; nor is it my intention, in the obvious sense of that word, that she ever shall.”

“Oh, your lordship perhaps has a tendency to Popery, then, and there is a convent in the background? Is that it, my good lord?” he asked, smiling.

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“No,” replied his father, who could not help smiling in return, “not at all, John. Emily will not require to be brought out, nor paraded through the debasing formalities of fashion. She shall not be excluded from fashion, certainly; but neither shall I suffer her to run the vulgar gauntlet of heartless dissipation, which too often hardens, debases, and corrupts. But a truce to this; the subject is painful to me; let us change it.”

The last observation of Dunroe to his sister startled her so much that she blushed deeply, and looked with that fascinating timidity which is ever associated with innocence and purity from her brother to her father.

“Have I said anything wrong, papa?” she asked, when Lord Cullamore had ceased to speak.

“Nothing, my love, nothing, but precisely what was natural and right. Dunroe’s reply, however, was neither the one nor the other, and he ought to have known it.”

“Well now, Emily,” said her brother, “I don’t regret it, inasmuch as it has enabled me to satisfy myself upon a point which I have frequently heard disputed—that is, whether a woman is capable of blushing or not. Now I have seen you blush with my own eyes, Emily; nay, upon my honor, you blush again this moment.”

“Dunroe,” observed his father, “you are teasing your sister; forbear.”

“But don’t you see, my lord,” persisted his son, “the absolute necessity for giving her a course of fashionable life, if it were only to remove this constitutional blemish. If it were discovered, she is ruined; to blush being, as your lordship knows, contrary to all the laws and statutes of fashion in that case made and provided.”

“Dunroe,” said his father, “I intend you shall spend part of the summer and all the autumn in Ireland, with us.”

“Oh, yes, John, you must come,” said his sister, clapping her snow-white hands in exultation at the thought. “It will be so delightful.”

“Ireland!” exclaimed Dunroe, with well-feigned surprise; “pray where is that, my lord?”

“Come, come, John,” said his father, smiling; “be serious.”

“Ireland!” he again exclaimed; “oh, by the way, that’s an island, I think, in the Pacific—is it not?”

“No,” replied his father; “a more inappropriate position you could not have possibly found for it.”

“Is not that the happy country where the people live without food? Where they lead a life of independence, and starve in such an heroic spirit?”

“My dear Dunroe,” said his father, seriously, “never sport with the miseries of a people, especially when that people are your own countrymen.”

“My lord,” he replied, disregarding the rebuke he had received, “for Heaven’s sake conceal that disgraceful fact. Remember, I am a young nobleman; call me profligate—-spendthrift—debauchee—anything you will but an Irishman. Don’t the Irish refuse beef and mutton, and take to eating each other? What can be said of a people who, to please their betters, practise starvation as their natural pastime, and dramatize hunger to pamper their most affectionate lords and masters, who, whilst the latter witness the comedy, make the performers pay for their tickets? And yet, although the cannibal system flourishes, I fear they find it anything but a Sandwich island.”

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“Papa,” said Lady Emily, in a whisper, and with tears in her eyes, “I fear John’s head is a little unsettled by his illness.”

“You will injure yourself, my dear Dunroe,” said his father, “if you talk so much.”

“Not at all, my good lord and father. But I think I recollect one of their bills of performance, which runs thus: ’On Saturday, the 25th inst., a tender and affectionate father, stuffed by so many cubic feet of cold wind, foul air, all resulting from extermination and the benevolence of a humane landlord, will in the very wantonness of repletion, feed upon, the dead body of his own child—for which entertaining performance he will have the satisfaction, subsequently, of enacting with success the interesting character of a felon, and be comfortably lodged at his Majesty’s expense in the jail of the county.’ Why, my lord, how could you expect me to acknowledge such a country? However, I must talk to Tom Norton about this. He was born in the country you speak of—and yet Tom has an excellent appetite; eats like other people; abhors starvation; and is no cannibal. It is true, I have frequently seen him ready enough to eat a fellow—a perfect raw-head-and-bloody-bones—for which reason, I suppose, the principle, or instinct, or whatever you call it, is still latent in his constitution. But, on the other hand, whenever Tom gnashed his teeth at any one *a la cannibale*, if the other gnashed his teeth at him, all the cannibal disappeared, and Tom was quite harmless.”

* This alludes to a dreadful fact of cannibalism, which occurred in the South of Ireland in 1846.

“By the way, Dunroe,” said his father, “who is this Tom Norton you speak of?”

“He is my most particular friend, my lord—my companion—and traveled with me over the Continent. He is kind enough to take charge of my affairs: he pays my servants, manages my tradesmen—and, in short, is a man whom I could not do without. He’s up to everything; and is altogether indispensable to me.”

Lord Cullamore paused for some time, and seemed for a moment absorbed in some painful reflection or reminiscence. At length he said,

“This man, Dunroe, must be very useful to you, if he be what you have just described him. Does he also manage your correspondence?”

“He does, my lord; and is possessed of my most unlimited confidence. In fact, I could never get on without him. My affairs are in a state of the most inextricable confusion, and were it not for his sagacity and prudence, I could scarcely contrive to live at all. Poor Tom; he abandoned fine prospects in order to devote himself to my service.”

“Such a friend must be invaluable, John,” observed his sister. “They say a friend, a true friend, is the rarest thing in the world; and when one meets such a friend, they ought to appreciate him.”

“Very true, Emily,” said the Earl; “very true, indeed.” He spoke, however, as if in a state of abstraction. “Norton!—Norton. Do you know, John, who he is? Anything of his origin or connections?”

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“Nothing whatever,” replied Dunroe; “unless that he is well connected—he told me so himself—too well, indeed, he hinted, to render the situation of a dependent one which he should wish his relatives to become acquainted with—Of course, I respected his delicacy, and did not, consequently, press him further upon the point.”

“That was considerate on your part,” replied the Earl, somewhat dryly; “but if he be such as you have described him, I agree with Emily in thinking he must be invaluable. And now, John, with respect to another affair—but perhaps this interview may be injurious to your health. Talking much, and the excitement attending it, may be bad, you know.”

“I am not easily excited, my lord,” replied Dunroe; “rather a cool fellow; unless, indeed, when I used to have duns to meet. But now Norton manages all that for me. Proceed, my lord.”

“Yes, but, John,” observed Lady Emily, “don’t let affection for papa and me allow you to go beyond your strength.”

“Never mind, Emily; I am all right, if this wound were healed, as it will soon be. Proceed, my lord.”

“Well, then, my dear Dunroe, I am anxious you should know that I have had a long conversation with Sir Thomas Gourlay, upon the subject of your marriage with his beautiful and accomplished daughter.”

“Yes, the Black Baronet; a confounded old scoundrel by all accounts.”

“You forget, sir,” said the Earl, sternly, “that he is father to your future wife.”

“Devilish sorry for it, my lord. I wish Lucy was daughter to any one else—but it matters not; I am not going to marry the black fellow, but twelve thousand a year and a pretty girl. I know a prettier, though.”

“Impossible, John,” replied Lady Emily, with enthusiasm. “I really think Lucy Gourlay the most lovely girl I have ever seen—the most amiable, the most dignified, the most,accomplished, the most—dear John, how happy I shall be to call her sister!”

“Dunroe,” proceeded his father, “I beg you consider this affair seriously—solemnly—the happiness of such a girl as Lucy Grourlay is neither to be sported with nor perilled. You will have much to reform before you can become worthy of her. I now tell you that the reformation must be effected, sincerely and thoroughly, before I shall ever give my consent to your union with her. There must be neither dissimulation nor hypocrisy on your part. Your conduct must speak for you, and I must, from the clearest evidence, be perfectly satisfied that in marrying you she is not wrecking her peace and happiness, by committing them to a man who is incapable of appreciating her, or who is insensible to what is due to her great and shining virtues.”

“It would be dreadful, John,” said his sister, “if she should not feel happy. But if John, papa, requires reformation, I am sure he will reform for Lucy’s sake.”

“He ought to reform from a much higher principle, my dear child,” replied her father.

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“And so he will, papa. Will you not, dear brother?”

“Upon my honor, my lord,” said Dunroe, “I had a conversation this very morning upon the subject with Tom Norton.”

“I am glad to hear it, my dear son. It is not too late—it is never too late—to amend the life; but in this instance there is an event about to take place which renders a previous reformation, in its truest sense, absolutely indispensable.”

“My lord,” he replied, “the truth is, I am determined to try a course of religion. Tom Norton tells me it is the best thing in the world to get through life with.”

“Tom Norton might have added that it is a much better thing to get through death with,” added the Earl, gravely.

“But he appears to understand it admirably, my lord,” replied Dunroe. “He says it quickens a man’s intellects, and not only prevents him from being imposed upon by knaves and sharpers, but enables him, by putting on a long face, and using certain cabalistic phrases, to overreach—no, not exactly that, but to—let me see, to steer a safe course through the world; or something to that effect. He says, too, that religious folks always come best off, and pay more attention to the things of this life, than any one else; and that, in consequence, they thrive and prosper under it. No one, he says, gets credit so freely as a man that is supposed to be religious. Now this struck me quite forcibly, as a thing that might be very useful to me in getting out of my embarrassments. But then, it would be necessary to go to church, I believe—to pray—sing psalms—read the Bible—and subscribe to societies of some kind or other. Now all that would be very troublesome. How does a person pray, my lord? Is it by repeating the Ten Commandments, or reading a religious book?”

Despite the seriousness of such a subject, Lord Cullamore and his daughter, on glancing at each other, could scarcely refrain from smiling.

“Now, I can’t see,” proceeded Dunroe, “how either the one or the other of the said commandments would sharpen a man for the world, as Tom Norton’s religion does.”

The good old Earl thought either that his son was affecting an ignorance on the subject which he did not feel, or that his ignorance was in reality so great that for the present, at least, it was useless to discuss the matter with him.

“I must say, my dear Dunroe,” he added, in a kind and indulgent voice, “that your first conceptions of reformation are very original, to say the least of them.”

“I grant it, my lord. Every one knows that all my views, acts, and expressions are original. ‘Dunroe’s a perfect original’ is the general expression among my friends. But on the subject of religion, I am willing to be put into training. I told Tom Norton to look

out and hire me a pas'n, or somebody, to give me lessons in it. Is there such a thing, by the way, as a Religious Grammar? If so, I shall provide one, and make myself master of all the rules, cases, inflections, interjections, groans, exclamations, and so on, connected with it. The Bible is the dictionary, I believe?"

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Poor Lady Emily, like her father, could not for the life of her suppose for a moment that her brother was serious: a reflection that relieved her from much anxiety of mind and embarrassment on his account.

“Papa,” said, she, whilst her beautiful features were divided, if we may so say, between smiles and tears, “papa, Dunroe is only jesting; I am sure he is only jesting, and does not mean any serious disrespect to religion.”

“That may be, my dear Emily; but he will allow me to tell him that it is the last subject upon which he, or any one else, should jest. Whether you are in jest or earnest, my dear Dunroe, let me advise you to bring the moral courage and energies of a man to the contemplation of your life, in the first place; and in the next, to its improvement. It is not reading the Bible, nor repeating prayers, that will, of themselves, make you religious, unless the heart is in earnest; but a correct knowledge of what is right and wrong—in other words, of human duty—will do much good in the first place; with a firm resolution to avoid the evil and adopt the good. Remember that you are accountable to the Being who placed you in this life, and that your duty here consists, not in the indulgence of wild and licentious passions, but in the higher and nobler ones of rendering as many of your fellow-creatures happy as you can: for such a course will necessarily insure happiness to yourself. This is enough for the present; as soon as you recover your strength you shall come to Ireland.”

“When I recover my strength!” he exclaimed. “Ay, to be eaten like a titbit. Heavens, what a delicious morsel a piece of a young peer would be to such fellows! but I will not run that horrible risk. Lucy must come to me—I am sure the prospect of a countess’s coronet ought to be a sufficient inducement to her. But, to think that I should run the risk of being shot from behind a hedge—made a component part of a midnight bonfire, or entombed in the bowels of some Patagonian cannibal, savagely glad to feed, upon the hated Saxon who has so often fed upon him!—No, I repeat, Lucy, if she is to be a countess, must travel in this direction.”

The indelicacy and want of all consideration for the feelings of his father, so obvious in his heartless allusion to a fact which could only result from that father’s death, satisfied the old man that any reformation in his son was for the present hopeless, and even Lady Emily felt anxious to put an end to the visit as soon as possible.

“By the way,” said his father, as they were taking their leave, “I have had an unpleasant letter from my brother, in which he states that he wrote to you, but got no answer.”

“I never received a letter from him,” replied his lordship; “none ever reached me; if it had, the very novelty of a communication from such a quarter would have prevented me from forgetting it.”

“I should think so. His letter to me, indeed, is a strange one. He utters enigmatical threats—”

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“Come, I like that—I am enigmatical myself—you see it is in the family.”

“Enigmatical threats which I cannot understand, and desires me to hold myself prepared for certain steps which he is about to take, in justice to what he is pleased to term his own claims. However, it is not worth notice. But this Norton, I am anxious to see him, Dunroe—will you request him to call upon me to-morrow at twelve o’clock?—of course, I feel desirous to make the acquaintance of a man who has proved himself such a warm and sterling friend to my son.”

“Undoubtedly, my lord, he shall attend on you—I shall take care of that. Good-by, my lord—good by, Emily—good—good—my dear girl, never mind the embrace—it is quite undignified—anything but a patrician usage, I assure you.”

Now it is necessary that we should give our readers a clearer conception of Lord Dunroe’s character than is to be found in the preceding dialogue. This young gentleman was one of those who wish to put every person who enters into conversation with them completely at fault. It was one of his whims to affect ignorance on many subjects with which he was very well acquainted. His ambition was to be considered a character; and in order to carry this idea out, he very frequently spoke on the most commonplace topics as a man might be supposed to do who had just dropped from the moon. He thought, also, that there was something aristocratic in this fictitious ignorance, and that it raised him above the common herd of those who could talk reasonably on the ordinary topics of conversation or life. His ambition, the reader sees, was to be considered original. It had besides, this advantage, that in matters where his ignorance is anything but feigned, it brought him out safely under the protection of his accustomed habit, without suffering from the imputation of the ignorance he affected. It was, indeed, the ambition of a vain and silly mind; but provided he could work out this paltry joke upon a grave and sensible though unsuspecting individual, he felt quite delighted at the feat; and took the person thus imposed upon into the number of his favorites. It was upon this principle among others that Norton, who pretended never to see through his flimsy irony, contrived to keep in his favor, and to shape him according to his wishes, whilst he made the weak-minded young man believe that everything he did and every step he took was the result of his own deliberate opinion, whereas in fact he was only a puppet in his hands.

His father, who was naturally kind and indulgent, felt deeply grieved and mortified by the reflections arising from this visit. During the remainder of the day he seemed wrapped in thought; but we do not attempt to assert that the dialogue with his son was the sole cause of this. He more than once took out his brother’s letter which he read with surprise, not unmingled with strong curiosity and pain. It was, as he said, extremely enigmatical, whilst at the same time it contained evidences of that deplorable spirit which almost uniformly embitters so deeply the feuds which arise from domestic misconceptions. On this point, however, we shall enable the reader to judge for himself. The letter was to the following effect:

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“My Lord Cullamore.—It is now nine months and upwards since I addressed a letter to your son; and I wrote to him in reference to you, because it had been for many years my intention never to have renewed or held any communication whatsoever with you. It was on this account, therefore, that I opened, or endeavored to open, a correspondence with him rather than with his father. In this I have been disappointed, and my object, which was not an unfriendly one, frustrated. I do not regret, however, that I have been treated with contempt. The fact cancelled the foolish indulgence with which an exhibition of common courtesy and politeness, if not a better feeling, on the part of your son, might have induced me to treat both you and him. As matters now stand between us, indulgence is out of the question; so is compromise. I shall now lose little time in urging claims which you will not be able to withstand. Whether you suspect the nature of these claims or not is more than I know. Be that, however, as it may, I can assure you that I had resolved not to disturb your last days by prosecuting them during your lifetime. That resolution I have now rescinded, and all that remains for me to say is; that as little time as possible shall be lost in enforcing the claims I allude to, in justice to my family.

“I am, my Lord Cullamore,

“Your obedient servant,

“RICHARD STAPLETON.”

This strange and startling communication caused the good old man much uneasiness, even although its object and purpose were altogether beyond his comprehension. The only solution that occurred to him of the mystery which ran through it, was that it must have been written under some misconception or delusion for which he could not account. Another key to the difficulty—one equally replete with distress and alarm—-was that his brother’s reason had probably become unsettled, and that the communication in question was merely the emanation of mental alienation. And, indeed, on this point only could he account for the miscarriage of the letter to his son, which probably had never been written at all and existed only in the disturbed imagination of his unfortunate brother.

At all events, the contents of this document, like those mysterious presentiments of evil which sometimes are said to precede calamity, hung like a weight upon his mind, view them as he might. He became nervous, depressed, and gloomy, pleaded illness as an apology for not dining abroad; remained alone and at home during the whole evening, but arose the next morning in better spirits, and when our friend Tom Norton presented himself, he had regained sufficient equanimity and composure to pay proper attention to that faithful and friendly gentleman.

Now Tom, who resolved to make an impression, as it is termed, was dressed in the newest and most fashionable morning visit costume, drove up to the hall-door at that

kind of breakneck pace with which your celebrated whips delight to astonish the multitude, and throwing the reins to a servant, desired, if he knew how to pace the horse up and down, to do so; otherwise to remember that he had a neck.

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The servant in question, a stout, compact fellow, with a rich Milesian face and a mellow brogue, looked at him with a steady but smiling eye.

“Have a neck, is it?” he exclaimed; “by my sowl, an’ it’s sometimes an inconvenience to have that same. My own opinion is, sir, that the neck now is jist one of the tenderest joints in the body.”

Norton looked at him for a moment with an offended and haughty stare.

“If you are incapable of driving the landau, sir,” he replied, “call some one who can; and don’t be impertinent.”

“Incapable,” replied the other, with a cool but humorous kind of gravity; “troth, then it’s disgrace I’d bring on my taicher if I couldn’t sit a saddle an’ handle a whip with the best o’ them. And wid regard to the neck, sir, many a man has escaped a worse fall than one from the box or the saddle.”

Norton drew himself up with a highly indignant scowl, and turning his frown once more upon this most impertinent menial, encountered a look of such comic familiarity, easy assurance, and droll indifference, as it would not be easy to match. The beau started, stared, again pulled himself to a still greater height—as if by the dignity of the attitude to set the other at fault—frowned more awfully, then looked bluster, and once more surveyed the broad, knowing face and significant laughing eyes that were fixed upon him—set, as they were, in the centre of a broad grin—after which he pulled up his collar with an air—taking two or three strides up and down with what he intended as aristocratic dignity—

“Hem! ahem! What do you mean, sir?”

To this, for a time, there was no reply; but there, instead, were the laughing fascinators at work, fixed not only upon him, but in him, piercing him through; the knowing grin still increasing and gathering force of expression by his own confusion.

“Curse me, sir, I don’t understand this insolence. What do you mean? Do you know who it is you treat in this manner?”

Again he stretched himself, pulled up his collar as before, displaying a rich diamond ring, then taking out a valuable gold watch, glanced at the time, and putting it in his fob, looked enormously big and haughty, exclaiming again, with a frown that was intended to be a stunner—after again pacing up and down with the genuine tone and carriage of true nobility—

“I say, sir, do you know the gentleman whom you are treating with such impertinence? Perhaps you mistake me, on account of a supposed resemblance, for some former acquaintance of yours. If, so, correct yourself; I have never seen you till this moment.”

There, however, was the grin, and there were the eyes as before, to which we must add a small bit of pantomime on the part of Morty O'Flaherty, for such was the servant's name, which bit of pantomime consisted in his (Morty's) laying his forefinger very knowingly alongside his nose, exclaiming, in a cautious and friendly voice however,

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“Barney, achora, don’t be alarmed; there’s no harm done yet. You’re safe if you behave yourself.”

“What!” said Norton. “By the bones of St. Patrick but you are Morty O’Flaherty! Confound it, my dear Morty, why didn’t you make yourself known at once? it would have relieved both of us.”

“One of us, you mane,” replied Morty, with a wink.

“Upon my soul I am glad to free you, Morty. And how are you, man alive? In a snug berth here, I see, with the father of my friend, Lord Dunroe.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Morty, shrewdly; “is that it? Your friend; Oh, I see. Nate as ever, like a clane sixpence. Well, Barney, the world will have its way.”

“Ay, Morty, and we must comply with it. Some it brings up, and others it brings down.”

“Whisht, now, Barney,” said Morty; “let by-gones be by-gones. That it didn’t bring you up, be thankful to a gracious Providence and a light pair o’ heels; that’s all. And what are you now?”

“No longer Barney Bryan, at any rate,” replied the other. “My name, at present, is Norton.”

“At present! Upon my sowl, Barney, so far as names goes, you’re a walkin’ catalogue.”

“Thomas Norton, Esquire; residing with that distinguished young nobleman, Lord Dunroe, as his bosom friend and inseparable companion.”

“Hem! I see,” said Morty, with a shrug, which he meant as one of compassion for the aforesaid Lord Dunroe; “son to my masther. Well, God pity him, Barney, is the worst I wish him. You will take care of him; you’ll tache him a thing or two—and that’s enough. But, Barney—”

“Curse Barney—Mr. Norton’s the word.”

“Well, Mr. Norton—ah, Mr. Norton, there’s one person you’ll not neglect.”

“Who is that, Morty?”

“Faith, your mother’s son, achora. However, you know the proverb—’A burnt child dreads the fire.’ You have a neck still, Barney—beg pardon, Mr. Norton—don’t forget that fact.”

“And I’ll take care of the said neck, believe me, Morty; I shall keep it safe, never fear.”

“Take care you don’t keep it a little too safe. A word to the wise is enough, Bar—Mr. Norton.”

“It is, Morty; and I trust you will remember that that is to be a regulation between us. ‘A close mouth is the sign of a wise head,’ too; and there’s a comrade for your proverb—-but we are talking too long. Listen; keep my secret, and I will make it worth your while to do so. You may ruin me, without serving yourself; but as a proof that you will find me your friend, I will slip you five guineas, as a recompense, you know, for taking care of the landau and horses. In short, if we work into each other’s hands it will be the better for us both.”

“I’ll keep your’ saicret,” replied honest Morty, “so long, Barney—hem! Mr. Norton—as you keep yourself honest; but I’ll dirty my hands wid none o’ your money. If I was willin’ to betray you, it’s not a bribe would prevent me.”

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Mr. Norton, in a few moments, was ushered into the presence of Lord Cullamore.

On entering the apartment, the old nobleman, with easy and native courtesy, rose up, and received him with every mark of attention and respect.

“I am happy, Mr. Norton,” he proceeded, “to have it in my power to thank you for the friendship and kindness which my son, Lord Dunroe, has been so fortunate as to receive at your hands. He speaks of you with such warmth, and in terms of such high esteem, that I felt naturally anxious to make your acquaintance, as his friend. Pray be seated.”

Norton, who was a quick and ready fellow, in more senses than one, bowed lowly, and with every mark of the deepest respect; but, at the same time, he certainly started upon a high and a rather hazardous theory—to wit, that of a man of consequence, who wished to be considered with respect to Dunroe rather as a patron than a dependent.

The fellow, we should have stated to the reader, was originally from Kerry, though he adopted Connaught, and consequently had a tolerable acquaintance with Latin and Greek—an acquisition which often stood him in stead through life; joined to which was an assurance that nothing short of a scrutiny such as Morty O’Maherty’s could conquer.

“I assure you, my lord,” he replied, “you quite overrate any trifling services I may have rendered to my friend Dunroe. Upon my soul and honor you do. I have done nothing for him—that is, nothing to speak of. But the truth is, I took a fancy to Dunroe; and I do assure you again, Lord Cullamore, that when I do take a fancy to any person—a rare case with me, I grant—I would go any possible lengths to serve him. Every man has his whim, my lord, and that is mine. I hope your lordship had a pleasant trip across Channel?”

“Yes, thank you, Mr. Norton; but I have been for some time past in delicate health, and am not now so capable of bearing the trip as formerly. Still I feel no reason to complain, although far from strong. Dunroe, I perceive, is reduced considerably by his wound and the consequent confinement.”

“Oh, naturally, of course, my lord; but a few days now will set him upon his legs.”

“That, it seems to me, Mr. Norton, was a very foolish and unpleasant affair altogether.”

“Nothing could be more so, my lord. It was altogether wrong on the part of Dunroe, and so I told him.”

“Could you not have prevented it, Mr. Norton?”

“Ha, ha, ha! very good, Lord Cullamore. Ask me could I prevent or check a flash of lightning. Upon my soul and honor, the thing was over, and my poor friend down, before you could say ’Jack Robinson’—hem!—as we say in Connaught.”

“You have travelled, too, with my son, Mr. Norton, and he is perfectly sensible of the services you have rendered him during his tour.”

“God forbid, my Lord Cullamore, that I should assume any superiority over poor, kind-hearted, and honorable Dunroe; but as you are his father, my lord, I may—and with pride and satisfaction I do it—put the matter on its proper footing, and say, that Dunroe travelled with me. The thing is neither here nor there, of course, nor would I ever allude to it unless as a proof of my regard and affection for him.”

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“That only enhances your kindness, Mr. Norton.”

“Why, my lord, I met Dunroe in Paris—no matter, I took him out of some difficulties, and prevented him from getting into more. He had been set by a clique of—but I will not dwell on this, it looks like egotism—I said before, I took a fancy to him—for it frequently happens, my good lord, that you take a fancy to the person you have served.”

“True enough, indeed, Mr. Norton.”

“I am fond of travelling, and was about to make my fourth or fifth tour, when I met your son, surrounded by a crew of—but I have alluded to this a moment ago. At all events, I saw his danger—a young man exposed to temptation—the most alluring and perilous. Well, my lord, mine was a name of some weight and authority, affording just the kind of countenance and protection your son required. Well, I travelled with him, guarded him, guided him, for as to any inconvenience I may myself have experienced in taking him by the most comprehensive routes, and some other matters, they are not worth naming. Of course I introduced him to some of the most distinguished men of France—to the Marquis De Fogleville, for instance, the Count Rapscallion, Baron Snottellin, and some others of the first rank and nobility of the country. The pleasure of his society, however, more than compensated me for all.”

“But, pardon me, Mr. Norton, I believe the title and family of De Fogleville have been extinct. The last of them was guillotined not long since for an attempt to steal the crown jewels of France, I think.”

“True, my lord, you are perfectly right, the unhappy man was an insane legitimist; but the title and estates have been revived in the person of another member of the family, the present marquis, who is a nobleman of high consideration and honor.”

“Oh, indeed! I was not aware of that, Mr. Norton,” said his lordship. “I am quite surprised at the extent of your generosity and goodness to my son.”

“But, my lord, it is not my intention to give up Dunroe or abandon the poor fellow yet awhile. I am determined to teach him economy in managing his affairs, to make him know the value of time, of money, and of system, in everything pertaining to Life and business. Nor do I regret what I have done, nor what I propose to do; far from it, my lord. All I ask is, that he will always look upon me as a friend or an elder brother, and consult me, confide in me, and come to me, in fact, or write to me, whenever he may think I can be of service to him.”

“And in his name, of course, I may at least thank you, Mr. Norton,” replied the Earl, with a slight irony in his manner, “not only for all you have done, but for all you propose to do, as you say.”

Norton shook his head peremptorily.

“Pardon me, my lord, no thanks. I am overpaid by the pleasure of ranking Dunroe among the number of my friends.”

“You are too kind, indeed, Mr. Norton; and I trust my son will be duly grateful, as he is duly sensible of all you have done for him. By the way, Mr. Norton, you alluded to Connaught. You are, I presume, an Irishman?”

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“I am an Irishman, my lord.”

“Of course, sir, I make no inquiry as to your individual family. I am sure from what I have seen of you they must have been, and are, persons of worth and consideration; but I wished to ask if the name be a numerous one in Ireland, or rather, in your part of it —Connaught?”

“Numerous, my lord, no, not very numerous, but of the first respectability.”

“Pray, is your father living, Mr. Norton? If he be, why don’t you bring him among us? And if you have any brother, I need scarcely say what pleasure it would afford me, having, as you are aware, I presume, some influence with ministers, to do anything I could for him, should he require it; probably in the shape of a foreign appointment, or something that way. Anything, Mr. Norton, to repay a portion of what is due to you by my family.”

“I thank your lordship,” replied Tom. “My poor father was, as too many other Irish gentlemen have been, what is termed a hard goer (the honest man was a horse jockey like myself, thought Tom)—and indeed ran through a great deal of property during the latter part of his life (when he was huntsman to Lord Rattlecap, he went through many an estate).”

“Well, but your brother?”

“Deeply indebted, my lord, but I have no brother living. Poor Edward did get a foreign appointment many years ago (he was transported for horse stealing), by the influence of one of the most eminent of our judges, who strongly advised him to accept it, and returned his name to government as a worthy and suitable candidate. He died there, my lord, in the discharge of his appointed duties. Poor Ned, however, was never fond of public business under government, and, indeed, accepted the appointment in question with great reluctance.”

“The reason why I made these inquiries about the name of Norton,” said Lord Cullamore, “is this. There was, several years ago, a respectable female of the name, who held a confidential situation in my family; I have long lost sight of her, however, and would be glad to know whether she is living or dead.”

("My sister-in-law,” thought Tom.) “I fear,” he replied, “I can render you no information on that point, my lord; the last female branch of our part of the family was my grandmother, who died about three years ago.”

At this moment a servant entered the apartment, bearing in his hand a letter, for which office he had received a bribe of half-a-crown. “I beg pardon, my lord, but there’s a woman at the hall-door, who wishes this letter to be handed to that gentleman; but I fear

there's some mistake," he added, "it is directed to Barney Bryan. She insists he is here, and that she saw him come into the house."

"Barney Bryan," said Tom, with great coolness; "show me the letter, for I think I know something about it. Yes, I am right. It is an insane woman, my lord, wife to a jockey of mine, who broke his neck riding my celebrated horse, Black and all Black, on the Curragh. The poor creature cannot believe that her husband is dead, and thinks that I enjoy that agreeable privilege. The circumstance, indeed, was a melancholy one; but I have supported her ever since."

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Morty O'Flaherty, who had transferred his charge to other hands, fearing that Mister Norton might get into trouble, now came to the rescue.

"Pray," said Tom, quick as lightning, "is that insane creature below still, a poor woman whose husband broke his neck riding a race for me on the Curragh, and she thinks that I stand to her in that capacity?"

"Oh, yes; she says," added the man who brought the letter, "that this gentleman's name is not Norton, but Bryan—Barney Bryan, I think—and that he is her husband, exactly as the gentleman says."

"Just so, my lord," said Tom, smiling; "poor thing! what a melancholy delusion."

"I was present at the accident, Mr. Norton," added Morty, boldly, "and remember the circumstance, in throth, very well. Didn't the poor woman lose her senses by it?"

"Yes," replied Tom, "I have just mentioned the circumstance to his lordship."

"And—beg pardon, Mr. Norton—doesn't she take you for her husband from that day to this?"

"Yes, so I have said."

"Oh, God help her, poor thing! Isn't she to be pitied?" added Morty, with a dry roguish glance at Mr. Norton; "throth, she has a hard fate of it. Howaniver, she is gone. I got her off, an' now the place is I clear of the unfortunate creature. The lord look to her!"

The servants then withdrew, and Norton made his parting bow to Lord Cullamore, whom we now leave to his meditations on the subject of this interview.

CHAPTER XXI. A Spy Rewarded

—Sir Thomas Gourlay Charged Home by the Stranger with the Removal and Disappearance of his Brother's Son.

We left the Black Baronet in a frame of mind by no means to be envied by our readers. The disappearance of his daughter and her maid had stunned and so completely prostrated him, that he had not sufficient energy even for a burst of his usual dark and overbearing resentment. In this state of mind, however, he was better able to reflect upon the distressing occurrence that had happened. He bethought him of Lucy's delicacy, of her sense of honor, her uniform propriety of conduct, her singular self-respect, and after all, of the complacent spirit of obedience with which, in everything but her contemplated union with Lord Dunroe, she had, during her whole life, and under the most trying circumstances, accommodated herself to his wishes. He then reflected

upon the fact of her maid having accompanied her, and concluded, very naturally, that if she had resolved to elope with this hateful stranger, she would have done so in pursuance of the precedent set by most young ladies who take such steps—that is, unaccompanied by any one but her lover. From this view of the case he gathered comfort, and was beginning to feel his mind somewhat more at ease, when a servant entered to say that Mr. Crackenfudge requested to see him on particular business.

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“He has come to annoy me about that confounded magistracy, I suppose,” exclaimed the baronet. “Have you any notion what the worthless scoundrel wants, Gibson?”

“Not the least, your honor, but he seems brimful of something.”

“Ay, brimful of ignorance, and of impertinence, too, if he durst show it; yes, and of as much pride and oppression as could well be contained in a miserable carcass like his. As he is a sneaking, vigilant rascal, however, and has a great deal of the spy in his composition, it is not impossible that he may be able to give me some information touching the disappearance of Miss Gourlay.”

Gibson, after making his bow, withdrew, and the redoubtable Crackenfudge was ushered into the presence of the baronet.

The first thing the former did was to survey the countenance of his patron, for as such he wished to consider him and to find him. There, then, Sir Thomas sat, stern but indifferent, with precisely the expression of a tiger lying gloomily in his den, the natural ferocity “in grim repose” for the time, but evidently ready to blaze up at anything that might disturb or provoke him. Had Crackenfudge been gifted with either tact or experience, or any enlarged knowledge of the human heart, especially of the deep, dark, and impetuous one that beat in the bosom then before him, he would have studied the best and least alarming manner of conveying intelligence calculated to produce such terrific effects upon a man like Sir Thomas Gourlay. Of this, however, he knew nothing, although his own intercourse with him might have well taught him the necessary lesson.

“Well, Mr. Crackenfudge,” said the latter, without moving, “what’s wrong now? What’s the news?”

“There’s nothing wrong, Sir Thomas, and a’ve good news.”

The baronet’s eye and brow lost some of their gloom; he arose and commenced, as was his custom, to walk across the room.

“Pray what is this good news, Mr. Crackenfudge? Will you be kind enough, without any unnecessary circumlocution, to favor your friends with it?”

“With pleasure, Sir Thomas, because a’ know you are anxious to hear it, and it deeply concerns you.”

Sir Thomas paused, turned round, looked at him for a moment with an impatient scowl; but in the meaningless and simpering face before him he could read nothing but what appeared to him to be an impudent chuckle of satisfaction; and this, indeed, was no more than what Crackenfudge felt, who had altogether forgotten the nature of the communication he was about to make, dreadful and disastrous as it was, and thought

only of the claim upon Sir Thomas's influence which he was about to establish with reference to the magistracy. It was the reflection, then, of this train of little ambition which Sir Thomas read in his countenance, and mistook for some communication that might relieve him, and set his mind probably at ease. The scowl we allude to accordingly disappeared, and Sir Thomas, after the glance we have recorded, said, checking himself into a milder and more encouraging tone:

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“Go on, Mr. Crackenfudge, let us hear it at once.”

“Well, then, Sir Thomas, a’ told you a’d keep my eye on that chap.”

“On whom? name him, sir.”

“A’ can’t, Sir Thomas; the fellow in the inn.”

“Oh! what about him?”

“Why he has taken her off.”

“Taken whom off?” shouted the baronet, in a voice of thunder. “You contemptible scoundrel, whom has he taken off?”

“Your daughter, Sir Thomas—Miss Gourlay. They went together in the ‘Fly’ on Tuesday night last to Dublin; a’ followed in the ’Flash of Lightning,’ and seen them in conversation. Dandy Dulcimer, who is your friend—For God’s sake, Sir Thomas, be quiet. You’ll shake me—a-a-ach—Sir—Thom-a-as—w-wi-will you not take my—my —li-life——”

“You lie like a villain, you most contemptible reptile,” shouted the other. “My daughter, sirrah, never eloped with an adventurer. She never eloped at all, sir. She durst not elope. She knows what my vengeance would be, sirrah. She knows, you lying whelp of perdition, that I would pursue herself and her paramour to the uttermost ends of the earth; that I would shoot them both dead—that I would trample upon and spurn their worthless carcasses, and make an example of them to all time, and through all eternity. And you—you prying, intermeddling scoundrel—how durst you—you petty, beggarly tyrant—hated and despised by poor and rich—was it to mock me—”

“Sir Thom-a-as, a’m—a’m&mdas
h;l—l—aach—ur-ur-ur-mur-murd-murd-er-er-err-errr.”

“Was it to jeer and sneer at me—to insult me—you miserable knave—to drive me mad—into raging frenzy—that you came, with a smirk of satisfaction on your face, to communicate the disgrace and dishonor of my family—the ruin of my hopes—the frustration of my ambition—of all I had set my heart on, and that I perilled my soul to accomplish? Yes, you villain, your eye was smiling—elated—your heart was glad—for, sirrah, you hate me at heart.”

“God! oh, oh! a’m—a’m—ur-urr-urrr—whee-ee-ee-hee-hee-hee. God ha-ha-ha-have mer-mer-mercy on my sinf-sinfu-l sou-so-soul! a’m gone.”

“Yes, you hate me, villain, and this is a triumph to you; every one hates me, and every one will rejoice at my shame. I know it, you accursed miscreant, I feel it; and in return I

hate, with more than the malignity of the devil, every human creature that God has made. I have been at enmity with them, and in that enmity I shall persist; deep and dark as hell shall it be, and unrelenting as the vengeance of a devil. There," he added, throwing the almost senseless body of Crackenfudge over on a sofa, "there, you may rest on that sofa, and get breath; get breath quickly, and mark, obey me."

"Yes, Sir Thomas, a' will; a'll do anything, provided that you'll let me escape with my life. God! a'm nearly dead, the fire's not out of my eyes yet."

"Silence, you wretched slave!" shouted the baronet, stamping with rage; not another word of complaint, but listen to n—listen to me, I say: go on, and let me hear, fully and at large, the withering history of this burning and most flagitious disgrace."

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“But if a’ do, you’ll only beat and throttle me to death, Sir Thomas.”

“Whether I may or may not do so, go on, villain, and—go on, that quickly, or by heavens I shall tear the venomous heart from your body, and trample the black intelligence out of it. Proceed instantly.”

With a face of such distress as our readers may well imagine, and a voice whose quavers of terror wrere in admirable accordance with it, the unfortunate Crackenfudge related the circumstance of Lucy’s visit to Dublin, as he considered it, and, in fact, so far as he was acquainted with her motions, as it appeared to him a decided elopement, without the possibility of entertaining either doubt or mistake about it.

In the meantime, how shall we describe the savage fury of the baronet, as the trembling wretch proceeded? It is impossible. His rage, the vehemence of his gestures, the spasms that seemed to sey;e sometimes upon his features and sometimes upon his limbs, as well as upon different parts of his body, transformed him into the appearance of something that was unnatural and frightful. He bit his lips in the effort to restrain these tremendous paroxysms, until the bloody foam fell in red flakes from his mouth, and as portions of it were carried by the violence of his gesticulations over several parts of his face, he had more the appearance of some bloody-fanged ghoul, reeking from the spoil of a midnight grave, than that of a human being.

“Now,” said he, “how did it happen that—brainless, worthless, and beneath all contempt, as you are, most execrable scoundrel—you suffered that adroit ruffian, Dulcimer—-whom I shall punish, never fear—how came it, you despicable libel on nature and common sense—that you allowed him to humbug you to your face, to laugh at you, to scorn you, to spit upon you, to poke your ribs, as if you were an idiot, as you are, and to kick you, as it were, in every imaginable part of your worthless carcass—how did it come, I say, that you did not watch them properly, that you did not get them immediately arrested, as you ought to have done, or that you did not do more than would merely enable you to chronicle my disgrace and misery?”

“A’ did all a’ could, Sir Thomas. A’ searched through all Dublin for her without success; but as to where he has her, a’ can’t guess. The first thing a’ did, after takin’ a sleep, was to come an’ tell you to-day; for a’ travelled home by last night’s coach. You ought to do something, Sir Thomas, for every one has it now. It’s through all Ballytrain. ‘Deed a’ pity you, Sir Thomas.”

Now this unfortunate being took it for granted that the last brief silence of the baronet resulted from, some reasonable attention to what he (Crackenfudge) had been saying, whereas the fact was, that his terrible auditor had been transfixed into the highest and most uncontrollable fit of indignation by the substance of his words.

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“What!” said he, in a voice that made Crackenfudge leap at least a foot from the sofa. “You pity me, do you!—you, you diabolical eavesdropper, you pity me. Sacred heaven! And again, you searched through all Dublin for my daughter!—carrying her disgrace and infamy wherever you appeared, and advertising them as you went along, like an emissary of shame and calumny, as you are. Yes,” said he, as he foamed with the fury of a raging bull; “‘I—I—I,’ you might have said, ’a nameless whelp, sprung from the dishonest clippings of a counter—I, I say, am in quest of Miss Gourlay, who has eloped with an adventurer, an impostor—with a brushmaker’s clerk.’”

“A tooth-brush manufacturer, Sir Thomas, and, you know, they are often made of ivory.”

“Come, you intermeddling rascal, I must either tear you asunder or my brain will burst; I will not have such a worthless life as yours on my hands, however; you vermin, out with you; I might have borne anything but your compassion, and even that too; but to blazon through a gaping metropolis the infamy of my family—of all that was dear to me—to turn the name of my child into a polluted word, which modest lips would feel ashamed to utter; nor, lastly, can I forgive you the crime of making me suffer this mad and unexampled agony.”

Action now took the place of words, and had, indeed, come in as an auxiliary for some time previous. He seized the unfortunate Crackenfudge, and as, with red and dripping lips, he gave vent to the furious eruptions of his fiery spirit, like a living Vesuvius—for we know of no other comparison so appropriate—he kicked and cuffed the wretched and unlucky intelligencer, until he fairly threw him out at the hall-door, which he himself shut after him.

“Begone, villain!” he exclaimed; “and may you never die till you feel the torments which you have kindled, like the flames of hell, within me!”

On entering the room again, he found, however, that with a being even so wretched and contemptible as Crackenfudge, there had departed a portion of his strength. So long as he had an object on which to launch his fury, he felt that he could still sustain the battle of his passions. But now a heavy sense came over him, as if of something which he could not understand or analyze. His heart sank, and he felt a nameless and indescribable terror within him—a terror, he thought, quite distinct from the conduct of his daughter, or of anything else he had heard. He had, in fact, lost all perception of his individual misery, and a moral gloom, black as night, seemed to cover and mingle with those fiery tortures which were consuming him. An apprehension, also, of immediate dissolution came over him—his memory grew gradually weaker and weaker, until he felt himself no longer able to account for the scene which had just taken place; and for a brief period, although he neither swooned nor fainted, nor fell into a fit of any kind, he experienced a stupor that

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amounted to a complete unconsciousness of being, if we except an undying impression of some great evil which had befallen him, and which lay, like a grim and insatiable monster, tearing up his heart. At length, by a violent effort, he recovered a little, became once more conscious, walked about for some time, then surveyed himself in the glass, and what between the cadaverous hue of his face and the flakes of red foam which we have described, when taken in connection with his thick, midnight brows, it need not be wondered at that he felt alarmed at the state to which he awakened.

After some time, however, he rang for Gibson, who, on seeing him, started.

“Good God, sir!” said he, quite alarmed, “whit is the matter?”

“I did not ring for you, sir,” he replied, “to ask impertinent questions. Send Gillespie to me.”

Gibson withdrew, and in the mean time his master went to his dressing-room, where he washed himself free of the bloody evidences of his awful passions. This being done, he returned to the library, where, in a few minutes, Gillespie attended him.”

“Gillespie,” he exclaimed, “do you fear God?”

“I hope I do, Sir Thomas, as well as another, at any rate.”

“Well, then, begone, for you are useless to me—begone, sirrah, and get me some one that fears neither God nor devil.”

“Why, Sir Thomas,” replied the ruffian, who, having expected a job, felt anxious to retrieve himself, “as to that matter, I can’t say that I ever was overburdened with much fear of either one or other of them. Indeed, I believe, thank goodness, I have as little religion as most people.”

“Are you sure, sirrah, that you have no conscience?”

“Why—hem—I have done things for your honor before, you know. As to religion, however, I’ll stand upon having as little of it as e’er a man in the barony. I give up to no one in a want of that commodity.”

“What proof can you afford me that you are free from it?”

“Why, blow me if I know the twelve commandments, and, besides, I was only at church three times in my life, and I fell asleep under the sermon each time; religion, sir, never agreed with me.”

“To blazon my shame!—bad enough; but the ruin of my hopes, d—n you, sir, how durst you publish my disgrace to the world?”

“I, your honor! I’ll take my oath I never breathed a syllable of it; and you know yourself, sir, the man was too drunk to be able to speak or remember anything of what happened.”

“Sir, you came to mock and jeer at me; and, besides, you are a liar, she has not eloped.”

“I don’t understand you, Sir Thomas,” said Gillespie, who saw at once by his master’s disturbed and wandering eye, that the language he uttered was not addressed to him.

“What—what,” exclaimed the latter, rising up and stretching himself, in order to call back his scattered faculties. “Eh, Gillespie!—what brought you here, sirrah? Are you too come to triumph over the ambitious projector? What am I saying? I sent for you, Gillespie, did I not?”

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“You did, Sir Thomas; and with regard to what we were speaking about—I mean religion—I’ll hould a pound note with Charley Corbet, when he comes back, that I have less of it than him; and we’ll both leave it to your honor, as the best judge; now, if I have less of it than Charley, I think I deserve the preference.”

The baronet looked at him, or rather in the direction where he stood, which induced Gillespie to suppose that he was paying the strictest attention to what he said.

“Besides, I once caught Charley at his prayers, Sir Thomas; but I’d be glad to see the man that ever caught me at them—that’s the chat.”

Sir Thomas placed his two hands upon his eyes for as good as a minute, after which he removed them, and stared about him like one awakening from a disturbed dream.

“Eh?—Begone, Gillespie; I believe I sent for you, but you may go. I am unwell, and not in a condition to speak to you. When I want you again, you shall be sent for.”

“I don’t care a d—— about either hell or the devil, Sir Thomas, especially when I’m drunk; and I once, for a wager, outswore Squire Leatherings, who was so deaf that I was obliged to swear with my mouth to the end of his ear-trumpet. I was backed for fifty guineas by Colonel Brimstone, who was head of the Hellfire Club.”

The baronet signed to him impatiently to begone, and this worthy moralist withdrew, exclaiming as he went:

“Take my word for it, you will find nothing to your hand equal to myself; and if there’s anything to be done, curse me but I deserve a preference. I think merit ought to have its reward at any rate.”

Sir Thomas, we need not say, felt ill at ease. The tumults of his mind resembled those of the ocean after the violence of the tempest has swept over it, leaving behind that dark and angry agitation which indicates the awful extent of its power. After taking a turn or two through the room, he felt fatigued and drowsy, with something like a feeling of approaching illness. Yielding to this heaviness, he stretched himself on a sofa, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

All minds naturally vicious, or influenced by the impulses of bad and irregular passions, are essentially vulgar, mean, and cowardly. Our baronet was, beyond question, a striking proof of this truth. Had he possessed either dignity, or one spark of gentlemanly feeling, or self-respect, he would not have degraded himself from what ought to have been expected from a man in his position, by his violence to the worthless wretch, Crackenfudge, who was slight, comparatively feeble, and by no means a match for him in a personal contest. The only apology that can be offered for him is, that it is probable he was scarcely conscious, in the whirlwind and tempest of his passions, that he

allowed himself to act such a base and unmanly part to a person who had not willingly offended him, and who was entitled, whilst under his roof, to forbearance, if not protection, even in virtue of the communication he had made.

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After sleeping about an hour, he arose considerably refreshed in body; but the agony of mind, although diminished in its strength by its own previous paroxysms, was still intense and bitter. He got up, surveyed himself once more in the glass, adjusted his dress, and helped himself to a glass or two of Madeira, which was his usual specific after these internal conflicts.

This day, however, was destined to be one of trial to him, although by no means his last; neither was it ordained to bring forth the final ordeals that awaited him. He had scarcely time to reflect upon the measures which, under the present circumstances, he ought to pursue, although he certainly was engaged in considering the matter, when Gibson once more entered to let him know that a gentleman requested the favor of a short interview.

“What gentleman? Who is he? I’m not in a frame of mind to see any stranger—I mean, Gibson, that I’m not well.”

“Sorry, to hear it, sir; shall I tell the gentleman you can’t see him?”

“Yes—no—stay; do you know who he is?”

“He is the gentleman, sir, who has been stopping for some time at the Mitre.”

“What!” exclaimed the baronet, bouncing to his feet.

“Yes, sir.”

If some notorious felon, red with half-a-dozen murders, and who, having broken jail, left an empty noose in the hands of the hangman, had taken it into his head to return and offer himself up for instant execution to the aforesaid hangman, and eke to the sheriff, we assert that neither sheriff nor hangman, nor hangman nor sheriff, arrange them as you may, could feel a thousandth part of the astonishment which seized Sir Thomas Gourlay on learning the fact conveyed to him by Gibson. Sir Thomas, however, after the first natural start, became, if we may use the expression, deadly, fearfully calm. It was not poor, contemptible Crackenfudge he had to deal with now, but the prime offender, the great felon himself, the author of his shame, the villain who poured in the fire of perdition upon his heart, who blasted his hopes, crumbled into ruin all his schemes of ambition for his daughter, and turned her very name into a byword of pollution and guilt. This was the man whom he was now about to get into his power; the man who, besides, had on a former occasion bearded and insulted him to his teeth;—-the skulking adventurer afraid to disclose his name—the low-born impostor, living by the rinsings of foul and fetid teeth—the base upstart—the thief—the man who robbed and absconded from his employer; and this wretch, this cipher, so low in the scale of society and life, was the individual who had left him what he then felt himself to be—a thing crushed, disgraced, trodden in the dust—and then his daughter!——

“Gibson,” said he, “show him into a room—say I will see him presently, in about ten minutes or less; deliver this message, and return to me.”

In a few moments Gibson again made his appearance.

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“Gibson,” continued his master, “where is Gillespie? Send him to me.”

“Gillespie’s gone into Ballytrain, sir, to get one of the horses fired.”

“Gibson, you are a good and faithful servant. Go to my bedroom and fetch me my pistols.”

“My God, Sir Thomas! oh, sir, for heaven’s sake, avoid violence! The expression of your face, Sir Thomas, makes me tremble.”

Sir Thomas spoke not, but by one look Gibson felt that he must obey him. On returning with the arms, his master took them out of his hands, opened the pans, shook and stirred the powder, examined the flints, saw that they were sharp and firm, and having done so, he opened a drawer in the table at which he usually wrote, and there placed them at full cock. Gibson could perceive that, although unnaturally calm, he was nevertheless in a state of great agitation; for whilst examining the pistols, he observed that his hand trembled, although his voice was low, condensed, and firm.

“For God’s sake, Sir Thomas! for the Almighty God’s sake—”

“Go, Gibson, and desire the ‘gentleman’ to walk up—show him the way.”

Sir Thomas’s mind was, no doubt, in a tumult; but, at the same time, it was the agitation of a man without courage. After Gibson had left the room, he grew absolutely nervous, both in mind and body, and felt as if he were unequal to the conflict that he expected. On hearing the firm, manly tread of the stranger, his heart sank, and a considerable portion of his violence abandoned him, though not the ungenerous purpose which the result of their interview might possibly render necessary. At all events, he felt that he was about to meet the stranger in a much more subdued spirit than he had expected; simply because, not being naturally a brave or a firm man, his courage, and consequently his resentment, cooled in proportion as the distance between them diminished.

Sir Thomas was standing with his back to the fire as the stranger entered. The manner of the latter was cool, but cautious, and his bow that of a perfect gentleman. The baronet, surprised into more than he had intended, bowed haughtily in return—a mark of respect which it was not his intention to have paid him.

“I presume, sir,” said he, “that I understand the object of this visit?”

“You and I, Sir Thomas Gourlay,” replied the stranger, “have had one interview already—and but one; and I am not aware that anything occurred then between us that could enable you to account for my presence here.”

“Well, sir, perhaps so,” replied the baronet, with a sneer; “but to what may I attribute the honor of that distinguished presence?”

“I come, Sir Thomas Gourlay, to seek for an explanation on a subject of the deepest importance to the party under whose wishes and instructions I act.”

“That party, sir,” replied the baronet, who alluded to his daughter, “has forfeited every right to give you instructions on that, or any other subject where I am concerned. And, indeed, to speak candidly, I hardly know whether more to admire her utter want of all shame in deputing you on such a mission, or your own immeasurable effrontery in undertaking it.”

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“Sir Thomas Gourlay,” replied the stranger, with a proud smile on his lips, “I beg to assure you, once for all, that it is not my intention to notice, much less return, such language as you have now applied to me. Whatever you may forget, sir, I entreat you to remember that you are addressing a gentleman, who is anxious in this interview, as well as upon all occasions when we may meet, to treat you with courtesy. And I beg to say now, that I regret the warmth of my language to you, though not unprovoked, on a former occasion.”

“Oh, much obliged, sir,” replied the baronet, with a low, ironical inclination of the head, indicative of the most withering contempt; “much obliged, sir. Perhaps you would honor me with your patronage, too. I dare say that will be the next courtesy. Well, I can’t say but I am a fortunate fellow. Will you have the goodness, however, to proceed, sir, and open your negotiations? unless, in the true diplomatic spirit, you wish to keep me in ignorance of its real object.”

“It is a task that I enter upon with great pain,” replied the other, without noticing the offensive politeness of the baronet, “because I am aware that there are associations connected with it, which you, as a father, cannot contemplate without profound sorrow.”

“Don’t rest assured of that,” said Sir Thomas. “Your philosophy may lead you astray there. A sensible man, sir, never regrets that which is worthless.”

The stranger looked a good deal surprised; however, he opened the negotiation, as the baronet said, in due form.

“I believe, Sir Thomas Gourlay,” he proceeded, “you remember that the son and heir of your late brother, Sir Edward Gourlay, long deceased, disappeared very mysteriously some sixteen or eighteen years ago, and has been lost to the family ever since.”

“Oh, sir,” exclaimed the baronet, with no little surprise, “I beg your pardon. Your exordium was so singularly clear, that I did not understand you before. Pray proceed.”

“I trust, then, you understand me now, sir,” replied the stranger; “and I trust you will understand me better before we part.”

The baronet, in spite of his hauteur and contemptuous sarcasm, began to feel uneasy; for, to speak truth, there was in the stranger’s words and manner, an earnestness of purpose, joined to a cool and manly spirit, that could not be treated lightly, or with indifference.

“Sir Thomas Gourlay,” proceeded the stranger—

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the other, interrupting him; “plain Thomas Gourlay, if you please. Is not that your object?”

“Truth, sir, is our object, and justice, and the restoration of the defrauded orphan’s rights. These, sir, are our objects; and these we shall endeavor to establish. Sir Thomas Gourlay, you know that the son of your brother lives.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, sir; disguise it—conceal it as you will. You know that the son of your brother lives. I repeat that emphatically.”

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“So I perceive. You are evidently a very emphatic gentleman.”

“If truth, sir, constitute emphasis, you shall find me so.”

“I attend to you, sir; and I give you notice, that when you shall have exhausted yourself, I have my explanation to demand; and, I promise you, a terrible one you shall find it.”

This the wily baronet said, in order, if possible, to confound the stranger, and throw him out of the directness of his purpose. In this, however, he found himself mistaken. The other proceeded:

“You, Sir Thomas Gourlay, did, one night about eighteen years ago, as I said, engage a man, disguised in a mask for the purpose of concealing his features, to kidnap your brother’s child from Red Hall—from this very house in which we both stand.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Sir Thomas, “I forgot that circumstance in the blaze of your eloquence; perhaps you will have the goodness to take a seat;” and in the same spirit of bitter sarcasm, he motioned him with mock courtesy, to sit down. The other, pausing only until he had spoken, proceeded:

“You engaged this man, I repeat, to kidnap your brother’s son and heir, under the pretence of bringing him to see a puppet-show. Now, Sir Thomas Gourlay,” proceeded the stranger, “suppose that the friends of this child, kidnapped by you, shall succeed in proving this fact by incontestable evidence, in what position will you stand before the world?”

“Much in the same position in which I stand now. In Red Hall, as its rightful proprietor, with my back probably to the fire, as it is at present.”

It is undeniable, however, that despite all this haughty coolness of the baronet, the charge involved in the statement advanced by the stranger stunned him beyond belief; not simply because the other made it, for that was a mere secondary consideration, but because he took it for granted that it never could have been made unless through the medium of treachery; and we all know that when a criminal, whether great or small, has reason to believe that he has been betrayed, his position is not enviable, inasmuch as all sense of security totters from under him. The stranger, as he proceeded, watched the features of his auditor closely, and could perceive that the struggle then going on between the tumult of alarm within and the effort at calmness without, was more than, with all his affected irony and stoicism, he could conceal.

“But, perhaps,” proceeded the baronet, “you who presume to be so well acquainted with the removal of my brother’s child, may have it in your power to afford me some information on the disappearance of my own. I wish you, however, to observe this

distinction. As the history you have given happens to be pure fiction, I should wish the other to be nothing but—truth."

"The loss of your child I regret, sir" (Sir Thomas bowed as before), "but I am not here to speak of that. You perceive now that we have got a clew to this painful mystery—to this great crime. A portion of the veil is raised, and you may rest assured that it shall not fall again until the author of this injustice shall be fully exposed. I do not wish to use harsher language."

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“As to that,” replied Sir Thomas, “use no unnecessary delicacy on the subject. Thank God, the English language is a copious one. Use it to its full extent. You will find all its power necessary to establish the pretty conspiracy you are developing. Proceed, sir, I am quite attentive. I really did not imagine I could have felt so much amused. Indeed, I am very fortunate in this respect, for it is not every man who could have such an excellent farce enacted at his own fireside.”

“All this language is well, and no doubt very witty, Sir Thomas; but, believe me, in the end you will find this matter anything but a farce. Now, sir, I crave your attention to a proposal which I am about to make to you on this most distressing subject. Restore this young man to his mother—use whatever means you may in bringing this about. Let it appear, for instance, that he was discovered accidentally, or in such a way, at least, that your name or agency, either now or formerly, may in no manner be connected with it. On these terms you shall be permitted to enjoy the title and property during your life, and every necessary guarantee to that effect shall be given you. The heart of Lady Gourlay is neither in your present title nor your present property, but in her child, whom that heart yearns to recover. This, then, Sir Thomas Gourlay, is the condition which I propose; and, mark me, I propose it on the alternative of our using the means and materials already in our hands for your exposure and conviction should you reject it.”

“There is one quality about you, sir,” replied the baronet, “which I admire extremely, and that is your extraordinary modesty. Nothing else could prompt you to stand up and charge a man of my rank and character, on my own hearth, with the very respectable crime of kidnapping my brother’s child. Extremely modest, indeed! But how you should come to be engaged in this vindictive plot, and how you, above all men living, should have the assurance to thus insult me, is a mystery for the present. Of course, you see, you are aware, that I treat every word you have uttered with the utmost degree of contempt and scorn which the language is capable of expressing. I neither know nor care who may have prompted you, or misled you; be that, however, as it may, I have only simply to state that, on this subject I defy them as thoroughly as I despise you. On another subject, however, I experience toward you a different, feeling, as I shall teach you to understand before you leave the room.”

“This being your reply, I must discharge my duty fully. Pray mark me, now, Sir Thomas. Did you not give instructions to a certain man to take your brother’s child *out of your path—out of your sight—out of your hearing?* And, Sir Thomas, was not that man *very liberally rewarded* for that act? I pray you, sir, to think seriously of this, as I need not say that if you persist in rejecting our conditions, a serious matter you will find it.”

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Another contemptuous inclination, and “you have my reply, sir,” was all the baronet could trust himself to say.

“I now come to a transaction of a more recent date, Sir Thomas.”

“Ah!” said the baronet, “I thought I should have had the pleasure of introducing the discussion of that transaction. You really are, however, quite a universal genius—so clear and eloquent upon all topics, that I suppose I may leave it in your hands.”

“A young man, named Fenton, has suddenly disappeared from this neighborhood.”

“Indeed! Why, I must surely live at the antipodes, or in the moon, or I could not plead such ignorance of those great events.”

“You are aware, Sir Thomas, that the person passing under that name is your brother’s son—the legitimate heir to the title and property of which you are in the unjust possession.”

Another bow. “I thank you, sir. I really am deriving much information at your hands.”

“Now I demand, Sir Thomas Gourlay, in the name of his injured mother, what you have done with that young man?”

“It would be useless to conceal it,” replied the other. “As you seem to know everything, of course you know that. To your own knowledge, therefore, I beg most respectfully to refer you.”

“I have only another observation to make, Sir Thomas Gourlay. You remember last Tuesday night, when you drove at an unseasonable hour to the town of------? Now, sir, I use your words, on *that* subject, to *your own knowledge* I beg most respectfully to refer you. I have done.”

Sir Thomas Gourlay, when effort was necessary, could certainly play an able and adroit part. There was not a charge brought against him in the preceding conference that did not sink his heart into the deepest dismay; yet did he contrive to throw over his whole manner and bearing such a veil of cold, hard dissimulation as it was nearly impossible to penetrate. It is true, he saw that he had an acute, sensible, independent man to deal with, whose keen eye he felt was reading every feature of his face, and every motion of his body, and weighing, as it were, with a practised hand, the force and import of every word he uttered. He knew that merely to entertain the subject, or to discuss it at all with anything like seriousness, would probably have exposed him to the risk of losing his temper, and thus placed himself in the power of so sharp and impurturbable an antagonist. As the dialogue proceeded, too, a portion of his attention was transferred from the topic in question to the individual who introduced it. His language, his manner, his dress, his *tout ensemble* were unquestionably not only those of an educated

gentleman, but of a man who was well acquainted with life and society, and who appeared to speak as if he possessed no unequivocal position in both.

“Who the devil,” thought he to himself several times, “can this person be? How does he come to speak on behalf of Lady Gourlay? Surely such a man cannot be a brush manufacturer’s clerk—and he has very little the look of an impostor, too.”

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All this, however, could not free him from the deep and deadly conviction that the friends of his brother's widow were on his trail, and that it required the whole united powers of his faculties for deception, able and manifold as they were, to check his pursuers and throw them off the scent. It was now, too, that his indignation against his daughter and him who had seduced her from his roof began to deepen in his heart. Had he succeeded in seeing her united to Lord Dunroe, previous to any exposure of himself—-supposing even that discovery was possible—his end, the great object of his life, was, to a certain extent, gained. Now, however, that that hope was out of the question, and treachery evidently at work against him, he felt that gloom, disappointment, shame, and ruin were fast gathering round him. He was, indeed, every way hemmed in and hampered. It was clear that this stranger was not a man to be either cajoled or bullied. He read a spirit—a sparkle—in his eye, which taught him that the brutality inflicted upon the unfortunate Crackenfudge, and such others as he knew he might trample on, would never do here.

As matters stood, however, he thought the only chance of throwing the stranger off his guard was to take him by a *coup de main*. With this purpose, he went over, and sitting down to his desk before the drawer that contained his pistols, thus placing himself between the stranger and the door, he turned upon him a look as stern and determined as he could possibly assume; and we must remark here, that he omitted no single consideration connected with the subject he was about to introduce that was calculated to strengthen his determination.

"Now, sir," said he, "in the first place, may I take the liberty of asking where you have concealed my daughter? I will have no equivocation, sir," he added, raising his voice—-"no evasion, no falsehood, but in one plain word, or in as many as may be barely necessary, say where you have concealed Miss Gourlay."

"Sir Thomas Gourlay," replied the other, "I can understand your feelings upon this subject, and I can overlook much that you may say in connection with it; but neither upon that nor any other, can I permit the imputation of falsehood against myself. You are to observe this, sir, and to forbear the repetition of such an insult. My reply is brief and candid: I know not where Miss Gourlay is, upon my honor as a gentleman."

"Do you mean to tell me, sir, that you and she did not elope in the same coach on Tuesday night last?"

"I do, sir; and I beg to tell you, that such a suspicion is every way unworthy of your daughter."

"Take care, sir; you were seen together in Dublin."

“That is true. I had the honor of travelling in the same coach with her to the metropolis; but I was altogether unconscious of being her fellow-traveller until we arrived in Dublin. A few brief words of conversation I had with her in the coach, but nothing more.”

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“And you presume to say that you know not where she is—that you are ignorant of the place of her retreat’?”

“Yes, I presume to say so, Sir Thomas; I have already pledged my honor as a gentleman to that effect, and I shall not repeat it.”

“As a gentleman!—but how do I know that you are a man of honor and a gentleman?”

“Sir Thomas, don’t allow your passion or prejudice to impose upon your judgment and penetration as a man of the world. I know you feel this moment that you are addressing a man who is both; and your own heart tells you that every word I have uttered respecting Miss Gourlay is true.”

“You will excuse me there, sir,” replied the baronet. “Your position in this neighborhood is anything but a guarantee to the truth of what you say. If you be a gentleman—a man of honor, why live here, incognito, afraid to declare your name, or your rank, if you have any?—why lie *perdu*, like a man under disgrace, or who had fled from justice?”

“Well, then, I beg you to rest satisfied that I am not under disgrace, and that I have motives for concealing my name that are disinterested, and even honorable, to myself, if they were known.”

“Pray, will you answer me another question—Do you happen to know a firm in London named Grinwell and Co.? they are toothbrush manufacturers? Now, mark my words well—I say Grinwell and Co., tooth-brush manufacturers.”

“I have until this moment never heard of Grinwell and Co., tooth-brush manufacturers.”

“Now, sir,” replied Sir Thomas, “all this may be very well and very true; but there is one fact that you can neither deny nor dispute. You have been paying your addresses clandestinely to my daughter, and there is a mutual attachment between you.”

“I love your daughter—I will not deny it.”

“She returns your affections?”

“I cannot reply to anything involving Miss Gourlay’s opinions, who is not here to explain them; nor is it generous in you to force me into the presumptuous task of interpreting her sentiments on such a subject.”

“The fact, however, is this. I have for some years entertained other and different views with respect to her settlement in life. You may be a gentleman, or you may be an impostor; but one thing is certain, you have taught her to contravene my wishes—to despise the honors to which a dutiful obedience to them would exalt her—to spurn my affection, and to trample on my authority. Now, sir, listen to me. Renounce her—give

up all claims to her—withdraw every pretension, now and forever; or, by the living God! you shall never carry your life out of this room. Sooner than have the noble design which I proposed for her frustrated; sooner than have the projects of my whole life for her honorable exaltation ruined, I could bear to die the death of a common felon. Here, sir, is a proposition that admits of only the one fatal and deadly alternative. You see these pistols; they are heavily loaded; and you know my purpose; —it is the purpose, let me tell you, of a resolved and desperate man."

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“I know not how to account for this violence, Sir Thomas Gourlay,” replied the stranger with singular coolness; “all I can say is, that on me it is thrown away.”

“Refuse the compliance with the proposition I have made, and by heavens you have looked upon your last sun. The pistols, sir, are cocked; if one fails, the other won’t.”

“This outrage, Sir Thomas, upon a stranger, in your own house, under the protection of your own roof, is as monstrous as it is cowardly.”

“My roof, sir, shall never afford protection to a villain,” said the baronet, in a loud and furious voice. “Renounce my daughter, and that quickly. No, sir, this roof will afford you no protection.”

[Illustration: PAGE 446— Pistols, which he instantly cocked, and held ready]

“Well, sir, I cannot help that,” replied the stranger, deliberately taking out of his breast, where they were covered by an outside coat, a case of excellent pistols, which he instantly cocked, and held ready for action: “If your roof won’t, these good friends will. And now, Sir Thomas, hear me; lay aside your idle weapons, which, were I even unarmed, I would disregard as much as I do this moment. Our interview is now closed; but before I go, let me entreat you to reflect upon the conditions I have offered you; reflect upon them deeply—yes, and accept them, otherwise you will involve yourself in all the consequences of a guilty but unsuccessful ambition—in contempt—infamy—and ruin.”

The baronet’s face became exceedingly blank at the exhibition of the fire-arms. Pistol for pistol had been utterly out of the range of his calculations. He looked upon the stranger with astonishment, not un-mingled with a considerable portion of that wholesome feeling which begets self-preservation. In fact, he was struck dumb, and uttered not a syllable; and as the stranger made his parting bow, the other could only stare at him as if he had seen an apparition.

CHAPTER XXII. Lucy at Summerfield Cottage.

On his way to the inn, the stranger could not avoid admiring the excellent sense and prudence displayed by Lucy Gourlay, in the brief dialogue which we have already detailed to our readers. He felt clearly, that if he had followed up his natural impulse to ascertain the place of her retreat, he would have placed himself in the very position which, knowing her father as she did, she had so correctly anticipated. In the meantime, now that the difficulty in this respect, which she had apprehended, was over, his anxiety to know her present residence returned upon him with full force. Not that he thought it consistent with delicacy to intrude himself upon her presence, without first obtaining her permission to that effect. He was well and painfully aware that a lying

report of their elopement had gone abroad, but as he did not then know that this calumny had been principally circulated by unfortunate Crackenfudge, who, however, was the dupe of Dandy Dulcimer, and consequently took the fact for granted.

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Lucy, however, to whom we must now return, on arriving at the neat cottage already alluded to, occasioned no small surprise to its proprietor. The family, when the driver knocked, were all asleep, or at least had not arisen, and on the door being opened by a broad-faced, good-humored looking servant, who was desired to go to a lady in the chaise, the woman, after rubbing her eyes and yawning, looked about her as if she were in a dream, exclaiming, “Lord bless us! and divil a sowl o’ them out o’ the blankets yet!”

“You’re nearly asleep,” said the driver; “but I’ll hould a testher that a tight crapper Would soon brighten your eye. Come, come,” he added, as she yawned again, “shut your pittaty trap, and go to the young lady in the chaise.”

The woman settled her cap, which was awry, upon her head, by plucking it quickly over to the opposite side, and hastily tying the strings of her apron, so as to give herself something of a tidy look, she proceeded, barefooted, but in slippers, to the chaise.

“Will you have the kindness,” said Lucy, in a very sweet voice, “to say to Mrs. Norton that a young friend of hers wishes to see her.”

“And tell her to skip,” added Alley Mahon, “and not keep us here all the blessed mornin’.”

“Mrs. Norton!” exclaimed the woman; “I don’t know any sich parson as that, Miss.”

“Why,” said Lucy, putting her head out of the chaise, and re-examining the cottage, “surely this is where my friend Mrs. Norton did live, certainly. She must have changed her residence, Alley. This is most unfortunate!—What are we to do? I know not where to go.”

“Whisht! Miss,” said Alley, “we’ll put her through her catechiz again. Come here, my good woman; come forrid; don’t be ashamed or afeard in the presence of ladies. Who does live here?”

“Mr. Mainwarin’,” replied the servant, omitting the “Miss,” notwithstanding that Alley had put in her claim for it by using the plural number.

“This is distressing—most unfortunate!” exclaimed Lucy; “how long has this gentleman--Mr.--Mr.------”

“Mainwarin’, Miss,” added the woman, respectfully.

“She’s a stupid lookin’ sthreel, at all events,” said Alley, half to herself and half to her mistress.

“Yes, Mainwaring,” continued Lucy; “how long has he been living here?”

“Troth, and that’s more than I can tell you, Miss,” replied the woman; “I’m from the county Wexford myself, and isn’t more than a month here.”

Whilst this little dialogue went on, or rather, we should say, after it was concluded, a tapping was heard at one of the windows, and a signal given with the finger for the servant to return to the house. She did so; but soon presented herself a second time at the chaise door with more agreeable intelligence.

“You’re right, Miss,” said she; “the mistress desired me to ask you in; she seen you from the windy, and desired me to bring your things too; you’re to come in, then, Miss, you, an’ the sarvint that’s along wid you.”

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On entering, an intelligent, respectable-looking female, of lady-like manners, shook hands with and even kissed Lucy, who embraced her with much affection.

“My dear Mrs. Norton,” she said, “how much surprised you must feel at this abrupt and unseasonable visit.”

“How much delighted, you mean, my dear Miss Gourlay; and if I am surprised, I assure you the surprise is an agreeable one.”

“But,” said the innocent girl, “your servant told me that you did not live here, and I felt so much distressed!”

“Well,” replied Mrs. Norton, “she was right, in one sense: if Mrs. Norton that was does not live here, Mrs. Mainwaring that is certainly does—and feels both proud and flattered at the honor Miss Gourlay does her humble residence.”

“How is this?” said Lucy, smiling; “you have then—”

“Yes, indeed, I have changed my condition, as the phrase goes; but neither my heart nor my affections to you, Miss Gourlay. Pray sit down on this sofa. Your maid, I presume, Miss Gourlay?”

“Yes,” replied Lucy; “and a faithful creature has she proved to me, Mrs. Nor—” but I beg your pardon, my dear madam; how am I—oh, yes, Mrs. Mainwaring!”

“Nancy,” said the latter, “take this young woman with you, and make her comfortable. You seem exhausted. Miss Gourlay; shall I get some tea?”

“Thank you, Mrs. Nor—Mainwaring, no; we have had a hasty cup of tea in Dublin. But if it will not be troublesome, I should like to go to bed for a time.”

Mrs. Mainwaring flew out of the room, and called Nancy Gallaher. “Nancy, prepare a bed immediately for this lady; her maid, too, will probably require rest. Prepare a bed for both.”

She was half in and half out of the room as she spoke; then returning with a bunch of keys dangling from her finger, she glanced at Miss Gourlay with that slight but delicate and considerate curiosity which arises only from a friendly warmth of feeling—but said nothing.

“My dear Mrs. Mainwaring,” said Lucy, who understood her look, “I feel that I have acted very wrong. I have fled from my father’s house, and I have taken refuge with you. I am at present confused and exhausted, but when I get some rest, I will give you an explanation. At present, it is sufficient to say that papa has taken my marriage with that odious Lord Dunroe so strongly into his head, that nothing short of my consent will

satisfy him. I know he loves me, and thinks that rank and honor, because they gratify his ambition, will make me happy. I know that that ambition is not at all personal to himself, but indulged in and nurtured on my account, and for my advancement in life. How then can I blame him?"

"Well, my child, no more of that at present; you want rest."

"Yes, Mrs. Mainwaring, I do; but I am very wretched and unhappy. Alas! you know not, my dear friend, the delight which I have always experienced in obeying papa in everything, with the exception of this hateful union; and now I feel something like remorse at having abandoned him."

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She then gave a brief account to her kind-hearted friend of her journey to Dublin by the "Fly," in the first instance, suppressing one or two incidents; and of her second to Mrs. Mainwaring's, who, after hearing that she had not slept at all during the night, would permit no further conversation on that or any other subject, but hurried her to bed, she herself acting as her attendant. Having seen her comfortably settled, and carefully tucked her up with her own hands, she kissed the fair girl, exclaiming, "Sleep, my love; and may God bless and protect you from evil and unhappiness, as I feel certain He will, because you deserve it."

She then left her to sepose, and in a few minutes Lucy was fast asleep.

Whilst this little dialogue between Lucy and Mrs. Mainwaring was proceeding in the parlor of Summerfield cottage, another was running parallel with it between the two servants in the kitchen.

"God bless me," said Nancy Gallaher, addressing Alley, "you look shockin' bad afther so early a journey! I'll get you a cup o' tay, to put a bloom in your cheek."

"Thank you, kindly, ma'am," replied Alley, with a toss of her head which implied anything but gratitude for this allusion to her complexion: "a good sleep, ma'am, will bring back the bloom—and that's aisy done, ma'am, to any one who has youth on their side. The color will come and go then, but let a wrinkle alone for keepin' its ground."

This was accompanied by a significant glance at Nancy's face, on which were legible some rather unequivocal traces of that description. Honest Nancy, however, although she saw the glance, and understood the insinuation, seemed to take no notice of either—the fact being that her whole spirit was seized with an indomitable curiosity, which, like a restless familiar, insisted on being gratified.

In the case of those who undertake journeys similar to that which Lucy had just accomplished, there may be noticed almost by every eye those evidences of haste, alarm, and anxiety, and even distress, which to a certain extent at least tell their own tale, and betray to the observer that all can scarcely be right. Now Nancy Gallaher saw this, and having drawn the established conclusion that there must in some way be a lover in the case, she sat down in form before the fortress of Alley Mahon's secret, with a firm determination to make herself mistress of it, if the feat were at all practicable. In Alley, however, she had an able general to compete with—a general who resolved, on the other hand, to make a sortie, as it were, and attack Nancy by a series of bold and unexpected manoeuvres.

Nancy, on her part, having felt her first error touching Alley's complexion, resolved instantly to repair it by the substitution of a compliment in its stead.

“Throth, an’ it’ll be many a day till there’s a wrinkle in your face, avourneen—an’ now that I look at you agin—a pretty an’ a sweet face it is. ’Deed it’s many a day since I seen two sich faces as yours and the other young lady’s; but anyway, you had betther let me get you a comfortable cup o’ tay—afther your long journey. Oh, then, but that beautiful creature has a sorrowful look, poor thing.”

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These words were accompanied by a most insinuating glance of curiosity, mingled up with an air of strong benevolence, to show Alley that it proceeded only from the purest of good feeling. “Thank you,” replied Alley, “I will take a cup sure enough. What family have you here? if it’s a fair question.”

“Sorra one but ourselves,” replied Nancy, without making her much the wiser.

“But, I mane,” proceeded Alley, “have you children? bekase if you have I hate them.”

“Neither chick nor child there will be under the roof wid you here,” responded Nancy, whilst putting the dry tea into a tin tea-pot that had seen service; “there’s only the three of us—that is, myself, the misthress, and the masther—for I am not countin’ a slip of a girl that comes in every day to do odd jobs, and some o’ the rough work about the house.”

“Oh, I suppose,” said Alley, indifferently, “the childre’s all married off?”

“There’s only one,” replied Nancy; “and indeed you’re right enough—she is married, and not long either—and, in truth, I don’t envy her the husband, she got. Lord save and guard us! I know I wouldn’t long keep my senses if I had him.”

“Why so?” asked Alley. “Has he two heads upon him?”

“Troth, no,” replied the other; “but he’s what they call a mad docther, an’ keeps a rheumatic asylum—that manes a place where they put mad people, to prevent them from doin’ harm. They say it would make the hair stand on your head like nettles even to go into it. However, that’s not what I’m thinkin’ of, but that darlin’ lookin’ creature that’s wid the misthress. The Lord keep sorrow and cross-fortune from her, poor thing—for she looks unhappy. Avillish! are you and she related? for, as I’m a sinner, there’s a resemblance in your faces—and even in your figures—only you’re something rounder and fuller than she is.”

“Isn’t she lovely?” returned Alley, making the most of the compliment. “Sure, wasn’t it in Dublin her health was drunk as the greatest toast in Ireland.” She then added after a pause, “The Lord knows I wouldn’t—”

“Wouldn’t what—avourneen?”

“I was just thinkin’, that I wouldn’t marry a mad docther, if there was ne’er another man in Ireland. A mad docther! Oh, beetha. Then will you let us know the name that’s upon him?” she added in a most wheedling tone.

“His name is Scareman, my misthress tells me—he’s related by the mother’s side to the Moontides of Ballycrazy, in the barony of Quarther Clift—arrah, what’s this your name is, avourneen?”

“Alley Mahon I was christened,” replied her new friend; “but,” she added, with an air of modest dignity that was inimitable in its way—“in regard of my place as maid of honor to Lady Lucy, I’m usually called Miss Mahon, or Miss Alley. My mistress, for her own sake, in ordher to keep up her consequence, you persave, doesn’t like to hear me called anything else than either one or t’other of them.”

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“And it’s all right,” replied the other. “Well, as I was going to say, that Mrs. Mainwaring is breakin’ her heart about this unforthunate marriage of her daughter to Scareman. It seems—but this is between ourselves—it seems, my dear, that he’s a dark, hard-hearted scrub, that ‘id go to hell or farther for a shillin’, for a penny, ay, or for a farden. An’ the servant that was here afore me—a clean, good-natured girl she was, in throth—-an’ got married to a blacksmith, at the cross-roads beyant—tould me that the scrames, an’ yells, an’ howlins, and roarins—the cursin’ and blasphaymin’—an’ the laughin’, that she said was worse than all—an’ the rattlin’ of chains—the Lord save us—would make one think themselves more in hell than in any place upon this world. And it appears the villain takes delight in it, an’ makes lashins of money by the trade.”

“The sorra give him good of it!” exclaimed Alley; “an’ I can tell you, it’s Lady Lucy—(divil may care, thought she—I’ll make a lady of her at any rate—this ignorant creature doesn’t know the differ) it’s Lady Lucy, I say, that will be sorry to hear of this same marriage—for you must know—what’s this your name is?”

“Nancy Gallaher, dear.”

“And were you ever married, Nancy?”

“If I wasn’t the fau’t was my own, ahagur! but I’ll tell you more about that some day. No, then, I was not, thank God!”

“Thank God! Well, throth, it’s a quare thing to thank God for that, at any rate.” This, of course, was parenthetical. “Well, my dear,” proceeded Alley, “you must know that Mrs. Scareman before her marriage—of course, she was then Miss Norton—acted in the kippacity of tutherer general to Lady Lucy, except durin’ three months that she was ill, and had to go to England to thry the wathers.”

“What wathers?” asked Nancy. “Haven’t we plenty o’ wather, an’ as good as they have, at home?”

“Not at all,” replied Alley, who sometimes, as the reader may have perceived, drew upon an imagination of no ordinary fertility; “in England they have spakin’ birds, singin’ trees, and goolden wather. So, as I was sayin’, while she went to thry the goolden wather------”

“Troth, if ever I get poor health, I’ll go there myself,” observed Nancy, with a gleam of natural humor in her clear blue eye.”

“Well, while she went to thry this goolden watlier, her mother, Mrs. Norton, came in her place as tutherer general, an’ that’s the way they became acquainted—Lady Lucy and her. But, my dear, I want to tell you a saicret.”

We are of opinion, that if Nancy's cap had been off at the moment, her two ears might have been observed to erect themselves on each side of her head with pure and unadulterated curiosity.

"Well, Miss Alley, what is it, ahagur?"

"Now, you won't breathe this to any human creature?"

"Is it me? Arrah! little you know the woman you're spakin' to. Divil a mortal could beat me at keepin' a saicret, at any rate; an' when you tell me this, maybe I'll let you know one or two that'll be worth hearin'."

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“Well,” continued Alley, “it’s this—Never call my mistress Lady Lucy, because she doesn’t like it.”

This was an apple from the shores of the Dead Sea. Nancy’s face bore all the sudden traces of disappointment and mortification; and, from a principle of retaliation, she resolved to give her companion a morsel from the same fruit.

“Now, Nancy,” continued the former, “what’s this you have to tell us?”

“But you swear not to breathe it to man, woman, or child, boy or girl, rich or poor, livin’ or dead?”

“Sartainly I do.”

“Well, then, it’s this. I understand that Docthor Scareman isn’t likely to have a family. Now, ahagur, if you spake, I’m done, that’s all.”

Having been then called away to make arrangements necessary to Lucy’s. comfort, their dialogue was terminated before she could worm out of Alley the cause of her mistress’s visit.

“She’s a cunnin’ ould hag,” said the latter, when the other had gone. “I see what she wants to get out o’ me; but it’s not for nothing Miss Lucy has trusted me, an’ I’m not the girl to betray her secrets to them that has no right to know them.”

This, indeed, was true. Poor Alley Mahon, though a very neat and handsome girl, and of an appearance decidedly respectable, was nevertheless a good deal vulgar in her conversation. In lieu of this, however, notwithstanding a large stock of vanity, she was gifted with a strong attachment to her mistress, and had exhibited many trying proofs of truthfulness and secrecy under circumstances where most females in her condition of life would have given way. As a matter of course, she was obliged to receive her master’s bribes, otherwise she would have been instantly dismissed, as one who presumed to favor Lucy’s interest and oppose his own. Her fertility of fancy, however, joined to deep-rooted affection for his daughter, enabled her to return as a recompense for Sir Thomas’s bribes, that description of one-sided truth which transfuses fiction into its own character and spirit, just as a drop or two of any coloring fluid will tinge a large portion of water with its own hue. Her replies, therefore, when sifted and examined, always bore in them a sufficient portion of truth to enable her, on the strong point of veracity on which she boldly stood, to bear herself out with triumph; owing, indeed, to a slight dash in her defence of the coloring we have described. Lucy felt that the agitation of mind, or rather, we should say, the agony of spirit which she had been of late forced to struggle with, had affected her health more than she could have anticipated. That and the unusual fatigue of a long journey in a night coach, eked out by a jolting drive to Wicklow at a time when she required refreshment and rest, told upon her constitution,

although a naturally healthy one. For the next three or four days after her arrival at Summerfield Cottage, she experienced symptoms of slight fever, apparently nervous. Every attention

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that could be paid to her she received at the hands of Mrs. Mainwaring, and her own maid, who seldom was a moment from her bedside. Two or three times a day she was seized with fits of moping, during which she deplored her melancholy lot in life, feared she had offended her kind hostess by intruding, without either notice or announcement, upon the quiet harmony of her family, and begged her again and again to forgive her; adding, “That as soon as her recovery should be established, she would return to her father’s house to die, she hoped, and join mamma; and this,” she said, “was her last and only consolation.”

Mrs. Mainwaring saw at once that her complaint was principally on the nerves, and lost no time in asking permission to call in medical advice. To this, Lucy, whose chief object was to remain unknown and in secrecy for the present, strongly objected; but by the mild and affectionate remonstrances of Mrs. Mainwaring, as well as at the earnest entreaties of Alley, she consented to allow a physician to be called in.

This step was not more judicious than necessary. The physician, on seeing her, at once pronounced the complaint a nervous fever, but hoped that it would soon yield to proper treatment. He prescribed, and saw her every second day for a week, after which she gave evident symptoms of improvement. Her constitution, as we have said, was good; and nature, in spite of an anxious mind and disagreeable reflections, bore her completely out of danger.

It was not until the first day of her appearance in the parlor subsequent to her illness, that she had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Mainwaring, of whom his wife spoke in terms of great tenderness and affection. She found him to be a gentlemanly person of great good sense and delicacy of feeling.

“I regret,” said he, after the usual introduction had taken place, “to have been deprived so long of knowing a young lady of whose goodness and many admirable qualities I have heard so much from the lips of Mrs. Mainwaring. It is true I knew her affectionate nature,” he added, with a look of more than kindness at his wife, “and I allowed something for high coloring in your case, Miss Gourlay, as well as in others, that I could name; but I now find, that with all her good-will, she sometimes fails to do justice to the original.”

“And, my dear John, did I not tell you so?” replied his wife, smiling; “but if you make other allusions, I am sure Miss Gourlay can bear me out.”

“She has more than borne you out, my dear,” he replied, purposely misunderstanding her. “She has more than borne you out; for, truth to tell, you have in Miss Gourlay’s case fallen far short of what I see she is.”

“But, Mr. Mainwaring,” said Lucy, smiling in her turn, “it is certainly very strange that she can please neither of us. The outline she gave me of your character was quite shocking. She said you were—what’s this you said of him, Mrs. Mainwaring—oh, it was very bad, sir. I think we must deprive her of all claim to the character of an artist. Do you know I was afraid to meet the original, in consequence of the gloomy colors in which she sketched what she intended, I suppose, should be the likeness.”

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“Well, my dear Miss Gourlay,” observed Mrs. Mainwaring, “now that I have failed in doing justice to the portraits of two of my dearest friends, I think I will burn my palette and brushes, and give up portrait painting in future.”

Mr. Mainwaring now rose up to take his usual stroll, but turning to Lucy before he went, he said,

“At all events, my dear Miss Gourlay, what between her painting and the worth of the original, permit me to say that this house is your home just as long as you wish. Consider Mrs. Mainwaring and me as parents to you; willing, nay, most anxious, in every sense, to contribute to your comfort and happiness. We are not poor, Miss Gourlay; but, on the contrary, both independent and wealthy. You must, therefore, want for nothing. I am, for as long as may be necessary, your parent, as I said, and your banker; and if you will permit me the honor, I would wish to add, your friend. Good-by, my dear child, I am going to take my daily ramble; but I am sure you are in safe hands when I leave you in my dear Martha’s. Good-by, my love.”

The amiable man took his golden-headed cane, and sauntered out to amuse himself among the fields, occasionally going into the town of Wicklow, taking a glance at the papers in the hotel, to which he generally added a glass of ale and a pipe.

It was not until he had left them that Lucy enjoyed an opportunity of pouring out, at full length, to her delicate-minded and faithful friend, the cause of her flight from home. This narrative, however, was an honorable proof of the considerate forbearance she evinced when, necessarily alluding to the character and conduct of her father. Were it not, in fact, that Mrs. Mainwaring had from personal opportunity been enabled to thoroughly understand the temper, feelings, and principles of the worthy baronet, she would have naturally concluded that Lucy was a disobedient girl, and her father a man who had committed no other error than that of miscalculating her happiness from motives of excessive affection.

Mrs. Mainwaring heard it all with a calm and matronly benignity that soothed poor Lucy; for it was for the first time she had ever disclosed the actual state of her feelings to any one, with the exception of her late mother.

“Now, my dear Miss Gourlay—”

“Call me Lucy, Mrs. Mainwaring,” said the affectionate girl, wiping her eyes, for we need not assure our readers that the recital of her sufferings, no matter how much softened down or modified, cost her many a bitter tear.

“I will indeed, my love, I will, Lucy,” she replied, kissing her cheek, “if it gratifies you. Why should I not? But you know the distance there is between us.”

“Oh, no, my dear Mrs. Mainwaring, no. What are the cold forms of the world but disguises and masks, under which the hardened and heartless put themselves in a position of false eminence over the humble and the good. The good are all equal over the earth, no matter what their relative situations may be; and on this account, notwithstanding my rank, I am scarcely worthy to sit at your feet.”

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Mrs. Mainwaring, with a kind of affectionate enthusiasm, put her hand upon the beautiful girl's hand, and was about to speak; but she paused for more than half a minute, during which space her serene and benevolent face assumed an expression of profound thought and seriousness. At length she sighed rather deeply, and said,

"My dear Lucy, it is too bad that the happiness of such a girl as you should be wrecked; but, worst of all, that it should be wrecked upon a most unprincipled profligate. You know the humbleness of my birth; the daughter of a decent farmer, who felt it a duty to give his children the only boon, except his blessing, that he had to bestow upon them—-a good education. Well, my dear child, I beg that you will not be disheartened, nor suffer your spirits to droop. You will look surprised when I tell you that I think it more than probable, if I am capable of judging your father's heart aright, that I shall be able by a short interview with him to change the whole current of his ambition, and to bring about such a revulsion of feeling against Lord Dunroe, as may prevent him from consenting to your union with that nobleman under any circumstances. Nay, not to stop here; but that I shall cause him to look upon the breaking up of this contemplated marriage as one of the greatest blessings that could befall his family."

"Such an event might be possible," replied Lucy, "were I not unfortunately satisfied that papa is already aware of Dunroe's loose habits of life, which he views only as the giddiness of a young and buoyant spirit that marriage would reform. He says Dunroe is only sowing his wild oats, as, with false indulgence, he is pleased to term it. Under these circumstances, then, I fear he would meet you with the same arguments, and as they satisfy himself so you will find him cling to the dangerous theory they establish."

"But, Lucy, my dear child, you are quite mistaken in your estimate of the arguments which I should use, because you neither can know nor suspect their import. They apply not at all to Lord Dunroe's morals, I assure you. It is enough to say, at present, that I am not at liberty to disclose them; and, indeed, I never intended to do so; but as a knowledge of the secret I possess may not only promote your happiness, but relieve you from the persecution and misery you endure on this young nobleman's account, I think it becomes my duty to have an interview with your father on the subject."

"Before you do so, my dear madam," replied Lucy, "it is necessary that I should put you in possession of—of—" there was here a hesitation, and a blush, and a confusion of manner, that made Mrs. Mainwaring look at her with some attention.

"Take care, Lucy," she said smiling; "a previous engagement, I'll warrant me. I see you blush."

"But not for its object, Mrs. Mainwaring," she replied. "However, you are right; and papa is aware of it."

"I see, Lucy; and on that account he wishes to hurry on this hated marriage—?"

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“I think so.”

“And what peculiar dislike has papa against the object of your choice?—are you aware?”

“The same he would entertain against any choice but his own—his great ambition. The toil and labor of all his thoughts, hopes, and calculations, is to see me a countess before he dies. I know not whether to consider this as affection moved by the ambition of life, or ambition stimulated by affection.”

“Ah, my dear Lucy, I fear very much that if your papa’s heart were analyzed it would be found that he is more anxious to gratify his own ambition than to promote your happiness, and that, consequently, his interest in the matter altogether absorbs yours. But we need not discuss this now. You say he is aware of your attachment?”

“He is; I myself confessed it to him.”

“Is he aware of the name and condition in life of your lover?”

“Alas, no! Mrs. Mainwaring. He has seen him, but that is all. He expressed, however, a fierce and ungovernable curiosity to know who and what he is; but, unfortunately, my lover, as you call him, is so peculiarly circumstanced, that I could not disclose either the one or the other.”

“But, my dear Lucy, is not this secrecy, this clandestime conduct, on the part of your lover, wrong? Ought you, on the other hand, to entertain an attachment for any person who feels either afraid or ashamed to avow his name and rank? Pardon me, my love.”

Lucy rose up, and Mrs. Mainwaring felt somewhat alarmed at the length she had gone, especially on observing that the lovely girl’s face and neck were overspread with a deep and burning blush.

“Pardon you, my dear madam! Is it for uttering sentiments worthy of the purest friendship and affection, and such only as I would expect to proceed from your lips? But it is necessary to state, in my own defence, that beloved mamma was aware of, and sanctioned our attachment. A mystery there is, unquestionably, about my lover; but it is one with which she was acquainted, for she told me so. It is not, however, upon this mystery or that mystery—but upon the truth, honor, delicacy, disinterestedness, of him to whom I have yielded my heart, that I speak. In true, pure, and exalted love, my dear Mrs. Mainwaring, there is an intuition of the heart which enables the soul to see into and comprehend its object, with a completeness of success as certain and effectual as the mission of an angel. When such love exists—and such only—all is soon known—the spirit is satisfied; and, except those lessons of happiness and delight that are before it, the heart, on that subject, has nothing more to learn. This, then, is my reply; and as for

the mystery I speak of, every day is bringing us nearer and nearer to its disclosure, and the knowledge of his worth."

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Mrs. Mainwaring looked, on with wonder. Lucy's beauty seemed to brighten, as it were with a divine light, as she uttered these glowing words. In fact, she appeared to undergo a transfiguration from the mortal state to the angelic, and exemplified, in her own person—now radiant with the highest and holiest enthusiasm of love—all that divine purity, all that noble pride and heroic devotedness of heart, by which it is actuated and inspired. Her eyes, as she proceeded, filled with tears, and on concluding, she threw herself, weeping, into her friend's arms, exclaiming,

"Alas! my dear, dear Mrs. Mainwaring, I am not worthy of him."

Mrs. Mainwaring kissed, and cherished, and soothed her, and in a short time she recovered herself, and resumed an aspect of her usual calm, dignified, yet graceful beauty.

"Alas!" thought her friend, as she looked on her with mingled compassion and admiration, "this love is either for happiness or death. I now see, after all, that there is much of the father's character stamped into her spirit, and that the same energy with which he pursues ambition actuates his daughter in love. Each will have its object, or die."

"Well, my love," she exclaimed aloud, "I am sorry we permitted our conversation to take such a turn, or to carry us so far. You are, I fear, not yet strong enough for anything calculated to affect or agitate you."

"The introduction of it was necessary, my dear madam," replied Lucy; "for I need not say that it was my object to mention the subject of our attachment to you before the close of our conversation."

"Well, at all events," replied Mrs. Mainwaring, "we shall go and have a walk through the fields. The sun is bright and warm; the little burn below, and the thousand larks above, will give us their melody; and Cracton's park—our own little three-cornered paddock—-will present us with one of the sweetest objects in the humble landscape—a green field almost white with daisies—pardon the little blunder, Lucy—thus constituting it a poem for the heart, written by the hand of nature herself."

Lucy, who enjoyed natural scenery with the high enthusiasm that was peculiar to her character, was delighted at the proposal, and in a few minutes both the ladies sauntered out through the orchard, which was now white and fragrant with blossoms.

As they went along, Mrs. Mainwaring began to mention some particulars of her marriage; a circumstance to which, owing to Lucy's illness, she had not until then had an opportunity of adverting.

“The truth is, my dear Lucy,” she proceeded, “I am naturally averse to lead what is termed a solitary life in the world. I wish to have a friend on whom I can occasionally rest, as upon a support. You know that I kept a boarding-school in the metropolis for many years after my return from the Continent. That I was successful and saved some money are facts which, perhaps, you don’t know. Loss of

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health, however, caused me to resign the establishment to Emily, your former governess; but, unfortunately, her health, like mine, gave way under the severity of its duties. She accordingly disposed of it, and accepted the important task of superintending the general course of your education, aided by all the necessary and usual masters. To this, as you are aware, she applied herself with an assiduity that was beyond her yet infirm state of health. She went to Cheltenham, where she recovered strength, and I undertook her duties until her return. I then sought out for some quiet, pretty, secluded spot, where I could, upon the fruits of my own industry, enjoy innocently and peacefully the decline of, I trust, a not unuseful life. Fortunately, I found our present abode, which I purchased, and which has been occasionally honored by your presence, as well as by that of your beloved mamma. Several years passed, and the widow was not unhappy; for my daughter, at my solicitation, gave up her profession as a governess, and came to reside with me. In the meantime, we happened to meet at the same party two individuals—gentlemen—who had subsequently the honor of carrying off the mother and daughter with flying colors. The one was Dr. Scareman, to whom Emily—my dear, unfortunate girl, had the misfortune to get married. He was a dark-faced, but handsome man—that is to say, he could bear a first glance or two, but was incapable of standing anything like a close scrutiny. He passed as a physician in good practice, but as the marriage was—what no marriage ought to be—a hasty one—we did not discover, until too late, that the practice he boasted of consisted principally in the management of a mad-house. He is, I am sorry to say, both cruel and penurious—at once a miser and a tyrant—and if his conduct to my child is not kinder and more generous, I shall feel it my duty to bring her home to myself, where, at all events, she can calculate upon peace and affection. The doctor saw that Emily was beautiful—-knew that she had money—and accordingly hurried on the ceremony.

“Such is the history of poor Emily’s marriage. Now for my own.

“Mr. Main waring was, like myself, a person who had been engaged in educating the young. For many years he had conducted, with great success, a boarding-school that soon became eminent for the number of brilliant and accomplished men whom it sent into society and the institutions of the country. Like me, he had saved money—like me he lost his health, and like me his destiny conducted him to this neighborhood. We met several times, and looked at each other with a good deal of curiosity; he anxious to know what kind of animal an old schoolmistress was, and I to ascertain with what tribe an old school-master should be classed. There was something odd, if not comical, in this scrutiny; and the best of it all was, that the more closely we inspected and investigated, the more accurately did we discover that we were counterparts—as

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exact as the two sides of a tally, or the teeth of a rat-trap—with pardon to dear Mr. Mainwaring for the nasty comparison, whatever may have put it into my head. He, in fact, was an old school-master and a widower; I an old school-mistress and a widow; he wanted a friend and companion, so did I. Each finding that the other led a solitary life, and only required that solace and agreeable society, which a kind and rational companion can most assuredly bestow, resolved to take the other, as the good old phrase goes, for better for worse; and accordingly here we are, thank God, with no care but that which proceeds from the unfortunate mistake which poor Emily made in her marriage. The spirit that cemented our hearts was friendship, not love; but the holiness of marriage has consecrated that friendship into affection, which the sweet intercourse of domestic life has softened into something still more agreeable and tender. My girl's marriage, my dear Lucy, is the only painful thought that throws its shadow across our happiness."

"Poor Emily," sighed Lucy, "how little did that calm, sweet-tempered, and patient girl deserve to meet such a husband. But perhaps he may yet improve. If gentleness and affection can soften a heart by time and perseverance, his may yet become human."

Such was the simple history of this amiable couple, who, although enjoying as much happiness as is usually allotted to man and woman, were not, however, free from those characteristic traces that enabled their friends to recognize without much difficulty the previous habits of their lives.

"Mrs. Mainwaring," said Lucy, "I must write to my father, I cannot bear to think of the anguish he will feel at my sudden and mysterious disappearance. It will set him distracted, perhaps cause illness."

"Until now, my dear child, you know you had neither time, nor health, nor strength to do so; but I agree with you, and think without doubt you ought to make his mind as easy upon this point as possible. At the same time I do not see that it is necessary for you to give a clew to your present residence. Perhaps it would be better that I should see him before you think of returning; but of that we will speak in the course of the evening, or during to-morrow, when we shall have a little more time to consider the matter properly, and determine what may be the best steps to take."

CHAPTER XXIII. A Lunch in Summerfield Cottage.

The little spot they strolled in was beautiful, from the natural simplicity of the sweet but humble scenery around them. They traversed it in every direction; sat on the sunny side of grassy eminences, gathered wild flowers, threw pebbles into the little prattling stream that ran over its stony bed before them; listened to and talked of and enjoyed the

music of the birds as they turned the very air and hedges into harmony. Lucy thought how happy she could be in such a calm and delightful retreat, with the society of the man she loved, far from the intrigue, and pride, and vanity, and ambition of life; and she could scarcely help shuddering when she reflected upon the track of criminal ambition and profligacy into which, for the sake of an empty and perhaps a painful title, her father wished to drag her.

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This train of thought, however, was dissipated by the appearance of Mr. Mainwaring, who had returned from his stroll, and came out to seek for them, accompanied by a young officer of very elegant and gentlemanly appearance, whom he introduced as Captain Roberts, of the 33d, then quartered in Dublin.

As an apology for the fact of Mr. Mainwaring having introduced a stranger to Lucy, under circumstances where privacy was so desirable, it may be necessary to say here, that Mrs. Mainwaring, out of delicacy to Lucy, forbore to acquaint him even with a hint at the cause of her visit, so far as Lucy, on the morning of her arrival, had hastily and briefly communicated it to her. This she was resolved not to do without her express permission.

“Allow me, ladies, to present to you my friend, Captain Roberts, of the 33d—or, as another older friend of mine, his excellent father, terms it, the three times eleven—by the way, not a bad paraphrase, and worthy of a retired school-master like myself. It is turning the multiplication table into a vocabulary and making it perform military duty.”

After the usual formalities had been gone through, Mr. Mainwaring, who was in peculiarly excellent spirits, proceeded:

“Of course you know, every officer when introduced or travelling is a captain—CAPTAIN—a good travelling name!—*Vide* the play-books, *passim*. My young friend, however, is at the present—you remember *as in pasenti*, Edward—only an ensign, but, please God, old as some of us are, Mrs. M. to wit—ahem! we will live to shake hands with him as captain yet.”

“You mean, of course, my dear,” said his wife, “that I will live to do so; the youngest, as the proverb has it, lives longest. No man, Mr. Roberts, will more regret the improbability of verifying his own wishes than Mr. Mainwaring.”

“Ah, Martha! you’re always too hard for me,” he replied, laughing. “But you must know that this young officer, of whom I feel so proud, is an old pupil of mine, and received his education at my feet. I consequently feel a more than usual interest in him. But come, we lose-time. It is now past two o’clock, and, if I don’t mistake, there’s a bit of cold ham and chicken to be had, and my walk has prepared me for lunch, as it usually does, and besides, Martha, there’s an old friend of mine, his father, waiting for our return, to whom I must introduce you both, ladies, as a sample of the fine old soldier, who is a capital version of human nature.”

On reaching the cottage they found our worthy friend, old Sam Roberts, in the garden, throwing crumbs of bread to a busy little flock of sparrows, behind one of the back windows that opened into it. His honest but manly face was lit up with all the eager and boisterous enjoyment of a child whilst observing with simple delight the fierce and angry

quarrels of the parents, as they fought on behalf of their young, for the good things so providentially cast in their way.

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“Come, now,” said Sam, “I’m commissary-general for this day, and, for a miracle, an honest one—fight fair, you wretches—but I don’t wonder at the spunk you show, for the rations, I can tell you, are better, poor things, than you are accustomed to. Hello, there! you, sir—you big fellow—you hulk of a cock—what business have you here? This is a quarrel among the ladies, sirrah, who are mothers, and it is for their young ones—on behalf of their children—they are showing fight; and you, sir, you overgrown glutton, are stuffing yourself, like many another ‘foul bird’ before you, with the public property. Shame, you little vulture! Don’t you see they fly away when they have gotten’ an allowance, and give it to their starving children? D—— your principle, sir, it’s a bad one. You think the strongest ought to take most, do you? Bravo! Well done, my little woman. Go on, you have right and nature on your side—that’s it, peck the glutton—he’s a rascal—a public officer—a commissary-general that—lay on him—well done—never mind military discipline—he’s none of your officer—he’s a robber—a bandit—and neither a soldier nor a gentleman—by fife and drum, that’s well done. But it’s all nature—all the heart of man.”

“Well, old friend,” said he, “and so this is your good lady. How do you do, ma’am? By fife and drum, Mr. Mainwaring, but it’s a good match. You were made for one another. And this young lady your daughter, ma’am? How do you do, Miss Mainwaring?”

“My dear Mr. Roberts,” said Mainwaring, “we are not so happy as to claim this young lady as a daughter. She is Miss Gourlay, daughter to Sir Thomas Gourlay, of Red Hall, now here upon a visit for the good of her health.”

“How do you do, Miss Gourlay? I am happy to say that I have seen a young lady that I have heard so much of—so much, I ought to say, that was good of.”

Lucy, as she replied, blushed deeply at this unintentional mention of her name, and Mrs. Mainwaring, signing to her husband, by putting her finger on her lips, hinted to him that he had done wrong.

Old Sam, however, on receiving this intelligence, looked occasionally, with a great deal of interest, from Lucy to the young officer, and again from the young officer to Lucy; and as he did it, he uttered a series of ejaculations to himself, which were for the most part inaudible to the rest. “Ha!—dear me!—God bless me!—very strange!—right, old Corbet—right for a thousand—nature will prove it—not a doubt of it—God bless me!—how very like they are!—perfect brother and sister!—bless me—it’s extraordinary—not a doubt of it. Bravo, Ned!”

“Come, ladies,” said Mr. Mainwaring; “come, my friend, old Sam, as you like to be called, and you, Edward, come one, come all, till we try the cold ham and chicken. Miss Gou—ehem—come, Lucy, my dear, the short cut through the window; you see it open, and now, Martha, your hand; but there is old Sam’s. Well done, Sam; your soldier’s

ever gallant. Help Miss—help the young lady up the steps, Edward. Good! he has anticipated me."

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In a few minutes they were enjoying their lunch, during which the conversation became very agreeable, and even animated. Young Roberts had nothing of the military puppy about him whatsoever. On the contrary, his deportment was modest, manly, and unassuming. Sensible of his father's humble, but yet respectable position, he neither attempted to swagger himself into importance by an affectation of superior breeding or contempt for his parent, nor did he manifest any of that sullen taciturnity which is frequently preserved, as a proof of superiority, or a mask for conscious ignorance and bad breeding; the fact being generally forgotten that it is an exponent of both.

"So, Edward, you like the army, then?" inquired Mr. Mainwaring.

"I do, sir," replied young Roberts; "it's a noble profession."

"Eight, Ned—a noble profession—that's the word," said old Sam; "and so it is, my boy, and a brave and a generous one."

Lucy Gourlay and the young soldier had occasionally glanced at each other; and it might have been observed, that whenever they did so, each seemed surprised, if not actually confused.

"Is it difficult, Edward," asked Mainwaring, after they had taken wine together, "to purchase a commission at present?"

"It is not very easy to procure commissions just now," replied the other; "but you know, Mr. Mainwaring, that I had the honor to be raised from the ranks."

"Bravo, Ned!" exclaimed old Sam, slapping him him on the back; "I am glad to see that you take that honor in its true light. Thousands may have money to buy a commission, but give me the man that has merit to deserve it; especially, Ned, at so young an age as yours."

"You must have distinguished yourself, sir," observed Lucy, "otherwise it is quite unusual, I think, to witness the promotion from the ranks of so young a man."

"I only endeavored to do my duty, madam," replied Roberts, bowing modestly, whilst something like a blush came over his cheeks.

"Never mind him, Miss Gourlay," exclaimed Sam—"never mind; he did distinguish himself, and on more than one occasion, too, and well deserved his promotion. When one of the British flags was seized upon and borne off, after the brave fellow whose duty it was to defend it with his life had done so, and was cut down by three French soldiers, our gentleman here, for all so modest as he looks, pursued them, fought single-handed against the three, rescued the flag, and, on his way back, met the general, who chanced to be a spectator of the exploit; when passing near him, bleeding, for he had been smartly wounded, the general rides over to him. 'Is the officer who bore that flag killed?'

he asked. ‘He is, general,’ replied Ned.—’You have rescued it?’—’I have, sir.’—’What is your name?’—He told him.—’Have you received an education?’—’A good education, general’—’Very good,’ proceeded the general. ’You have recovered the flag, you say?’—’I considered it my duty either to die or to do so, general,’ replied Ned.—’Well said, soldier,’ returned the general, ’and well done, too: as for the flag itself, you must only keep it for your pains. Your commission, young man, shall be made out. I will take charge of that myself.’—There, now, is the history of his promotion for you.”

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“It is highly honorable to him in every sense,” observed Lucy. “But it was an awful risk of life for one man to pursue three.”

“A soldier, madam,” replied Roberts, bowing to her for the compliment, “in the moment of danger, or when the flag of his sovereign is likely to be sullied, should never remember that he has a life; or remember it only that it may be devoted to the glory of his country and the maintenance of her freedom.”

“That’s well said, Edward,” observed Mr. Mainwaring; “very well expressed indeed. The clauses of that sentence all follow in a neat, consecutive order. It is, indeed, all well put together as if it were an exercise.”

Edward could not help smiling at this unconscious trait of the old school-master peeping out.

“That general is a fine old fellow,” said Sam, “and knew how to reward true courage. But you see, Mr. Mainwaring and ladies, it’s all natural, all the heart of man.”

“There’s Mr. Mitchell, our clergyman,” observed Mrs. Mainwaring, looking out of the window; “I wish he would come in. Shall I call him, dear?”

“Never mind now, my love,” replied her husband. “I like the man well enough; he is religious, they say, and charitable, but his early education unfortunately was neglected. His sermons never hang well together; he frequently omits the exordium, and often winds them up without the peroration at all. Then he mispronounces shockingly, and is full of false quantities. It was only on last Sunday that he laid the accent on *i* in Dalilah. Such a man’s sermons, I am sorry to say, can do any educated man little good. Her’s a note, my love, from Mrs. Fletcher. I met the servant coming over with it, and took it from him. She wishes to hear from you in an hour or two: it’s a party, I think.”

He threw the note over to his wife, who, after apologizing to the company, opened, and began to read it.

Honest old Mainwaring was an excellent man, and did a great deal of good in a quiet way, considering his sphere of life. In attending to the sermon, however, when at church, he laid himself back in his pew, shut his eyes, put the end of his gold-headed cane to his lips, and set a criticising. If all the rhetorical rules were duly observed, the language clear, and the parts of the sermon well arranged, and if, besides, there was neither false accent, nor false quantity, nor any bad grammar, he pronounced it admirable, and praised the preacher to the skies. Anything short of this, however, he looked upon not only as a failure, but entertained strong doubts of the man’s orthodoxy, as well as of the purity of his doctrine.

“Yes, my dear,” replied Mrs. Mainwaring, after having glanced over the note, “you are right; it is a party; and we are both asked; but I wonder, above all things, that Miss Fletcher should never cross her t’s; then the tails of her letters are so long that they go into the line below them, which looks so slovenly, and shows that her writing must have bean very much neglected. I also know another fair neighbor of ours who actually puts ‘for’ before the infinitive mood, and flourishes her large letters like copperplate capitals that are only fit to appear in a merchant’s books.”

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“But you know, my dear,” said her husband, “that she is a grocer’s widow, and, it is said, used to keep his accounts.”

“That is very obvious, my dear; for, indeed, most of her invitations to tea are more like bills duly furnished than anything else. I remember one of them that ran to the following effect:

“’Mrs. Allspice presents compliments to Messrs. Mainwaring &, Co.—to wit, Miss Norton ‘—this was my daughter—’ begs to be favored, per return of post, as to whether it will suit convenience for to come on next Tuesday evening, half-past seven, to take a cup of the best flavored souchong, 7s. 6d. per lb., and white lump, Jamaica, Is. per ditto, with a nice assortment of cakes, manufactured by ourselves. Punctuality to appointment expected.’”

“Well, for my part,” said Sam, “I must say it’s the entertainment I’d look to both with her and the parson, and neither the language nor the writing. Mrs. Mainwaring, will you allow me to propose a toast ma’am? It’s for a fine creature, in her way; a lily, a jewel.”

“With pleasure, Mr. Roberts,” said that lady, smiling, for she knew old Sam must always have his own way.

“Well, then, fill, fill, each of you. Come, Miss Gourlay, if only for the novelty of the thing; for I dare say you never drank a toast before. Ned, fill for her. You’re an excellent woman, Mrs. Mainwaring: and he was a lucky old boy that got you to smooth down the close of his respectable and useful life—at least, it was once useful—but we can’t be useful always—well, of his harmless life—ay, that is nearer the thing. Yes, Mrs. Mainwaring, by all accounts you are a most excellent and invaluable woman, and deserve all honor.”

Mrs. Mainwaring sat with a comely simper upon her good-natured face, looking down with a peculiar and modest appreciation of the forthcoming compliment to herself.

“Come now,” Sam went on, “to your legs. You all, I suppose, know who I mean. Stand, if you please, Miss Gourlay. Head well up, and shoulders a little more squared, Mainwaring. Here now, are you all ready?”

“All ready,” responded the gentlemen, highly amused.

“Well, then, here’s my Beck’s health! and long life to her! She’s the pearl of wives, and deserves to live forever!”

A fit of good-humored laughter followed old Sam’s toast, in which Mrs. Mainwaring not only came in for an ample share, but joined very heartily herself; that worthy lady taking it for granted that old Sam was about to propose the health of the hostess, sat still, while the rest rose; even Lucy stood up, with her usual grace and good-nature, and put the

glass to her lips; and as it was the impression that the compliment was meant for Mrs. Mainwaring, the thing seemed very like what is vulgarly called a bite, upon the part of old Sam, who in the meantime, had no earthly conception of anything else than that they all thoroughly understood him, and were aware of the health he was about to give.

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“What!” exclaimed Sam, on witnessing their mirth; “by fife and drum, I see nothing to laugh at in anything connected with my Beck. I always make it a point to drink the old girl’s health when I’m from home; for I don’t know how it happens, but I think I’m never half so fond of her as when we’re separated.”

“But, Mr. Eoberts,” said Mrs. Mainwaring, laughing, “I assure you, from the compliments you paid me, I took it for granted that it was my health you were about to propose.”

“Ay, but the compliments I paid you, ma’am, were all in compliment to old Beck; but next to her, by fife and drum, you deserve a bumper. Come, Mainwaring, get to legs, and let us have her health. Attention, now; head well up, sir; shoulders square; eye on your wife.”

“It shall be done,” replied Mainwaring, entering into the spirit of the joke. “If it were ambrosia, she is worthy of a brimmer. Come, then, fill your glasses. Edward, attend to Miss Gourlay. Sam, help Mrs. Mainwaring. Here, then, my dear Martha; like two winter apples, time has only mellowed us. We have both run parallel courses in life; you, in instructing the softer and more yielding sex; I, the nobler and more manly.”

“Keep strictly to the toast, Matthew,” she replied, “or I shall rise to defend our sex. You yielded first, you know. Ha, ha, ha!”

“As the stronger yields to the weaker, from courtesy and compassion. However, to proceed. We have both conjugated *amo* before we ever saw each other, so that our recurrence to the good old verb seemed somewhat like a Saturday’s repetition. As for *doceo*, we have been both engaged in enforcing it, and successfully, Martha”—here he shook his purse—“during the best portion of our lives; for which we have made some of the most brilliant members of society our debtors. *Lego* is now one of our principal enjoyments; sometimes under the shadow of a spreading tree in the orchard, during the serene effulgence of a summer’s eve; or, what is still more comfortable, before the cheering blaze of the winter’s fire, the blinds down, the shutters closed, the arm-chair beside the table—on that table an open book and a warm tumbler—and Martha, the best of wives—

“Attention, Mainwaring; my Beck’s excepted.”

“Martha, the best of wives—old Sam’s Beck always excepted—sitting at my side. As for *audio*, the truth is, I have been forced to experience the din and racket of that same verb during the greater portion of my life, in more senses than I am willing to describe. I did not imagine, in my bachelor days, that the fermenting tumult of the school-room could be surpassed by a single instrument; but, alas!—well, it matters not now; all I can say is, that I never saw her—heard I mean, for I am on *audio*—that the performance of that same single instrument did not furnish me with a painful praxis of the nine parts of speech all going together; for I do believe that nine tongues all at work could not have

matched her. But peace be with her! she is silent at last, and cannot hear me now. I thought I myself possessed an extensive knowledge of the languages, but, alas I was nothing; as a linguist she was without a rival. However, I pass that over, and return to the subject of my toast. Now, my dear Martha, since heaven gifted me with you—"

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“Attention, Mainwaring! Eyes up to the ceiling, sir, and thank God!”

Mainwaring did so; but for the life of him could not help throwing a little comic spirit into the action, adding in an undertone that he wished to be heard. “Ah, my dear Sam, how glad I am that you did not bid me go farther. However, to proceed—No, my dear Martha, ever since our most felicitous conjugation, I hardly know what the exemplary verb *audio* means. I could scarcely translate it. Ours is a truly grammatical union. Not the nominative case with verb—not the relative with the antecedent—not the adjective with the substantive—affords a more appropriate illustration of conjugal harmony, than does our matrimonial existence. Peace and quietness, however, are on your tongue—-affection and charity in your heart—benevolence in your hand, which is seldom extended empty to the pool—and, altogether, you are worthy of the high honor to which,”—this he added with a bit of good-natured irony—“partly from motives of condescension, and partly, as I said, from motives of compassion, I have, in the fulness of a benevolent heart, exalted you.” The toast was then drank.

“Attention, ladies!” said Sam, who had been looking, as before, from the young officer to Lucy, and vice versa—“Mainwaring, attention! Look upon these two—upon Miss Gourlay, here, and upon Ned Roberts—and tell me if you don’t think there’s a strong likeness.”

The attention of the others was instantly directed to an examination of the parties in question, and most certainly they were struck with the extraordinary resemblance.

“It is very remarkable, indeed, Mr. Roberts,” observed their hostess, looking at them again; “and what confirms it is the fact, that I noticed the circumstance almost as soon as Mr. Roberts joined us. It is certainly very strange to find such a resemblance in persons not at all related.”

Lucy, on finding the eyes of her friends upon her, could not avoid blushing; nor was the young officer’s complexion without a somewhat deeper tinge.

“Now,” said Mrs. Mainwaring, smiling, “the question is, which we are to consider complimented by this extraordinary likeness.”

“The gentleman, of course, Mrs. Mainwaring,” replied Sam.

“Unquestionably,” said Edward, bowing to Lucy; “I never felt so much flattered in my life before, nor ever can again, unless by a similar comparison with the same fair object.”

Another blush on the part of Lucy followed this delicate compliment, and old Sam exclaimed:

“Attention, Mainwaring! and you, ma’am,”—addressing Mrs. Mainwaring. “Now did you ever see brother and sister more like? eh!”

“Very seldom ever saw brother and sister so like,” replied Mainwaring. “Indeed, it is most extraordinary.”

“Wonderful! upon my word,” exclaimed his wife.

“Hum!—Well,” proceeded Sam, “it is, I believe, very odd—very—and may be not, either—may be not so odd. Ahem!—and yet, still—however, no matter, it’s all natural; all the heart of man—eh! Mainwaring?”

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“I suppose so, Mr. Roberts; I suppose so.”

After old Sam and his son had taken their departure, Lucy once more adverted to the duty as well as the necessity of acquainting her father with her safety, and thus relieving his mind of much anxiety and trouble. To this her friend at once consented. The baronet, in the meantime, felt considerably the worse for those dreadful conflicts which had swept down and annihilated all that ever had any tendency to humanity or goodness in his heart. He felt unwell—that is to say, he experienced none of those symptoms of illness which at once determine the nature of any specific malady. The sensation, however, was that of a strong man, who finds his frame, as it were, shaken—who is aware that something of a nameless apprehension connected with his health hangs over him, and whose mind is filled with a sense of gloomy depression and restlessness, for which he neither can account nor refer to any particular source of anxiety, although such in reality may exist. It appeared to be some terrible and gigantic hypochondriasis—some waking nightmare—coming over him like the shadow of his disappointed ambition, blighting his strength, and warning him, that when the heart is made the battle-field of the passions for too long a period, the physical powers will ultimately suffer, until the body becomes the victim of the spirit.

Yet, notwithstanding this feeling, Sir Thomas’s mind was considerably relieved. Lucy had not eloped; but then, the rumor of her elopement had gone abroad. This, indeed, was bitter; but, on the other hand, time—circumstances—the reappearance of this most mysterious stranger—and most of all, Lucy’s high character for all that was great and good, delicate and honorable, would ere long, set her right with the world. Nothing, he felt, however, would so quickly and decidedly effect this as her return to her father’s roof; for this necessary step would at once give the lie to calumny.

In order, therefore, to ascertain, if possible, the place of her present concealment, he resolved to remove to his metropolitan residence, having taken it for granted that she had sought shelter there with some of her friends. Anxious, nervous, and gloomy, he ordered his carriage, and in due time arrived in Dublin.

Thither the stranger had preceded him. The latter, finding that Ballytrain could no longer be the scene of his operations, also sought the metropolis. Fenton had disappeared—-Lucy was no longer there. His friend Birney was also in town, and as in town his business now lay, to town therefore he went.

In the meantime, we must turn a little to our friend Crackenfudge, who, after the rough handling he had received from the baronet, went home, if not a sadder and a wiser, at least a much sorer man. The unfortunate wretch was sadly basted. The furious baronet, knowing the creature he was, had pitched into him in awful style. He felt, however, when cooled down, that he had gone too far; and that, for the sake of Lucy, and in order to tie up the miserable wretch’s babbling tongue, it was necessary that he

should make some apology for such an unjustifiable outrage. He accordingly wrote him the following letter before he went to town:

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“DEAR SIR,—The nature of the communication which, I am sure from kind feelings, you made to me the other day, had such an effect upon a temper naturally choleric, that I fear I have been guilty of some violence toward you. I am, unfortunately, subject to paroxysms of this sort, and while under their influence feel utterly unconscious of what I do or say. In your case, will you be good enough to let me know—whether I treated you kindly or otherwise; for the fact is, the paroxysm I speak of assumes an affectionate character as well as a violent one. Of what I did or said on the occasion in question I have no earthly recollection. In the meantime, I have the satisfaction to assure you that Miss Gourlay has not eloped, but is residing with a friend, in the metropolis. I have seen the gentleman to whom you alluded, and am satisfied that their journey to town was purely accidental. He knows not even where she is; but I do, and am quite easy on the subject. Have the kindness to mention this to all your friends, and to contradict the report of her elopement wherever and whenever you hear it.

“Truly yours,

“Thomas Gourlay.

“Periwinkle Crackenfudge, Esq.

“P. S.—In the meantime, will you oblige me by sending up to my address in town a list of your claims for a seat on the magisterial bench. Let it be as clear and well worded as you can make it, and as authentic. You may color a little, I suppose, but let the groundwork be truth—if you can; if not truth—then that which comes as near it as possible. Truth, you know, is always better than a lie, unless where a lie happens to be better than truth.

“T. G.”

To this characteristic epistle our bedrubbed friend sent the following reply:

“My dear Sir Thomas,—A’ would give more than all mention to be gifted with your want of memory respecting what occurred the other day. Never man had such a memory of that dreadful transaction as a’ have; from head to heel a’m all memory; from heel to head a’m all memory—up and down —round—about—across—here and there, and everywhere—a’m all memory; but in one particular place, Sir Thomas—ah! there’s where a’ suffer—however, it doesn’t make no matter; a’ only say that you taught me the luxury of an easy chair and a. soft cushion ever since, Sir Thomas.

“Your letter, Sir Thomas, has given me great comfort, and has made me rejoice, although it is with groans a’ do it, at the whole transaction. If you succeed in getting me the magistracy, Sir Thomas, it will be the most blessed and delightful basting that ever a lucky man got. If a’ succeed in being turned into a bony fidy live magistrate, to be called ‘your worship,’ and am to have the right of fining and flogging and committing the

people, as a' wish and hope to do, then all say that the hand of Providence was in it, as well as your foot, Sir Thomas. Now, that you have explained the circumstance, a' feel very much honored by

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the drubbing a' got, Sir Thomas; and, indeed, a' don't doubt, after all, but it was meant in kindness, as you say, Sir Thomas; and a'm sure besides, Sir Thomas, that it's not every one you'd condescend to drub, and that the man you would drub, Sir Thomas, must be a person of some consequence. A' will send you up my claims as a magistrate some of these days—that is, as soon as a' can get some long-headed fellow to make them out for me.

"And have the honor to be, my dear Sir Thomas, your much obliged and favored humble servant.

"Periwinkle Crackenfudge.

"Sir Thomas Gourlay, Bart."

CHAPTER XXIV.—An Irish Watchhouse in the time of the "Charlies."

Another subject which vexed the baronet not a little was the loss of his money and pistols by the robbery; but what he still felt more bitterly, was the failure of the authorities to trace or arrest the robber. The vengeance which he felt against that individual lay like a black venomous snake coiled round his heart. The loss of the money and the fire-arms he might overlook, but the man, who, in a few moments, taught him to know himself as he was—who dangled him, as it were, over the very precipice of hell—with all his iniquities upon his head, the man who made him feel the crimes of a whole life condensed into one fearful moment, and showed them to him darkened into horror by the black lightning of perdition; such a man, we say, he could never forgive. It was in vain that large rewards were subscribed and offered, it was in vain that every effort was made to discover the culprit. Not only was there no trace of him got, but other robberies had been committed by a celebrated highwayman of the day, named Finnerty, whom neither bribe nor law could reach.

Our readers may remember, with reference to the robbery of the baronet, the fact of Trailcudgel's having met the stranger on his way to disclose all the circumstances to the priest, and that he did not proceed farther on that occasion, having understood that Father M'Mahon was from home. Poor Trailcudgel, who, as the reader is aware, was not a robber either from principle or habit, and who only resorted to it when driven by the agonizing instincts of nature, felt the guilt of his crime bitterly, and could enjoy rest neither night nor day, until he had done what he conceived to be his duty as a Christian, and which was all he or any man could do: that is, repent for his crime, and return the property to him from whom he had taken it. This he did, as it is usually done, through

the medium of his pastor; and on the very day after the baronet's departure both the money and pistols were deposited in Father M'Mahon's hands.

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In a few days afterwards the worthy priest, finding, on inquiry, that Sir Thomas had gone to Dublin, where, it was said, he determined to reside for some time, made up his mind to follow him, in order to restore him the property he had lost. This, however, was not the sole purpose of his visit to the metropolis. The letter he had given the stranger to Corbet, or Dunphy, had not, he was sorry to find, been productive of the object for which it had been written. Perhaps it was impossible that it could; but still the good priest, who was as shrewd in many things as he was benevolent and charitable in all, felt strongly impressed with a belief that this old man was not wholly ignorant, or rather unconnected with the disappearance of either one or the other of the lost children. Be this, however, as it may, he prepared to see the baronet for the purpose already mentioned.

He accordingly took his place—an inside one—in the redoubtable "Fly," which, we may add, was the popular vehicle at the time, and wrapping himself up in a thick frieze cloak, or great coat, with standing collar that buttoned up across his face to the very eyes, and putting a shirt or two, and some other small matters, into a little bundle—tying, at the same time, a cotton kerchief over his hat and chin—he started on his visit to the metropolis, having very much the appearance of a determined character, whose dress and aspect were not, however, such as to disarm suspicion. He felt much more careful of the baronet's pocket-book than he did of his own, and contrived to place it in an inside pocket, which being rather small for it, he was obliged to rip a little in order to give it admittance. The case of pistols he slipped into the pockets of his jock, one in each, without ever having once examined them, or satisfied himself—simple man—as to whether they were loaded or not. His own pocket-book was carelessly placed in the right-hand pocket of the aforesaid jock, along with one of the pistols.

The night was agreeable, and nothing worth recording took place until they had come about five miles on the side of ------, when a loud voice ordered the coachman to stop.

"Stop the coach, sir!" said the voice, with a good deal of reckless and bitter expression in it; "stop the coach, or you are a dead man."

Several pistols were instantly leveled at both coachman and guard, and the same voice, which was thin, distinct, and wiry, proceeded—"Keep all steady now, boys, and shoot the first that attempts to move. I will see what's to be had inside."

He went immediately to the door of the "Fly," and opening it, held up a dark lantern, which, whilst it clearly showed him the dress, countenances, and condition of the passengers, thoroughly concealed his own.

The priest happened to be next him, and was consequently the first person on whom this rather cool demand was made.

“Come, sir,” said the highwayman, “fork out, if you please; and be quick about it, if you’re wise.”

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“Give a body time, if you plaise,” responded the priest, who at that moment had about him all the marks and tokens of a farmer, or, at least, of a man who wished to pass for one. “I think,” he added, “if you knew who you had, you’d not only pass me by, but the very coach I’m travelin’ in. Don’t be unaisy, man alive,” he proceeded; “have patience—for patience, as everybody knows, is a virtue—do, then, have patience, or, maybe—-oh! ay!—here it is—here is what you want—the very thing, I’ll be bound—and you must have it, too.” And the poor man, in the hurry and alarm of the moment, pulled out one of the baronet’s pistols.

The robber whipped away the lantern, and instantly disappeared. “By the tarn, boys,” said he, “it’s Finnerty himself, disguised like a farmer. But he’s mid to travel in a public coach, and the beaks on the lookout for him. Hello! all’s right, coachman; drive on, we won’t disturb you this night, at all events. Gee hup!—off you go; and off we go—with empty pockets.”

It happened that this language, which the robber did not intend to have reached the ears of the passengers, was heard nevertheless, and from this moment until they changed horses at ------ there was a dead silence in the coach.

On that occasion one gentleman left it, and he had scarcely been half a minute gone when a person, very much in the garb and bearing of a modern detective, put in his head, and instantly withdrew it, exclaiming,

“Curse me, it’s a hit—he’s inside as snug as a rat in a trap. Up with you on top of the coach, and we’ll pin him when we reach town. ’Gad, this is a windfall, for the reward is a heavy one.—If we could now manage the baronet’s business, we were made men.”

He then returned into the coach, and took his seat right opposite the priest, in order the better to watch his motions, and keep him completely under his eye.

“Dangerous traveling by night, sir,” said he, addressing the priest, anxious to draw his man into conversation.

“By night or by day, the roads are not very safe at the present time,” replied his reverence.

“The danger’s principally by night, though,” observed the other. “This Finnerty is playing the devil, they say; and is hard to be nabbed by all accounts.”

The observation was received by several hums, and hems, and has, and very significant ejaculations, whilst a fat, wealthy-looking fellow, who sat beside the peace-officer—for such he was—in attempting to warn him of Finnerty’s presence, by pressing on his foot, unfortunately pressed upon that of the priest in mistake, who naturally interpreted the hems and has aforesaid to apply to the new-corner instead of himself.

This cannot be matter of surprise, inasmuch as the priest had his ears so completely muffled up with the collar of his jock and a thick cotton kerchief, that he heard not the allusions which the robber had made outside the coach, when he mistook him for Finnerty. He consequently peered very keenly at the last speaker, who to tell the truth, had probably in his villanous features ten times more the character and visage of a highwayman and cutthroat than the redoubtable Finnerty himself.

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“It’s a wonder,” said the priest, “that the unfortunate man has not been taken.”

“Hum!” exclaimed the officer; “unfortunate man. My good fellow, that’s very mild talk when speaking of a robber. Don’t you know that all robbers deserve the gallows, eh?”

“I know no such thing,” replied the priest. “Many a man has lived by robbing, in his day, that now lives by catching them; and many a poor fellow, as honest as e’er an individual in this coach—”

“That’s very shocking language,” observed a thin, prim, red-nosed lady, with a vinegar aspect, who sat erect, and apparently fearless, in the corner of the coach—“very shocking language, indeed. Why, my good man, should you form any such wile kimparison?”

“Never mind, ma’am; never mind,” said the officer, whose name was Darby; “let him proceed; from what he is about to say, I sha’n’t be surprised if he justifies robbery—not a bit—but will be a good deal, if he don’t. Go on, my good fellow.”

“Well,” proceeded the priest, “I was going to say, that many a poor wretch, as honest as e’er an individual, man or woman—”

Here there was, on the part of the lady, an indignant toss of the head, and a glance of supreme scorn leveled at the poor priest; whilst Darby, like a man who had generously undertaken the management of the whole discussion, said, with an air of conscious ability, if not something more, “nevermind him, ma’am; give him tether.”

“As honest,” persisted the priest, “as e’er an individual, man or woman, in this coach—-and maybe, if the truth were known, a good deal honester than some of them.”

“Good,” observed the officer; “I agree with you in that—right enough there.”

The vinegar lady, now apprehensive that her new ally had scandalously abandoned her interests, here dropped her eyes, and crossed her hands upon her breast, as if she had completely withdrawn herself from the conversation.

“I finds,” said she to herself, in a contemptuous soliloquy, “as how there ain’t no gentleman in this here wehicle.”

“Just pay attention, ma’am,” said the officer—“just pay attention, that’s all.”

This, however, seemed to have no effect—at least the lady remained in the same attitude, and made no reply.

“Suppose now,” proceeded the priest, “that an unfortunate father, in times of scarcity and famine, should sit in his miserable cabin, and see about him six or seven of his

family, some dying of fever, and others dying from want of food; and suppose that he was driven to despair by reflecting that unless he forced it from the rich who would not out of their abundance prevent his children from starving, he can procure them relief in no other way, and they must die in the agonies of hunger before his face. Suppose this, and that some wealthy man, without sympathy for his fellow-creatures, regardless of the cries of the poor-heartless, ambitious, and oppressive; and

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suppose besides that it was this very heartless and oppressive man of wealth who, by his pride and tyranny, and unchristian vengeance, drove that poor man and his wretched family to the state I have painted them for you, in that cold and dreary hovel; suppose all this, I say, and that that wretched poor man, his heart bursting, and his brain whirling, stimulated by affection, goaded by hunger and indescribable misery; suppose, I say, that in the madness of despair he sallies out, and happens to meet the very individual who brought him and his to such a dreadful state—do you think that he ought to let him pass—"

"I see," interrupted the officer, "without bleeding him; I knew you would come to that—go along."

"That he ought to let that wealthy oppressor pass, and allow the wife of his bosom and his gasping little ones to perish, whilst he knows that taking that assistance from him by violence which he ought to give freely would save them to society and him? Mark me, I'm not justifying robbery. Every general rule has its exception; and I'm only supposing a case where the act of robbery may be more entitled to compassion than to punishment—but, as I said, I'm not defending it."

"Ain't you, faith?" replied the officer; "it looks devilish like it, though. Don't you think so, ma'am?"

"I never listens to no nonsense like that ere," replied the lady. "All I say is, that a gentleman as I've the honor of being acquainted with, 'as been robbed the other night of a pocket-book stuffed with banknotes, and a case of Hirish pistols that he kept to shoot robbers, and sich other wulgar wretches as is to be found nowhere but in Hireland."

"Stuffed!" exclaimed the priest, disdainfully; "as much stuffed, ma'am, as you are."

The officer's very veins tingled with delight on hearing the admission which was involved in the simple priest's exclamation. He kept it, however, to himself, on account of the large reward that lay in the background.

"I stuffed!" exclaimed the indignant lady, whose thin face had for a considerable time been visible, for it was long past dawn; "I defy you, sir," she replied, "you large, nasty, Hirish farmer, as feeds upon nothing but taters. I stuffed!—no lady—you nasty farmer—goes without padding, which is well known to any man as is a gentleman. But stuffed! I defy you, nasty Paddy; I was never stuffed. Those as stuff use 'oss 'air; now I never uses 'oss 'air."

"If you weren't stuffed, then," replied the priest, who took a natural disrelish to her affectation of pride and haughtiness, knowing her as he now did—"many a better

woman was. If you weren't, ma'am, it wasn't your own fault. Sir Thomas Gourlay's English cook need never be at a loss for plenty to stuff herself with."

This was an extinguisher. The heaven of her complexion was instantly concealed by a thick cloud in the shape of a veil. She laid herself back in the corner of the carriage, and maintained the silence of a vanquished woman during the remainder of the journey.

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On arriving in town the passengers, as is usual, betook themselves to their respective destinations. Father M'Mahon, with his small bundle under his arm, was about to go to the Brazen Head Tavern, when he found himself tapped on the shoulder by our friend Darby, who now held a pistol in his hand, and said:

"There are eight of us, Mr. Finnerty, and it is useless to shy Abraham. You're bagged at last, so come off quietly to the office."

"I don't understand you," replied the priest, who certainly felt surprised at seeing himself surrounded by so many constables, for it was impossible any longer to mistake them. "What do you mean, my friend? or who do you suppose me to be?"

The constable gave him a knowing wink, adding with as knowing an air—"It's no go here, my lad—safe's the word. Tramp for the office, or we'll clap on the wrist-buttons. We know you're a shy cock, Mr. Finnerty, and rather modest, too—that's the cut. Simpson, keep the right arm fast, and, you, Gamble, the left, whilst we bring up the rear. In the meantime, before he proceeds a step, I, as senior, will take the liberty to—-just—see—what—is—here," whilst, suiting the word to the action, he first drew a pistol from the left pocket, and immediately after another from the right, and—shades of Freney and O'Hanlon!—the redoubtable pocket-book of Sir Thomas Gourlay, each and all marked not only with his crest, but his name and title at full length.

The priest was not at a moment's loss how to act. Perceiving their mistake as to his identity, and feeling the force of appearances against him, he desired to be conducted at once to the office. There he knew he could think more calmly upon the steps necessary to his liberation than he could in a crowd which was enlarging every moment, on its being understood that Finnerty, the celebrated highwayman, had been at length taken. Not that the crowd gave expression to any feeling or ebullition that was at all unfriendly to him. So far from that, it gathered round him with strong expressions of sympathy and compassion for his unhappy fate. Many were the anecdotes reported to each other by the spectators of his humanity—his charity—his benevolence to the poor; and, above all, of his intrepidity and courage; for it may be observed here—and we leave moralists, metaphysicians, and political economists to draw whatever inferences they please from the fact—but fact it is—that in no instance is any man who has violated the law taken up publicly, on Irish ground, whether in town or country, that the people do not uniformly express the warmest sympathy for him, and a strong manifestation of enmity against his captors. Whether this may be interpreted favorably or otherwise of our countrymen, we shall not undertake to determine. As Sir Roger de Coverly said, perhaps much might be advanced on both sides.

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On entering the watch-house, the heart of the humane priest was painfully oppressed at the scenes of uproar, confusion, debauchery, and shameless profligacy, of which he saw either the present exhibition or the unquestionable evidences. There was the lost and hardened female, uttering the wild screams of intoxication, or pouring forth from her dark, filthy place of confinement torrents of polluted mirth; the juvenile pickpocket, ripe in all the ribald wit and traditional slang of his profession; the ruffian burglar, with strong animal frame, dark eyebrows, low forehead, and face full of coarseness and brutality; the open robber, reckless and jocular, indifferent to consequences, and holding his life only in trust for the hangman, or for some determined opponent who may treat him to cold lead instead of pure gold; the sneaking thief, cool and cowardly, ready-witted at the extricating falsehood—for it is well known that the thief and liar are convertible terms—-his eye feeble, cunning, and circumspective, and his whole appearance redolent of duplicity and fraud; the receiver of stolen goods, affecting much honest simplicity; the good creature, whether man or woman, apparently in great distress, and wondering that industrious and unsuspecting people, struggling to bring up their families in honesty and decency, should be imposed upon and taken in by people that one couldn't think of suspecting. There, too, was the servant out of place, who first a forger of discharges, next became a thief, and heroically adventuring to the dignity of a burglar for which he had neither skill nor daring, was made prisoner in the act; and there he sits, half drunk, in that corner, repenting his failure instead of his crime, forgetting his cowardice, and making moral resolutions with himself, that, should he escape now, he will execute the next burglary in a safe and virtuous state of sobriety. But we need not proceed: there was the idle and drunken mechanic, or, perhaps, the wife, whose Saturday night visits to the tap-room in order to fetch him home, or to rescue the wages of his industry from the publican, had at length corrupted herself.

Two other characters were there which we cannot overlook, both of whom had passed through the world with a strong but holy scorn for the errors and failings of their fellow-creatures. One of them was a man of gross, carnal-looking features, trained, as it seemed to the uninitiated, into a severe and sanctified expression by the sheer force of religion. His face was full of godly intolerance against everything at variance with the one thing needful, whatever that was, and against all who did not, like himself, travel on fearlessly and zealously Zionward. He did not feel himself justified in the use of common and profane language; and, consequently, his vocabulary was taken principally from the Bible, which he called "the Lord's word." Sunday was not Sunday with him, but "the Lord's day;" and he never went to church in his life, but always to "service."

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Like most of his class, however, he seemed to be influenced by that extraordinary anomaly which characterizes the saints—that is to say, as great a reverence for the name of the devil as for that of God himself; for in his whole life and conversation he was never known to pronounce it as we have written it. Satan—the enemy—the destroyer, were the names he applied to him: and this, we presume, lest the world might suspect that there subsisted any private familiarity between them. His great ruling principle, however, originated in what he termed a godless system of religious liberality; in other words, he attributed all the calamities and scourges of the land to the influence of Popery. and its toleration by the powers that be. He was a big-boned, coarse man, with black, greasy hair, cut short; projecting cheek-bones, that argued great cruelty; dull, but lascivious eyes; and an upper lip like a dropsical sausage. We forget now the locality in which he had committed the offence that had caused him to be brought there. But it does not much matter; it is enough to say that he was caught, about three o'clock, perambulating the streets, considerably the worse for liquor, and not in the best society. Even as it was, and in the very face of those who had detected him so circumstanced, he was railing against the ungodliness of our "rulers," the degeneracy of human nature, and the awful scourges that the existence of Popery was bringing on the land.

As it happened, however, this worthy representative of his class was not without a counterpart among the moral inmates of the watch-house. Another man, who was known among his friends as a Catholic voteen, or devotee, happened to have been brought to the game establishment, much in the same circumstances, and for some similar offence. When compared together, it was really curious to observe the extraordinary resemblance which these two men bore to each other. Each was dressed in sober clothes, for your puritan of every creed must, like his progenitors the Pharisees of old, have some peculiarity in his dress that will gain him credit for religion. Their features were marked by the same dark, sullen shade which betokens intolerance. The devotee was thinner, and not so large a man as the other; but he made up in the cunning energy which glistened from his eyes for the want of physical strength, as compared with the Protestant saint; not at all that he was deficient in it *per se*, for though a smaller man, he was better built and more compact than his brother. Indeed, so nearly identical was the expression of their features—the sensual Milesian mouth, and naturally amorous temperament, hypocrisized into formality, and darkened into bitterness by bigotry —that on discovering each other in the watch-house, neither could for his life determine whether the man before him belonged to idolatrous Rome on the one hand, or the arch heresy on the other.

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There they stood, exact counterparts, each a thousand times more anxious to damn the other than to save himself. They were not long, however, in discovering each other, and in a moment the jargon of controversy rang loud and high amidst the uproar and confusion of the place. The Protestant saint attributed all the iniquity by which the land, he said, was overflowed, and the judgments under which it was righteously suffering, to the guilt of our rulers, who forgot God, and connived at Popery.

The Popish saint, on the other hand, asserted that so long as a fat and oppressive heresy was permitted to trample upon the people, the country could never prosper. The other one said, that idolatry—Popish idolatry—was the cause of all; and that it was the scourge by which “the Lord” was inflicting judicial punishment upon the country at large. If it were not for that he would not be in such a sink of iniquity at that moment. Popish idolatry it was that brought him there; and the abominations of the Romish harlot were desolating the land.

The other replied, that perhaps she was the only harlot of the kind he would run away from; and maintained, that until all heresy was abolished, and rooted out of the country, the curse of God would sit upon them, as the corrupt law church does now in the shape of an overgrown nightmare. What brought him, who was ready to die for his persecuted church, here? He could tell the heretic;—it was Protestant ascendancy, and he could prove it;—yes, Protestant ascendancy, and nothing else, was it that brought him to that house, its representative, in which he now stood. He maintained that it resembled a watch-house; was it not full of wickedness, noise, and blasphemy; and were there any two creeds; in it that agreed together, and did not fight like devils?

How much longer this fiery discussion might have proceeded it is difficult to say. The constable of the night, finding that the two hypocritical vagabonds were a nuisance to the whole place, had them handcuffed together, and both placed in the black hole to finish their argument.

In short, there was around the good man—vice, with all her discordant sounds and hideous aspects, clanging in his ear the multitudinous din that arose from the loud and noisy tumult of her brutal, drunken, and debauched votaries.

The priest, who respected his cloth and character, did not lay aside his jock, nor expose himself to the coarse jests and ruffianly insolence with which the vagabond minions of justice were in those days accustomed to treat their prisoners. He inquired if he could get a person to carry a message from him to a man named Corbet, living at 25 Constitution Hill; adding, that he would compensate him fairly. On this, one of those idle loungers or orderlies about such places offered himself at once, and said he would bring any message he wished, provided he forked out in the first instance.

“Go, then,” said the priest, handing him a piece of silver, “to No. 25 Constitution Hill, where a man named Corbet—what am I saying—Dunphy, lives, and tell him to come to me immediately.”

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“Ha!” said Darby, laying his finger along; his nose, as he spoke to one of his associates, “I smell an alias there. Good; first Corbet and then Dunphy. What do you call that? That chap is one of the connection. Take the message, Skipton; mark him well, and let him be here, if possible, before we bring the prisoner to Sir Thomas Gourlay’s.”

The fellow winked in reply, and approaching the priest, asked,

“What message have you to send, Mr. Finnerty?”

“Tell him—but stay; oblige me with a slip of paper and a pen, I will write it down.”

“Yes, that’s better,” said Darby. “Nothing like black and white, you know,” he added, aside to Skipton.

Father M’Mahon then wrote down his office only; simply saying, “The parish priest of Ballytrain wishes to see Anthony Dunphy as soon as he can come to him.”

This description of himself excited roars of laughter throughout the office; nor could the good-natured priest himself help smiling at the ludicrous contrast between his real character and that which had been affixed upon him.

“Confound me,” said Darby, “but that’s the best alias I have heard this many a day. It’s as good as Tom Green’s that was hanged, and who always stuck to his name, no matter how often he changed it. At one time it was Ivy, at another Laurel, at another Yew, and so on, poor fellow, until he swung.” Skipton, the messenger, took the slip of paper with high glee, and proceeded on his embassy to Constitution Hill.

He had scarcely been gone, when a tumult reached their ears from outside, in which one voice was heard considerably louder and deeper than the rest; and almost immediately afterwards an old acquaintance of the reader’s, to wit, the worthy student, Ambrose Gray, in a very respectable state of intoxication, made his appearance, charged with drunkenness, riot, and a blushing reluctance to pay his tavern reckoning. Mr. Gray was dragged in at very little expense of ceremony, it must be confessed, but with some prospective damage to his tailor, his clothes having received considerable abrasions in the scuffle, as well as his complexion, which was beautifully variegated with tints of black, blue, and yellow.

“Well, Mr. Gray,” said Darby, “back once more I see? Why, you couldn’t live without us, I think. What’s this now?”

“A deficiency of assets, most potent,” replied Gray, with a hiccough—“unable to meet a rascally tavern reckoning;” and as Mr. Gray spoke he thrust his tongue into his cheek, intimating by this significant act his high respect for Mr. Darby.

“You had better remember, sir, that you are addressing the senior officer here,” said the latter, highly offended.

“Most potent, grave, and reverend senior, I don’t forget it; nor that the grand senior can become a most gentlemanly ruffian whenever he chooses. No, senior, I respect your ruffianship, and your ruffianship ought to respect me; for well you wot that many a time before now I’ve greased that absorbing palm of yours.”

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“Ah,” replied Darby, “the hemp is grown for you, and the rope is purchased that will soon be greased for your last tug. Why didn’t you pay your bill, I say?”

“I told you before, most potent, that that fact originated in a deficiency of assets.”

“I rather think, Mr. Gray,” said Darby, “that it originated in a very different kind of deficiency—a deficiency of inclination, my buck.”

“In both, most reverend senior, and I act on scriptural principles; for what does Job say? ‘Base is the slave that patient pays.’”

“Well, my good fellow, if you don’t pay, you’ll be apt to receive, some fine day, that’s all,” and here he made a motion with his arm, as if he were administering the cat-o’-nine-tails; “however, this is not my business. Here comes Mrs. Mulroony to make her charge. I accordingly shove you over to Ned Nightcap, the officer for the night.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Gray, “I see, most potent, you have operated before. Kow-de-dow-de-dow, my boy. There was a professional touch in that jerk that couldn’t be mistaken: that quiver at the wrist was beautiful, and the position of the arm a perfect triangle. It must have been quite a pleasure to have suffered from such a scientific hand as yours. How do you do again, Mrs. Mulroony? Mrs. Mulroony, I hope you did not come without some refreshment. And you’ll withdraw the charge, for the sake of futurity, Mrs. Mulroony.”

“If you do, Mrs. Mulroony,” said Darby, “I’m afraid you’ll have to look to futurity for payment. I mean to that part of it commonly called ’to-morrow comenever.’—Make your charge, ma’am.”

Here a pale-faced, sinister-looking old fellow, in a red woollen nightcap, with baggy protuberances hanging under his red bleared eyes, now came to a little half door, inside of which stood his office for receiving all charges against the various delinquents that the Charlies, or watchmen of the period, had conducted to him.

“Here,” said he, in a hoarse, hollow voice, “what’s this—what’s this? Another charge against you, Mr. Gray? Garvy,” said he, addressing a watchman, “tell them vagabones that if they don’t keep, quiet I’ll put them in irons.”

This threat was received with a chorus of derision by those to whom it was addressed, and the noise was increased so furiously, that it resembled the clamor of Babel.

“Here, Garvy,” said honest Ned, “tickle some of them a bit. Touch up that bullet-headed house-breaker that’s drunk—Sam Stancheon, they call him—lave a nate impression of the big kay on his head; he’ll undherstand it, you know; and there’s Molly Brady, or Emily Howard, as she calls herself, give her a clink on the noddle to stop her jinteelity. Blast her pedigree; nothing will serve her but she must be a lady on our hands. Tell her I’ll not lave a copper ring or a glass brooch on her body if she’s not quiet.”

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The watchman named Garvy took the heavy keys, and big with the deputed authority, swept, like the destroying angel upon a small scale, through the tumultuous crew that were assembled in this villanous pandemonium, thrashing the unfortunate vagabonds on the naked head, or otherwise, as the case might be, without regard to age, sex, or condition, leaving bumps, welts, cuts, oaths, curses, and execrations, *ad infinitum*, behind him. Owing to this distribution of official justice a partial calm was restored, and the charge of Mrs. Mulroony was opened in form.

“Well, Mrs. Mulroony, what charge is this you have against Misther Gray?”

“Because,” replied Ambrose, “I wasn’t in possession of assets to pay her own. Had I met her most iniquitous charge at home, honest Ned, I should have escaped the minor one here. You know of old, Ned, how she lost her conscience one night, about ten years ago; and the poor woman, although she put it in the ‘Hue and Cry,’ by way of novelty, never got it since. None of the officers of justice knew of such a commodity; *ergo*, Ned, I suffer.”

Here Mr. Ambrose winked at Ned, and touched his breeches pocket significantly, as much as to say, “the bribe is where you know.”

Ned, however, was strictly impartial, and declined, with most commendable virtue, to recognize the signal, until he saw whether Mrs. Mulroony did not understand “generosity” as well as Mr. Gray.

“Misther Gray, I’ll thank you to button your lip, if you plaise. It’s all very right, I suppose; but in the manetime let daicent Mrs. Mulroony tell her own story. How is it, ma’am?”

“Faith, plain enough,” she replied; “he came in about half past five o’clock, with three or four skips from college—”

“Scamps, Mrs. Mulroony. Be just, be correct, ma’am. We were all gentlemen scamps, Ned, from college. Everybody knows that a college scamp is a respectable character, especially if he be a divinity student, a class whom we are proud to place at our head. You are now corrected, Mrs. Mulroony—proceed.”

“Well; he tould me to get a dinner for five; but first asked to see what he called ‘the bill of hair.’”

“In your hands it is anything but a bill of rights, Mrs. Mulroony.”

“I tould him not to trouble himself; that my dinner was as good as another’s, which I thought might satisfy him; but instead o’ that, he had the assurance to ask me if I could give them hair soup. I knew very well what the skip was at.”

“Scamp, ma’am, and you will oblige me.”

“For if grief for poor Andy (weeping), that suffered mainly for what he was as innocent of as the unborn child—if grief, an’ every one knows it makes the hair to fall; an’ afther all it’s only a bit of a front I’m wearin’;—ah, you villain, it was an ill-hearted cut, that.”

“It wasn’t a cut did it, Mrs. Mulroony; it fell off naturally, and by instalments—or rather it was a cut, and that was what made you feel it; that youthful old gentleman, Time, gave it a touch with a certain scythe he carries. No such croppy as old Time, Mrs. Mulroony.” On concluding, he winked again at old Ned, and touched his pocket as before.

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“Mr. Amby, be quiet,” said Ned, rather complacently though, “an’ let daicent Mrs. Mulroony go on.”

“‘Well, then,’ says he, ’if you haven’t, ‘hair-soup,’ which was as much as to say—makin’ his own fun before the strangers—that I ought to boil my very wig to plaise him—my front, I mane, ‘maybe,’ says he, ’you have oxtail.’ Well, flesh and blood could hardly bear that, and I said it was a scandal for him to treat an industrious, un-projected widow in such a way; ‘if you want a dinner, Mr. Gray,’ says I, ’I can give you and your friends a jacketful of honest corned beef and greens.’ Well, my dear—”

At this insinuating expression of tenderness, old Ned, aware, for the first time, that she was a widow, and kept that most convenient of establishments, an eating-house, cocked his nightcap, with great spirit and significance, and with an attempt at a leer, which, from the force of habit, made him look upon her rather as the criminal than the accuser, he said—“It was scandalous, Mrs. Mulroony; and it is a sad thing to be unprotected, ma’am; it’s a pity, too, to see sich a woman as you are without somebody to take care of her, and especially one that id undherstand swindlin’. But what happened next, ma’am?”

“Why, my dear—indeed, I owe you many thanks for your kindness—you see, my dear,”—the nightcap here seemed to move and erect itself instinctively—“this fellow turns round, and says to the other four skips—’Gentlemen,’ says he, ‘could you conde—condescend,’ I think it was—yes—’could you condescend to dine upon corned beef and greens? They said, not unless it would oblige him; and then he said it wasn’t to oblige him, but to sarve the house he did it. So, to make a long story short, they filled themselves with my victuals, drank seven tumblers of punch each, kept playin’ cards the whole night, and then fell a fightin’—smashed glass, delft, and everything; and when it was mornin’, slipped out, one by one, till I caught my skip here, the last of them—”

“Scamp, Mrs. Roony; a gentleman scamp, known to every one as a most respectable character on town.”

“When I caught him going off without payment, he fairly laughed in my face, and offered to toss me.”

“Oh, the villain!” said Ned; “I only wish I had been there, Mrs. Mulroony, and you wouldn’t have wanted what I am sorry to see you do want—a protector. The villain, to go to toss such a woman—to go to take such scandalous liberties! Go on, ma’am—go on, my dear Mrs. Mulroony.”

“Well, my dear, he offered, as I said, to toss me for it—double or quits—and when I wouldn’t stand that, he asked me if I would allow him to kiss it in, at so many kisses a-day; but I told him that coin wouldn’t pass wid me.”

“He’s a swindler, ma’am; no doubt of it, and you’ll never be safe till you have some one to protect you that understands swindlin’ and imposition. Well, ma’am—well, my dear ma’am, what next?”

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“Why, he then attempted to escape; but as I happened to have a stout ladle in my hand, I thought a good basting wouldn’t do him any harm, and while I was layin’ on him two sailors came in, and they took him out of my hands.”

“Out of the frying-pan into the fire, you ought to say, Mrs. Mulroony.”

“So he and they fought, and smashed another lot of glass, and then I set out and charged him on the watch. Oh, murdher sheery—to think the way my beautiful beef and greens went!”

Here Mr. Ambrose, approaching Mrs. Mulroony, whispered—“My dear Mrs. Mulroony, remember one word—futurity; heir apparent—heir direct; so be moderate, and a short time will place you in easy circumstances. The event that’s coming will be a stunner.”

“What’s that he’s sayin’ to you, my dear Mrs. Mulroony?” asked Ned; “don’t listen to him, he’ll only soohdher and palaver you. I’ll take your charge, and lock him up.”

“Darby,” said Mr. Gray, now approaching that worthy, “a single word with you—we understand one another—I intended to bribe old Ned, the villain; but you shall have it.”

“Very good, it’s a bargain,” replied the virtuous Darby; “fork out.”

“Here, then, is ten shillings, and bring me out of it.”

Darby privately pocketed the money, and moving toward Ned, whispered to him—“Don’t take the charge for a few minutes. I’ll fleece them both. Amby has given me half-a-crown; another from her, and then, half and half between us. Mrs. Mulroony, a word with you. Listen—do you wish to succeed in this business?”

“To be sure I do; why not?”

“Well, then, if you do, slip me five shillings, or you’re dished, like one of your own-dinners, and that Amby Gray will slice you to pieces. Ned’s his friend at heart, I tell you.”

“Well, but you’ll see me rightified?”

“Hand the money, ma’am; do you know who you’re speaking to? The senior of the office.”

On receiving the money, the honest senior whispers to the honest officer of the night—-“A crown from both, that is, half from each; and now act as you like; but if you take the widow’s charge, we’ll have a free plate, at all events, whenever we call to see her, you know.”

Honest Ned, feeling indignant that he was not himself the direct recipient of the bribes, and also anxious to win favor in the widow's eyes, took the charge against Mr. Gray, who was very soon locked up, with the "miscellanies," in the black hole, until bail could be procured.

On finding that matters had gone against him, Gray, who, although unaffected in speech, was yet rather tipsy, assumed a look of singular importance, as if to console himself for the degradation he was about to undergo; he composed his face into an expression that gave a ludicrous travesty of dignity.

"Well," said he, with a solemn swagger, nodding his head from side to side as he spoke, in order to impress what he uttered with a more mysterious emphasis—"you are all acting in ignorance, quite so; little you know who the person is that's before you; but it doesn't signify—I am somebody, at all events."

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“A gentleman in disguise,” said a voice from the black hole. “You’ll find some of your friends here.”

“You are right, my good fellow—you are perfectly right;” said Ambrose, nodding with drunken gravity, as before; “high blood runs in my veins, and time will soon tell that; I shall stand and be returned for the town of Ballytrain, as soon as there comes a dissolution; I’m bent on that.”

“Bravo! hurra! a very proper member you’ll make for it,” from the black hole.

“And I shall have the Augean stables of these corrupt offices swept of their filth. Ned, the scoundrel, shall be sent to the right about; Mr. Darby, for his honesty, shall have each wrist embraced by a namesake.”

Here he was shoved by Garvy, the watchman, head foremost into the black hole, after having received an impulse from behind, kindly intended to facilitate his ingress, which, notwithstanding his drunken ambition, the boast of his high blood, and mighty promises, was made with extraordinary want of dignity.

Although we have described this scene nearly in consecutive order, without the breaks and interruptions which took place whilst it proceeded, yet the reader should imagine to himself the outrage, the yelling, the clamor, the by-battles, and scurrilous contests in the lowest description of blackguardism with which it was garnished; thus causing it to occupy at least four times the period we have ascribed to it. The simple-minded priest, who could never have dreamt of such an exhibition, scarcely knew whether he was asleep or awake, and sometimes asked himself whether it was not some terrible phantasm by which he was startled and oppressed. The horrible impress of naked and hardened villany—the light and mirthful delirium of crime—the wanton manifestations of vice, in all its shapes, and the unblushing front of debauchery and profligacy—-constituted, when brought together in one hideous group, a sight which made his heart groan for human nature on the one hand, and the corruption of human law on the other.

“The contamination of vice here,” said he to himself, “is so concentrated and deadly, that innocence or virtue could not long resist its influence. Alas! alas!”

Old Dunphy now made his appearance; but he had scarcely time to shake hands with the priest, when he heard himself addressed from between the bars of Gray’s limbo, with the words,

“I say, old Corbet, or Dunphy, or whatever the devil they call you; here’s a relation of yours by the mother’s side only, you old dog—mark that; here I am, Ambrose Gray, a gentleman in disguise, as you well know; and I want you to bail me out.”

“An’ a respectable way you ax it,” said Dunphy, putting on his spectacles, and looking at him through the bars.

“Respect! What, to a beggarly old huckster and kidnapper! Why, you penurious slicer of musty bacon—you iniquitous dealer in light weights—what respect are you entitled to from me? You know who I am—and you must bail me. Otherwise never expect, when the time comes, that I shall recognize you as a base relative, or suffer you to show your ferret face in my presence.”

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“Ah!” exclaimed the old man, bitterly; “the blood is in you.”

“Eight, my old potatomonger; as true as gospel, and a great deal truer. The blood is in me.”

“Ay,” replied the other, “the blood of the oppressor—the blood of the villain—the blood of the unjust tyrant is in you, and nothing else. If you had his power, you’d be what he is, and maybe, worse, if the thing was possible. Now, listen; I’ll make the words you just said to me the bitterest and blackest to yourself that you ever spoke. That’s the last information I have for you; and as I know that you’re just where you ought to be, among the companions you are fit for, there I leave you.”

He then turned toward the priest, and left Gray to get bail where he might.

When Skipton, the messenger, who returned with Dunphy, or Corbet, as we shall in future call him, entered the watch-house, he drew Darby aside, and held some private conversation with him, of which it was evident that Corbet was the subject, from the significant glances which each turned upon him from time to time.

In the meantime, the old man, recognizing the priest rather by his voice than his appearance, lost no time in acquainting the officers of justice that they were completely mistaken in the individual. The latter had briefly mentioned to him the circumstance and cause of his arrest.

“I want you,” said the priest, “to go to Sir Thomas Gourlay directly, and tell him that I have his money and pistols quite safe, and that I was on my way up to town with them, when this unpleasant mistake took place.”

“I will, your reverence,” said he, “without loss of time. I see,” he added, addressing Darby and the others, “that you have made a mistake here.”

“What mistake, my good man?” asked Darby.

“Why, simply, that instead of a robber, you have been sharp enough to take up a most respectable Catholic clergyman from Ballytrain.”

“What,” said Darby, “a Popish priest! Curse me, but that’s as good, if not better, than the other thing. No Papist is allowed, under the penalty of a felony, to carry arms, and here is a Popish priest travelling with pistols. The other thing, Skipton, was only for the magistrates, but this is a government affair.”

“He may be Finnerty, after all,” replied Skipton, aside; “this old fellow is no authority as to his identity, as you may guess from what I told you.”

“At all events,” replied Darby, “we shall soon know which he is—priest or robber; but I hope, for our own sakes, he’ll prove a priest on our hands. At any rate the magistrates are now in the office, and it’s full time to bring his reverence up.”

Corbet, in the meantime, had gone to Sir Thomas Gourlay’s with his reverence’s message, and in a few minutes afterwards the prisoner, strongly guarded, was conducted to the police office.

CHAPTER XXV. The Police Office

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—Sir Spigot Sputter and Mr. Coke—An Unfortunate Translator—Decision in “a Law Case.”

It is not our intention to detail the history of occurrences that are calculated to fill the mind with sorrow, not unmingled with disgust, or to describe scenes that must necessarily lower our estimate of both man and woman. On the bench sat two magistrates, of whom we may say that, from ignorance of law, want of temper, and impenetrable stupidity, the whole circle of commercial or professional life could not produce a pair more, signally unqualified for the important offices they occupied. One of them, named Sputter, Sir Spigot Sputter, was an old man, with a red face and perpetual grin, whose white hair was cropped close; but in compensation for this he wore powder and a queue, so that his head, except in vivacity of motion, might not inappropriately be compared to an overgrown tadpole struggling to get free from his shoulders, and escape to the nearest marsh. He also wore a false eye, which gave him a perennial blink that was sadly at variance with magisterial dignity. Indeed the consequences of it were sometimes ludicrous enough. When, for instance, one of those syrens who perambulate our fashionable streets after the sun has gone down, happened to be brought up to answer some charge that came under his jurisdiction, Sir Spigot’s custom always was to put his glass to the safe eye, and peer at her in the dock; which act, when taken in connection with the grin and the droop of the glass eye, seemed to the spectators as if he and she understood each other, and that the wink in question was a kind of telegraphic dispatch sent to let her know that she had a friend on the bench. Sir Spigot was deaf, too, a felicitous circumstance, which gave him peculiar facility in the decision of his cases.

The name of his brother on the bench was Coke, who acted in the capacity of what is termed a law magistrate. It is enough, however, to say, that he was a thin man, with a long, dull face, a dull eye, a dull tongue, a dull ear, and a dull brain. His talents for ambiguity were surprising, and it always required a hint from the senior of the office, Darby, to enable him to understand his own decisions. This, however, was not without some beneficial consequences to the individuals before him; as it often happened, that when he seemed to have committed some hardened offender, after the infliction of a long, laborious, obscure harangue, he has immediately ordered him to be discharged. And, on the contrary, when some innocent individual heard with delight the sentence of the court apparently, in his favor, judge of what he must have felt on finding himself sent off to Newgate, Kilmainham, or the Penitentiary. In this instance, however, the advantage to the public was nearly equal; for if the guilty escaped in one case, so did the innocent in another. Here now is where Darby became useful; for Darby, who was well acquainted with his style, and with his meaning, when he had any, always interpreted his decisions to him, and told him in a whisper, or on a slip of paper, whether he had convicted the prisoner, or not.

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We shall detail one case which occurred this morning. It happened that an amiable and distinguished literary gentleman, an LL.D., and a barrister, had lost from his library a book on which he placed great value, and he found this book on a stall not very far from the office. On seeing the volume he naturally claimed it, and the woman who had received it from the thief, who was a servant, refused to give it up, unless the money she had paid for it were returned to her. Neither would the wretch disclose the name of the thief, but snapped her fingers in Dr. A——'s face, saying she defied him, and that he could only bring her before Mr. Coke, who, she knew very well, would see justice done her. She lived by buying books, she said, and by selling books; and as he lived by writing books, she thought it wasn't handsome of him to insult the profession by bringing such a blackguard charge against them in her name.

He summoned her, however, and the case was one of the first called on the morning in question. The receiver of the stolen book came forward, with much assurance, as defendant, and modest Dr. A—— as plaintiff; when Sir Spigot, putting his glass to his eye, and looking from the one to the other with his wink and grin as usual, said to Darby:

"What is this man here for?"

"It's a law case, your worship," replied the senior officer.

Coke, who sat solemn and silent, looked at the doctor, and said:

"Well, sir, what is your case? Please to state it."

The case, being a very plain and brief one, was soon stated, the woman's reply was then heard, after which Mr. Coke looked graver than before, and proceeded somewhat to the following effect:

"This is a case of deep interest to that important portion of the bibiliopolist profession who vend their wares on stalls."

"Thank your worship," said the woman, with a courtesy.

"This most respectable body of persons, the booksellers—[another courtesy from the woman]—are divided into several classes; first, those who sell books in large and splendid shops; next, those who sell them in shops of less pretension; thirdly, those who sell them on stalls in thoroughfares, and at the corners of streets; fourthly, those who carry them in baskets, and who pass from place to place, and combine with the book-selling business that of flying stationer; and fifthly, those who do not sell them at all, but only read them; and as those who read, unless they steal or borrow, must purchase, I accordingly class them as booksellers indirectly, inasmuch as if they don't sell books themselves, they cause others to do so. For this reason it is evident that every man

living, and woman too, capable of reading a book, is a bookseller; so that society at large is nothing but one great bookselling firm.

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“Having thus established the immense extent and importance of the business, I now proceed to the consideration of the case before us. To steal a book is not in every case an offence against the law of libel, nor against the law of arson, nor against the law of insurrection, nor against the law of primogeniture; in fact, it is only against the law of theft—it offends only one law—and is innocent with respect to all the others. A person stealing a book could not be indicted under the statute of limitations, for instance; except, indeed, in so far as he may be supposed to limit the property of the person from whom he stole it. But on this point the opinion of the learned Folderol would go pretty far, were it not for the opinion of another great man, which I shall presently quote. Folderol lays it down as a fixed principle in an able treatise upon the law of weathercocks, that if property be stolen from an individual, without the aggregate of that property suffering reduction or diminution, he is not robbed, and the crime of theft has not been committed. The other authority that I alluded to, is that of his great and equally celebrated opponent, Tolderol, who lays it down on the other hand, that when a thief, in the act of stealing, leaves more behind him than he found there at first, so that the man stolen from becomes richer by the act of theft than he had been before it, the crime then becomes *dupleis delicti*, or one of harum-scarum, according to Doodle, and the thief deserves transportation or the gallows. And the reason is obvious: if the property of the person stolen from, under the latter category, were to be examined, and that a larger portion of it was found there than properly had belonged to him before the theft, he might be suspected of theft himself, and in this case a double conviction of the parties would ensue; that is, of him who did not take what he ought, and of him who had more than he was entitled to. This opinion, which is remarkable for its perspicuity and soundness, is to be found in the one hundred and second folio of Logerhedius, tome six hundred, page 9768.

“There is another case bearing strongly upon the present one, in ‘Snifter and Snivell’s Reports,’ vol. 86, page 1480, in which an old woman, who was too poor to purchase a Bible, stole one, and was prosecuted for the theft. The counsel for the prosecution and the defence were both equally eminent and able. Counsellor Sleek was for the prosecution and Rant for the defence. Sleek, who was himself a religious barrister, insisted that the *locus delicti* aggravated the offence, inasmuch as she had stolen the Bible out of a church; but Rant maintained that the *locus delicti* was a *prima facie* evidence of her innocence, inasmuch as she only complied with a precept of religion, which enjoins all sinners to seek such assistance toward their spiritual welfare as the church can afford them.

“Sleek argued that the principle of theft must have been innate and strong, when the respect due to that sacred edifice was insufficient to restrain her from such an act—an act which constituted sacrilege of a very aggravated kind.

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“Rant replied, that the motive and not the act constituted the crime. There was *prima facie* proof that she stole it for pious purposes—to wit, that she might learn therefrom a correct principle for the conduct of her life. It was not proved that the woman had sold the book, or pledged it, or in any-other way disposed of it for her corporal or temporal benefit; the inference, therefore, was, that the motive, in the first place, justified the act, which was *in se* a pious one; and, besides, had the woman been a thief, she would have stolen the plate and linen belonging to the altar; but she did not, therefore there existed on her part no consciousness nor intention of wrong.

“Sleek rejoined, that if the woman had felt any necessity for religious advice and instruction, she would have gone to the minister, whose duty it was to give it.

“Rant replied, that upon Sleek’s own principles, if the minister had properly discharged his duty, the woman would have been under no necessity for taking the Bible at all; and that, consequently, in a strict spirit of justice, the theft, if theft it could be called, was not the theft of the old woman, but that of the minister himself, who had failed to give her proper instructions. It was the duty of the minister to have gone to the old woman, and not that of the old woman to have gone to the minister; but, perhaps, had the woman been young and handsome, the minister might have administered consolation.

“I find that Sleek here made a long speech about religion, which he charged Rant with insulting; he regretted that a false humanity had repealed some of those stringent but wholesome laws that had been enacted for the preservation of holy things, and was truly sorry that this sacrilegious old wretch could not be brought to the stake. He did not envy his learned, friend the sneering contempt for religion that ran through his whole argument.

“Rant bowed and smiled, and replied that, in his opinion, the only stake the poor woman ought to be brought to was a beefsteak; for he always wished to see the law administered with mercy.

“Sleek was not surprised at hearing such a carnal argument brought to the defence of such a crime, and concluded by pressing for the severest punishment the law could inflict against this most iniquitous criminal, who—and he dared even Rant himself to deny the fact—came before that court as an old offender; he therefore pressed for a conviction against a person who had acted so flagrantly *contra bonos mores*.

“Rant said, she could not or ought not to be convicted. This Bible was not individual property; it was that of a parish that contained better than eighteen thousand inhabitants. Now, if any individual were to establish his right of property in the Bible, and she herself was a proprietress as well as any of them, the amount would be far beneath any current coin of the realm, consequently there existed no legal symbol of property for the value of which a conviction could be had.

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“As I perceive, however,” added Mr. Coke, “that the abstract of the arguments in this important case runs to about five hundred pages, I shall therefore recapitulate Judge Nodwell’s charge, which has been considered a very brilliant specimen of legal acumen and judicial eloquence.

“‘This, gentlemen of the jury,’ said his lordship,’ is a case of apparently some difficulty, and I cannot help admiring the singular talent and high principles displayed by the learned counsel on both sides, who so ably argued it. Of one thing I am certain, that no consciousness of religious ignorance, no privation of religious knowledge, could ever induce my learned friend Sleek to commit such a theft. Rather than do so, I am sure he would be conscientious enough to pass through the world without any religion at all. As it is, we all know that he is a great light in that respect—’

“‘He would be a burning light, too, my lord,’ observed Rant.

“No; his reverence for the Bible is too great, too sincere to profane it by such vulgar perusal as it may have received at the hands of that destitute old woman, who probably thumbed it day and night, without regard either to dog-ears or binding, or a consideration of how she was treating the property of the parish. The fact, however, gentlemen, seems to be, that the old woman either altogether forgot the institutions of society, or resolved society itself in her own mind into first principles. Now, gentlemen, we cannot go behind first principles, neither can we go behind the old woman. We must keep her before us, but it is not necessary to keep the Bible so. It has been found, indeed, that she did not sell, pledge, bestow, or otherwise make the book subservient to her temporal or corporal wants, as Mr. Rant very ingeniously argued. Neither did she take it to place in her library—for she had no library; nor for ostentation in her hall—for she had no hall, as my pious friend Counsellor Sleek has. But, gentlemen, even if this old woman by reading the Bible learned to repent, and felt conversion of heart, you are not to infer that the act which brought her to grace and repentance may not have been a hardened violation of the law. Beware of this error, gentlemen. The old woman by stealing this Bible may have repented her of her sins, it is true; but it is your business, gentlemen, to make her repent of the law also. The law is as great a source of repentance as the Bible any day, and, I am proud to say, has caused more human tears to be shed, and bitterer ones, too, than the Word of God ever did. Even although justified in the sight of heaven, it does not follow that this woman is to escape here. It is the act, and not the heart, that the law deals with. The purity of her motives, her repentance, are nothing to the law; but the law is everything to the person in whom they operate; because, although the heart may be innocent, the individual person must be punished. A penitent heart, or a consciousness of the pardon of God, are not fit considerations for a jury-box. You are, therefore, to exclude the motive, and to take nothing into consideration but the act; for it is only that by which the law has been violated.

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"'But is there no such thing as mercy, my lord?' asked a juror.

"In the administration of the law there is such a fiction—a beautiful negation, indeed—-but we know that Justice always holds the first place, and when she is satisfied, then we call in Mercy. Such, at least, is the wholesome practice and constitutional spirit of British law. I have now, gentlemen, rendered you every assistance in my power. If you think this old woman guilty, you will find accordingly; if not, you will give her the benefit of any doubt in her favor which you may entertain.

"The woman," continued Coke, "was convicted, and here follows the sentence of the judge.

"Martha Dotinghed—you have been convicted by the verdict of twelve as intelligent and respectable gentlemen as I ever saw in a jury-box; convicted, I am sorry to say, very properly, of a most heinous crime, that of attempting to work out your salvation in an improper manner—to wit, by making illegally free with the Word of God.

"'In troth, my lord,' replied the culprit, 'the Word of God is become so scarce nowadays, that unless one steals it, they have but a poor chance of coming by it honestly, or hearing it at all'."

"You have been convicted, I say, notwithstanding a most able defence by your counsel, who omitted no argument that could prove available for your acquittal; and I am sorry to hear from your own lips, that you are in no degree penitent for the crime you have committed. You say, the Word of God is scarce nowadays—but that fact, unhappy woman, only aggravates your guilt—for in proportion to the scarcity of the Word of God, so is its value increased—and we all know that the greater the value of that which is stolen, the deeper, in the eye of the law, is the crime of the thief. Had you not given utterance to those impenitent expressions, the court would have been anxious to deal mercifully with you. As it is, I tell you to prepare for the heaviest punishment it can inflict, which is, that you be compelled to read some one of the Commentaries upon the Book you have stolen, once, at least, before you die, should you live so long, and may God have mercy on you!

"Here the prisoner fell into strong hysterics, and was taken away in a state of insensibility from the dock.

"Now," proceeded Coke, closing the ponderous tome, "I read this case from a feeling that it bears very strongly upon that before us. Saponificus, the learned and animated civilian, in his reply to the celebrated treatise of '*Rigramarolius de Libris priggatis,*' commonly called his *Essay on Stolen Books*, asserts that there never yet was a book printed but was more or less stolen; and society, he argues, in no shape, in none of its classes—neither in the prison, lockup, blackhole, or penitentiary—presents us with such a set of impenitents and irreclaimable thieves as those who write books. Theft is their

profession, and gets them the dishonest bread by which they live. These may always read the eighth commandment by leaving the negative out, and then take it in an injunctive sense. Such persons, in prosecuting another for stealing a book, cannot come into court with clean hands. Felons in literature, therefore, appear here with a very bad grace in prosecuting others for the very crime which they themselves are in the habit of committing."

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“But, your worship,” said Dr. A——, “this charge against authors cannot apply to me; the book in question is a translation.”

“Pooh!” exclaimed Coke, “only a translation! But even so, has it notes or comments?”

“It has, your worship; but they—”

“And, sir, could you declare solemnly, that there is nothing stolen in the notes and comments, or introduction, if there is any?”

The doctor, “Ehem! hem!”

“But in the meantime,” proceeded Coke, “here have I gone to the trouble of giving such a profound decision upon a mere translation! Who is the translator?”

“I am myself, your worship; and in this case I am both plaintiff and translator.”

“That, however,” said Coke, shaking his head solemnly, “makes the case against you still worse.”

“But, your worship, there is no case against me. I have already told you that I am plaintiff and translator; and, with great respect, I don’t think you have yet given any decision whatever.”

“I have decided, sir,” replied Coke, “and taken the case I read for you as a precedent.”

“But in that case, your worship, the woman was convicted.”

“And so she is in this, sir,” replied Coke. “Officer, put Biddy Corcoran forward. Biddy Corcoran, you are an old woman, which, indeed, is evident from the nature of your offence, and have been convicted of the egregious folly of purchasing a translation, which this gentleman says was compiled or got up by himself. This is conduct which the court cannot overlook, inasmuch as if it were persisted in, we might, God help us, become inundated with translations. I am against translations—I have ever been against them, and I shall ever be against them. They are immoral in themselves, and render the same injury to literature that persons of loose morals do to society. In general, they are nothing short of a sacrilegious profanation of the dead, and I would almost as soon see the ghost of a departed friend as the translation of a defunct author, for they bear the same relation. The regular translator, in fact, is nothing less than a literary ghoul, who lives upon the mangled carcasses of the departed—a mere sack-’em-up, who disinters the dead, and sells their remains for money. You, sir, might have been better and more honestly employed than in wasting your time upon a translation. These are works that no men or class of men, except bishops, chandlers, and pastrycooks, ought to have anything to do with; and as you, I presume, are not a bishop, nor a chandler, nor a pastrycook, I recommend you to spare your countrymen in

future. Biddy Corcoran, as the court is determined to punish you severely, the penalty against you is, that you be compelled to read the translation in question once a week for the next three months. I had intended to send you to the treadmill for the same space of time: but, on looking more closely into the nature of your offence, I felt it my duty to visit you with a much severer punishment."

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“That, your worship,” replied the translator, “is no punishment at all; instead of that, it will be a pleasure to read my translation, and as you have pronounced her to be guilty, it goes in the very teeth of your decision.”

“What—what—what kind of language is this, sir?” exclaimed Sir Spigot Sputter! “This is disrespect to the court, sir. In the teeth of his decision! His worship’s decision, sir, has no teeth.”

“Indeed, on second thoughts, I think not, sir,” replied, the indignant wit and translator; “it is indeed a very toothless decision, and exceedingly appropriate in passing sentence upon an old woman in the same state.”

“Eh—eh,” said Sir Spigot, “which old woman? who do you mean, sir? Yourself or the culprit? Eh? eh?”

“Your worship forgets that there are four of us,” replied the translator.

“Well, sir! well, sir! But as to the culprit—that old woman there—having no teeth, that is not her fault,” replied Sir Spigot; “if she hasn’t teeth, she has gum enough—eh! eh! you must admit that, sir.”

“You all appear to have gum enough,” replied the wit, “and nothing but gum, only it is gum arabic to me, I know.”

“You have treated this court with disrespect, sir,” said Coke, very solemnly; “but the court will uphold its dignity. In the meantime you are fined half-a-crown.”

“But, your worship,” whispered Darby, “this is the celebrated Dr. A——, a very eminent man.”

“I have just heard, sir,” proceeded Coke, “from the senior officer of the court, that you are a very eminent man; it may be so, and I am very sorry for it. I have never heard your name, however, nor a syllable of your literary reputation, before; but as it seems you are an eminent man, I take it for granted that it must be in a private and confidential way among your particular friends. I will fine you, however, another half-crown for the eminence.”

“Well, gentlemen,” replied the doctor, “I have heard of many ’wise saws and modern instances,’ but—”

“What do you mean, sir?” said Sir Spigot. “Another insult! You asserted, sir, already, that Mr. Coke’s decision had teeth—”

“But I admitted my error,” replied the other.

“And now you mean to insinuate, I suppose, that his worship’s saws are handsaws. You are fined another half-crown, sir, for the handsaw.”

“And another,” said Coke, “for the *gum arabic*.”

The doctor fearing that the fines would increase thick and threefold, forthwith paid them all, and retired indignantly from the court.

And thus was the author of certainly one of the most beautiful translations in any language, at least in his own opinion, treated by these two worthy administrators of the law. (* A fact.)

CHAPTER XXVI. The Priest Returns Sir Thomas’s Money and Pistols

—A Bit of Controversy—A New Light Begins to Appear.

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Very fortunately for the priest he was not subjected to an examination before these worthies. Sir Thomas Gourlay, having heard of his arrest and the cause of it, sent a note with his compliments, to request that he might be conducted directly to his residence, together with his pocket-book and pistols, assuring them, at the same time, that their officers had committed a gross mistake as to his person.

This was quite sufficient, and ere the lapse of twenty minutes Father M'Mahon, accompanied by Skipton and another officer, found himself at the baronet's hall-door. On entering the hall, Sir Thomas himself was in the act of passing from the breakfast parlor to his study above stairs, leaning upon the arm of Gibson, the footman, looking at the same time pale, nervous, and unsteady upon his limbs. The moment Skipton saw him, he started, and exclaimed, as if to himself, but loud enough for the priest to hear him:

"'Gad! I've seen him before, once upon a time; and well I remember the face, for it is not one to be forgotten."

The baronet, on looking round, saw the priest, and desired him to follow them to his study.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas," said the officer, "we now place his reverence safely in your hands; here, too, is your pocket-book and pistols."

"Hand them to him, sir," replied the baronet, nodding toward the priest; "and that is enough."

"But, Sir Thomas—"

"What is it, sir? Have you not done your duty?"

"I hope so, sir; but if it would not be troublesome, sir, perhaps you would give us a receipt; an acknowledgment, sir."

"For what?"

"For the priest's body, sir, in the first place, and then for the pocket-book and pistols."

"If I were a little stronger," replied the baronet, in an angry voice, "I would write the receipt upon your own body with a strong horsewhip; begone, you impudent scoundrel!"

Skipton turned upon him a bitter and vindictive look, and replied, "Oh, very well, sir—-come, Tom, you are witness that I did my duty."

Sir Thomas on entering the study threw himself listlessly on a sofa, and desired Gibson to retire.

“Take a seat, sir,” said he, addressing Father M’Mahon. “I am far from well, and must rest a little before I speak to you; I know not what is the matter with me, but I feel all out of sorts.”

He then drew a long breath, and laid his head upon his hand, as if to recover more clearly the powers of his mind and intellect. His eyes, full of thought not unmingled with anxiety, were fixed upon the carpet, and he seemed for a time wrapped in deep and painful abstraction. At length he raised himself up, and drawing his breath apparently with more freedom began the conversation.

“Well, sir,” said he, in a tone that implied more of authority and haughtiness than of courtesy or gentlemanly feeling; “it seems the property of which I have been robbed has come into your possession.”

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“It is true, sir; and allow me to place it in your own hands exactly as I got it. I took the precaution to seal the pocket-book the moment it was returned to me, and although it was for a short time in possession of the officers of justice, yet it is untouched, and the seal I placed on it unbroken.”

The baronet’s hand, as he took the pocket-book, trembled with an agitation which he could not repress, although he did everything in his power to subdue it: his eye glittered with animation, or rather with delight, as he broke the seal.

“It was very prudently and correctly done of you, sir, to seal up the pocket-book; very well done, indeed: and I am much obliged to you so far, although we must have some conversation upon the matter immediately—”

“I only did what, as a Catholic clergyman, Sir Thomas, and an honest man, I conceived to be my duty.”

“What—what—what’s this?” exclaimed the baronet, his eye blazing with rage and disappointment. “In the name of hell’s fire, sir, what is this? My money is not all here! There is a note, sir, a one pound note wanting; a peculiar note, sir; a marked note; for I always put a marked note among my money, to provide against the contingency of such a robbery as I sustained. Pray, sir, what has become of that note? I say, priest, the whole pocket-book ten times multiplied, was not worth a fig compared with the value I placed upon that note.”

“How much did you lose, Sir Thomas?” asked the priest calmly.

“I lost sixty-nine pounds, sir.”

“Well, then,” continued the other, “would it not be well to see whether that sum is in the pocket-book. You have not yet reckoned the money.”

“The note I speak of was in a separate compartment; in a different fold of the book; apart from the rest.”

“But perhaps it has got among them? Had you not better try, sir?”

“True,” replied the other; and with eager and trembling hands he examined them note by note; but not finding that for which he sought, he stamped with rage, and dashing the pocket-book, notes and all, against the floor, he ground his teeth, and approaching the priest with the white froth of passion rising to his lips, exclaimed, “Hark you, priest, if you do not produce the missing note, I shall make you bitterly repent it! You know where it is, sir! You could understand from the note itself—” He paused, however, for he felt at once that he might be treading dangerous ground in entering into particulars. “I say, sir,” he proceeded, with a look of menace and fury, “if you refuse to produce the note I

speak of, or to procure it for me, I shall let you know to your cost what the power of British law can effect."

The priest rose up with dignity, his cheek heightened with that slight tinge, which a sense of unmerited insult and a consciousness of his own integrity render natural to man—so long as he is a man.

"Sir Thomas Gourlay," he proceeded, "upon your conduct and want of gentlemanly temper since I have entered this apartment it is not my intention to make any comment; but I need not tell you that the minister of God is received in Christian society with the respect due to his sacred office."

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“Minister of the devil, sir,” thundered the baronet; “do you think that I shall be influenced by this slavish cant? Where is the note I speak of? If you do not produce it, I shall consider you an accomplice after the fact, and will hold you responsible as such. Remember, you are but a Popish priest.”

“That is a fact, sir, which I shall always recollect with an humble sense of my own unworthiness; but so long as I discharge its duties conscientiously and truly, I shall also recollect it with honor. Of the note you allude to in such unbecoming words, I know nothing; and as to your threats, I value them not.”

“If you know nothing of the note, sir, you do certainly of the robber.”

“I do, Sir Thomas; I know who the man is that robbed you.”

“Well, sir,” replied the other, triumphantly, “I am glad you have acknowledged so much. I shall force you to produce him. At least I shall take care that the law will make you do so.”

“Sir Thomas Gourlay, I beg you to understand that there is a law beyond and above your law—the law of God—the law of Christian duty; and that you shall never force me to transgress. The man who robbed you in a moment of despair and madness, repented him of the crime; and the knowledge of that crime, and its consequent repentance were disclosed to me in one of the most holy ordinances of our religion.”

“Is it one of the privileges of your religion to throw its veil over the commission of crime? If so, the sooner your religion is extirpated out of the land the better for society.”

“No, sir, our religion does not throw its veil over the criminal, but over the penitent. We leave the laws of the land to their own resources, and aid them when we can; but in the case before us, and in all similar cases, we are the administrators of the laws of God to those who are truly penitent, and to none others. The test of repentance consists in reformation of life, and in making restitution to those who have been injured. The knowledge of this comes to us in administering the sacred ordinance of penance in the tribunal of confession; and sooner than violate this solemn compact between the mercy of God and a penitent heart, we would willingly lay down our lives. It is the most sacred of all trusts.”

“Such an ordinance, sir, is a bounty and provocative to crime.”

“It is a bounty and provocative to repentance, sir; and society has gained much and lost nothing by its operation. Remember, sir, that those who do not repent, never come to us to avow their crimes, in which case we are ignorant both of the crime and criminal. Here there is neither repentance, on the one hand, nor restitution, on the other, and society, of course, loses everything and gains nothing. In the other case, the person

sustaining the injury gains that which he had lost, and society a penitent and reformed member. If, then, this sacred refuge for the penitent—not for the criminal, remember—-had no existence, those restitutions of property which take place in thousands of cases, could never be made."

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“Still, sir, you shield the criminal from his just punishment.”

“No, sir; we never shield the criminal from his just punishment. God has promised mercy to him who repents, and we merely administer it without any reference to the operation of the law. It often happens, Sir Thomas Gourlay, that a person who has repented and made restitution, is taken hold of by the law and punished. This ordinance, therefore, does not stand between the law and its victim; it only deals between him and his God, leaving him, like any other offender, to the law he has violated.”

“I am no theologian, sir; but without any reference to your priestly cant, I simply say, that the man who is cognizant of another’s crime against the law, either of God or man, and who will shield him from justice, is *particeps criminis*, and I don’t care a fig what your obsolete sacerdotal dogmas may assert to the contrary. You say you know the man who unjustly deprived me of my property; if then, acknowledging this, you refuse to deliver him up to justice, I hold you guilty of his crime. Suppose he had taken my life, as he was near doing, how, pray, would you have made restitution? Bring me to life again, I suppose, by a miracle. Away, sir, with this cant, which is only fit for the barbarity of the dark ages, when your church was a mass of crime, cruelty, and ignorance; and when a cunning and rapacious priesthood usurped an authority over both soul and body, ay, and property too, that oppressed and degraded human nature.”

“I will reason no longer with you, sir,” replied the priest; “because you talk in ignorance of the subject we are discussing—but having now discharged an important duty, I will take my leave.”

“You may of me,” replied the other; “but you will not so readily shift yourself out of the law.”

“Any charge, sir, which either law or Justice may bring against me, I shall be ready to meet; and I now, for your information, beg to let you know that the law you threaten me with affords its protection to me and the class to which I belong, in the discharge of this most sacred and important trust. Your threats, Sir Thomas, consequently, I disregard.”

“The more shame for it if it does,” replied the baronet; “but, hark you, sir, I do not wish, after all, that you and I should part on unfriendly terms. You refuse to give up the robber?”

“I would give up my life sooner.”

“But could you not procure me the missing note?”

“Of the missing note, Sir Thomas Gourlay, I know nothing. I consequently neither can nor will make any promise to restore it.”

“You may tell the robber from me,” pursued the baronet, “that I will give him the full amount of his burglary, provided he restores me that note. The other sixty-nine pounds shall be his on that condition, and no questions asked.”

“I have already told you, sir, that it was under the seal of confession the knowledge of the crime came to me. Out of that seal I cannot revert to the subject without betraying my trust; for, if he acknowledged his guilt to me under any other circumstances, it would become my duty to hand him over to the law.”

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“Curse upon all priests!” said the other indignantly; “they are all the same; a crew of cunning scoundrels, who attempt to subjugate the ignorant and the credulous to their sway; a pack of spiritual swindlers, who get possession of the consciences of the people through pious fraud, and then make slavish instruments of them for their own selfish purposes. In the meantime I shall keep my eye upon you, Mr. M’Mahon, and, believe me, if I can get a hole in your coat I shall make a rent of it.”

“It is a poor privilege, sir, that of insulting the defenceless. You know I am doubly so—-defenceless from age, defenceless in virtue of my sacred profession; but if I am defenceless against your insults, Sir Thomas Gourlay, I am not against your threats, which I despise and defy. The integrity of my life is beyond your power, the serenity of my conscience beyond your vengeance. You are not of my flock, but if you were, I would say, Sir Thomas, I fear you are a bold, bad man, and have much to repent of in connection with your past and present life—much reparation to make to your fellow-creatures. Yes; I would say, Sir Thomas Gourlay, the deep tempest of strong passions within you has shaken your powerful frame until it totters to its fall. I would say, beware; repent while it is time, and be not unprepared for the last great event. That event, Sir Thomas, is not far distant, if I read aright the foreshadowing of death and dissolution that is evident in your countenance and frame. I speak these words in, I trust, a charitable and forgiving spirit. May they sink into your heart, and work it to a sense of Christian feeling and duty!

“This I would say were you mine—this I do say, knowing that you are not; for my charity goes beyond my church, and embraces my enemy as well as my friend;” and as he spoke he prepared co go.

“You may go, sir,” replied the baronet, with a sneer of contempt, “only you have mistaken your man. I am no subject for your craft—not to be deceived by your hypocrisy—and laugh to scorn your ominous but impotent croaking. Only before you go, remember the conditions I have offered the scoundrel who robbed me; and if the theological intricacies of your crooked creed will permit you, try and get him to accept them. It will be better for him, and better for you too. Do this, and you may cease to look upon Sir Thomas Gourlay as an enemy.”

The priest bowed, and without returning any reply left the apartment and took his immediate departure.

Sir Thomas, after he had gone, went to the glass and surveyed himself steadily. The words of the priest were uttered with much solemnity and earnestness; but withal in such a tone of kind regret and good feeling, that their import and impressiveness were much heightened by this very fact.

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“There is certainly a change upon me, and not one for the better,” he said to himself; “but at the same time the priest, cunning as he is, has been taken in by appearances. I am just sufficiently changed in my looks to justify and give verisimilitude to the game I am playing. When Lucy hears of my illness, which must be a serious one, nothing on earth will keep her from me; and if I cannot gain any trace to her residence, a short paragraph in the papers, intimating and regretting the dangerous state of my health, will most probably reach her, and have the desired effect. If she were once back, I know that, under the circumstances of my illness, and the impression that it has been occasioned by her refusal to marry Dunroe, she will yield; especially as I shall put the sole chances of my recovery upon her compliance. Yet why is it that I urge her to an act which will probably make her unhappy during life? But it will not. She is not the fool her mother was; and yet I am not certain that her mother was a fool either. We did not agree; we could not. She always refused to coincide with me almost in everything; and when I wished to teach Lucy the useful lessons of worldly policy, out came her silly maxims of conscience, religion, and such stuff. But yet religious people are the best. I have always found it so. That wretched priest, for instance, would give up his life sooner than violate what he calls—that is, what he thinks—his duty. There must be some fiction, however, to regulate the multitude; and that fiction must be formed by, and founded on, the necessities of society. That, unquestionably, is the origin of all law and all religion. Only religion uses the stronger and the wiser argument, by threatening us with another world. Well done, religion! You acted upon a fixed principle of nature. The force of the enemy we see not may be magnified and exaggerated; the enemy we see not we fear, especially when described in the most terrible colors by men who are paid for their misrepresentations, although these same impostors have never seen the enemy they speak of themselves. But the enemy we see we can understand and grapple with; ergo, the influence of religion over law; ergo, the influence of the priest, who deals in the imaginary and ideal, over the legislator and the magistrate, who deal only in the tangible and real. Yes, this indeed, is the principle. How we do fear a ghost! What a shiver, what a horror runs through the frame when we think we see one; and how different is this from our terror of a living enemy. Away, then, with this imposture, I will none of it. Yet hold: what was that I saw looking into the window of the carriage that contained my brother’s son? What was it? Why a form created by my own fears. That credulous nurse, old mother Corbet, stuffed me so completely with superstition when I was young and cowardly, that I cannot, in many instances, shake myself free from it yet. Even the words of that priest alarmed me for a moment. This, however, is merely the weakness of human nature—the effect of unreal phantasms that influence the reason while we are awake, just as that of dreams does the imagination while we are asleep. Away, then, ye idle brood! I will none of you.”

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He then sat himself down on the sofa, and rang for Gibson, but still the train of thought pursued him.

“As to Lucy, I think it is still possible to force her into the position for which I destined her—quite possible. She reasons like a girl, of course, as I told her. She reasons like a girl who looks upon that silly nonsense called love as the great business of life; and acts accordingly. Little she thinks, however, that love—her love—his love—both their loves—will never meet twelve months after what is termed the honey-moon. No, they will part north and south. And yet the honey-moon has her sharp ends, as well as every other moon. When love passes away, she will find that the great business of life is, to make as many as she can feel that she is above them in the estimation of the world; to impress herself upon her equals, until they shall be forced to acknowledge her superiority. And although this may be sometimes done by intellect and principle, yet, in the society in which she must move, it is always done by rank, by high position, and by pride, that jealous vindictive pride which is based upon the hatred of our kind, and at once smiles and scorns. What would I be if I were not a baronet? Sir Thomas Gourlay passes where Mr. Gourlay would be spurned. This is the game of life, and we shall play it with the right weapons. Many a cringing scoundrel bows to the baronet who despises the man; and for this reason it is that I have always made myself to be felt to some purpose, and so shall Lucy, if I should die for it. I hate society, because I know that society hates me; and for that reason I shall so far exalt her, that she will have the base compound at her feet, and I shall teach her to scorn and trample upon it. If I thought there were happiness in any particular rank of life, I would not press her; but I know there is not, and for that reason she loses nothing, and gains the privilege—the power—of extorting homage from the proud, the insolent, and the worthless. This is the triumph she shall and must enjoy.”

Gibson then entered, and the baronet, on hearing his foot, threw himself into a languid and invalid attitude.

“Gibson,” said he, “I am very unwell; I apprehend a serious attack of illness.”

“I trust not, sir.”

“If any person should call, I am ill, observe, and not in a condition to see them.”

“Very well, sir.”

“Unless you should suspect, or ascertain, that it is some person on behalf of Miss Gourlay; and even then, mark, I am very ill indeed, and you do not think me able to speak to any one; but will come in and see.”

“Yes, sir; certainly sir.”

“There, then, that will do.”

The priest, on leaving the baronet’s residence, was turning his steps toward the hotel in which the stranger had put up, when his messenger to Constitution Hill approaching put his hand to his hat, and respectfully saluted him.

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“I beg your pardon, sir,” said he, “and I am sorry, now that I know who you are, for the trouble you got into.”

“Thank you, my friend,” said the priest; “I felt it wouldn’t signify, knowing in my conscience that I was no robber. In the meantime, I got one glimpse of your metropolitan life, as they call it, and the Lord knows I never wish to get another. Troth, I was once or twice so confounded with the noise and racket, that I thought I had got into purgatory by mistake.”

“Tut, sir, that’s nothing,” replied Skipton; “we were very calm and peaceable this morning; but with respect to that baronet, he’s a niggardly fellow. Only think of him, never once offering us the slightest compensation for bringing him home his property! There’s not another man in Ireland would send us off empty-handed as he did. The thing’s always usual on recovering property.”

“Speak for yourself, in the singular number, if you plaise; you don’t imagine that I wanted compensation.”

“No, sir, certainly not; but I’m just thinking,” he added, after curiously examining Father M’Mahon’s face for some time, “that you and I met before somewhere.”

“Is that the memory you have?” said the priest, “when you ought to recollect that we met this morning, much against my will, I must say.”

“I don’t mean that,” said the man; “but I think I saw you once in a lunatic asylum.”

“Me, in a lunatic asylum?” exclaimed the good priest, somewhat indignantly. “The thing’s a bounce, my good man, before you go farther. The little sense I’ve had has been sufficient, thank goodness, to keep me free from such establishments.”

“I don’t mean that, sir,” replied the other, smiling, “but if I don’t mistake, you once brought a clergyman of our persuasion to the lunatic asylum in ------.”

“Ay, indeed,” returned the priest; “poor Quin. His was a case of monomania; he imagined himself a gridiron, on which all heretics were to be roasted. That young man was one of the finest scholars in the three kingdoms. But how do you remember that?”

“Why for good reasons; because I was a servant in the establishment at the time. Well,” he added, pausing, “it is curious enough that I should have seen this very morning three persons I saw in that asylum.”

“If I had been much longer in that watch-house,” replied the other, “I’m not quite certain but I’d soon be qualified to pay a permanent visit to some of them. Who were the three persons you saw there, in the mane time?”

“That messenger of yours was one of them, and that niggardly baronet was the other; yourself, as I said, making the third.”

The priest looked at him seriously; “you mane Corbet,” said he, “or Dunphy as he is called?”

“I do. He and the baron brought a slip of a boy there; and, upon my conscience, I think there was bad work between them. At all events, poor Mr. Quin and he were inseparable. The lad promised that he would allow himself to be roasted, the very first man, upon the reverend gridiron;—and! for that reason Quin took him into hand; and gave him an excellent education.”

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“And no one,” replied the priest, “was better qualified to do it. But what bad work do you suspect between Corbet and the baronet?”

“Why, I have my suspicions,” replied the man. “It’s not a month since I heard that the son of that very baronet’s brother, who was heir to the estate and titles, disappeared, and has never been heard of since. Now, all the water in the sea wouldn’t wash the pair of them clear of what I suspect, which is—that both had a hand in removing that boy. The baronet was a young man at the time, but he has a face that no one could ever forget. As for Corbet, I remember him well, as why shouldn’t I? he came there often. I’ll take my oath it would be a charity to bring the affair to light.”

“Do you think the boy is there still?” asked the priest, suppressing all appearance of the interest which he felt.

“No,” replied the other, “he escaped about two or three years ago; but, poor lad, when it was discovered that he led too easy a life, and had got educated, his treatment was changed; a straight waistcoat was put on him, and he was placed in solitary confinement. At first he was no more mad than I am; but he did get occasionally mad afterwards. I know he attempted suicide, and nearly cut his throat with a piece of glass one day that his hands got loose while they were changing his linen. Old Rivet died, and the establishment was purchased by Tickleback, who, to my own knowledge, had him regularly scourged.”

“And how did he escape, do you know?” inquired the priest.

“I could tell you that, too, maybe,” replied Skipton; “but I think, sir, I have told you enough for the present. If that young man is living, I would swear that he ought to stand in Sir Thomas Gourlay’s shoes. And now do you think, sir,” he inquired, coming at last to the real object of his communication, “that if his right could be made clear, any one who’d help him to his own mightn’t expect to be made comfortable for life?”

“I don’t think there’s a doubt about it,” replied the priest. “The property is large, and he could well afford to be both generous and grateful.”

“I know,” returned the man, “that he is both one and the other, if he had it in his power.”

“Well,” said the priest, seriously; “mark my words—this may be the most fortunate day you ever saw. In the mane time, keep a close mouth. The friends of that identical boy are on the search for him this moment. They had given him up for dead; but it is not long since they discovered that he was living. I will see you again on this subject.”

“I am now a constable,” said the man, “attached to the office you were in to-day, and I can be heard of any time.”

“Very well,” replied the priest, “you shall hear either from me or from some person interested in the recovery of the boy that’s lost.”

CHAPTER XXVII. Lucy calls upon Lady Gourlay, where she meets her Lover

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Sir Thomas, who shams Illness, is too sharp for Mrs. Mainwaring, who visits Him—-Affecting interview between Lucy and Lady Gourlay

Lucy Gourlay, anxious to relieve her father's mind as much as it was in her power to do, wrote to him the day after the visit of Ensign Roberts and old Sam to Summerfield Cottage. Her letter was affectionate, and even tender, and not written without many tears, as was evident by the blots and blisters which they produced upon the paper. She fully corroborated the stranger's explanation to her father; for although ignorant at the time that an interview had taken place between them, she felt it to be her duty toward all parties to prevent, as far as her testimony could go, the possibility of any misunderstanding upon the subject. This letter was posted in Dublin, from an apprehension lest the local post-office might furnish a clew to her present abode. The truth was, she feared that if her father could trace her out, he would claim her at once, and force her home by outrage and violence. In this, however, she was mistaken; he had fallen upon quite a different and far more successful plan for that purpose. He knew his daughter well, and felt that if ever she might be forced to depart from those strong convictions of the unhappiness that must result from a union between baseness and honor, it must be by an assumption of tenderness and affection toward her, as well as by a show of submission, and a concession of his own will to hers. This was calculating at once upon her affection and generosity. He had formed this plan before her letter reached him, and on perusing it, he felt still more determined to make this treacherous experiment upon her very virtues—thus most unscrupulously causing them to lay the groundwork of her own permanent misery.

In the meantime, Mrs. Mainwaring, having much confidence in the effect which a knowledge of her disclosure must, as she calculated, necessarily produce on the ambitious baronet, resolved to lose no time in seeing him. On the evening before she went, however, the following brief conversation took place between her and Lucy:

"My dear Lucy," said she, "a thought has just struck me. Your situation, excepting always your residence with us, is one of both pain and difficulty. I am not a woman who has ever been much disposed to rely on my own judgment in matters of importance."

"But there, my dear Mrs. Mainwaring, you do yourself injustice."

"No, my dear child."

"But what is your thought?" asked Lucy, who felt some unaccountable apprehension at what her friend was about to say.

"You tell me that neither you nor your aunt, Lady Gourlay, have ever met."

"Never, indeed," replied Lucy; "nor do I think we should know each other if we did."

“Then suppose you were, without either favor or ceremony, to call upon her—to present yourself to her in virtue of your relationship—in virtue of her high character and admirable principles—in virtue of the painful position in which you are placed—to claim the benefit of her experience and wisdom, and ask her to advise you as she would a daughter.”

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Lucy's eyes glistened with delight, and, stooping down, she imprinted a kiss upon the forehead of her considerate and kind friend.

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Mainwaring," she exclaimed: "a thousand thanks for that admirable suggestion. Many a time has my heart yearned to know that extraordinary woman, of whose virtues the world talks so much, and whose great and trusting spirit even sorrow and calamity cannot prostrate. Yes, I will follow your advice; I will call upon her; for, even setting aside all selfish considerations, I should wish to know her for her own worth."

"Very well, then; I am going in to see your father to-morrow—had you not better come with me? I shall leave you at her house, and can call for you after my interview with him shall have been concluded. I shall order a chaise from the hotel to be with us in the morning, so that you may run little or no risk of being seen or known."

"That will be delightful," replied Lucy; "for I am sure Lady Gourlay will be a kind and affectionate friend to me. In seeking her acquaintance—may I hope, her friendship—I am not conscious of violating any command or duty. Ever since I recollect, it was a well-known fact, that the families, that is to say, my father and uncle, never met, nor visited—mamma knew, of course, that to keep up an intimacy, under such circumstances, would occasion much domestic disquietude. This is all I know about it; but I never remember having heard any injunction not to visit."

"No," replied Mrs. Mainwaring; "such an injunction would resemble that of a man who should desire his child not to forget to rise next morning, or, to be sure to breathe through his lungs. I can very well understand why such a prohibition was never given in that case. Well, then, we shall start pretty early in the morning, please God; but remember that you must give me a full detail of your reception and interview."

The next day, about the hour of two o'clock, a chaise drew up at the residence of Lady Gourlay, and on the hall-door being opened, a steady, respectable-looking old footman made his appearance at the chaise door, and, in reply to their inquiries, stated, "that her ladyship had been out for some time, but was then expected every moment."

"What is to be done?" said Lucy, in some perplexity; "or how am I to bestow myself if she does not return soon?"

"We expect her ladyship every moment, madam," replied the man; "and if you will have the goodness to allow me to conduct you to the drawing-room, you will not have to wait long—I may assure you of that."

"You had better go in, my dear," said Mrs. Mainwaring, "and I shall call for you in about an hour, or, perhaps, a little better."

It was so arranged, and Lucy went in accordingly.

We must now follow Mrs. Mainwaring, who, on inquiring if she could see Sir Thomas Gourlay, was informed by Gibson, who had got his cue, that he was not in a condition to see any one at present.

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“My business is somewhat important,” replied Mrs. Mainwaring, with a good deal of confidence in the truth of what she said.

Gibson, however, approached her, and, with the air of a man who was in possession of the secrets of the family, said, “Perhaps, ma’am, you come on behalf of Miss Gourlay?”

“Whatever my business may be,” she replied, indignantly, “be it important or otherwise, I never communicate it through the medium of a servant; I mean you no offence,” she proceeded; “but as I have already stated that it is of importance, I trust that will be sufficient for the present.”

“Excuse me, ma’am,” replied Gibson, “I only put the question by Sir Thomas’s express orders. His state of health is such, that unless upon that subject he can see no one. I will go to him, however, and mention what you have said. He is very ill, however, exceedingly ill, and I fear will not be able to see you; but I shall try.”

Sir Thomas was seated upon a sofa reading some book or other, when Gibson reappeared.

“Well, Gibson, who is this?”

“A lady, sir; and she says she wishes to see you on very important business.”

“Hum!—do you think it anything connected with Miss Gourlay?”

“I put the question to her, sir,” replied the other, “and she bridled a good deal—I should myself suppose it is.”

“Well, then, throw me over my dressing-gown and nightcap; here, pull it up behind, you blockhead;—there now—how do I look?”

“Why, ahem, a little too much in health, Sir Thomas, if it could be avoided.”

“But, you stupid rascal, isn’t that a sign of fever? and isn’t my complaint fulness about the head—a tendency of blood there? That will do now; yes, the plethoric complexion to a shade; and, by the way, it is no joke either. Send her up now.”

When Mrs. Mainwaring entered, the worthy invalid was lying incumbent upon the sofa, his head raised high upon pillows, with his dressing-gown and night-cap on, and his arms stretched along by his sides, as if he were enduring great pain.

“Oh, Mrs. Norton,” said he, after she had courtesied, “how do you do?”

“I am sorry to see you ill, Sir Thomas,” she replied, “I hope there is nothing serious the matter.”

“I wish I myself could hope so, Mrs. Norton.”

“Excuse me, Sir Thomas, I am no longer Mrs. Norton; Mrs. Mainwaring, at your service.”

“Ah, indeed! Then you have changed your condition, as they say. Well, I hope it is for the better, Mrs. Mainwaring; I wish you all joy and happiness!”

“Thank you, Sir Thomas, it is for the better; I am very happily married.”

“I am glad to hear it—I am very glad to hear it; that is to say, if I can be glad at anything. I feel very ill, Mrs. Mainwaring, very ill, indeed; and this blunt, plain-spoken doctor of mine gives me but little comfort. Not that I care much about any doctor’s opinion—it is what I feel myself that troubles me. You are not aware, perhaps, that my daughter has abandoned me—deserted me—and left me solitary—sick—ill; without care—without attendance—without consolation;—and all because I wished to make her happy.”

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“This, Sir Thomas,” replied Mrs. Mainwaring, avoiding a direct reply as to her knowledge of Lucy’s movements, “is, I presume, with reference to her marriage with Lord Dunroe.”

“Oh yes; young women will not, now-a-days, allow a parent to form any opinion as to what constitutes their happiness; but I cannot be angry with Lucy now; indeed, I am not. I only regret her absence from my sick bed, as I may term it; for, indeed, it is in bed I ought to be.”

“Sir Thomas, I, came to speak with you very seriously, upon the subject of her union with that young nobleman.”

“Ah, but I am not in a condition, Mrs. Mainwaring, to enter upon such a topic at present. The doctor has forbidden me to speak upon any subject that might excite me. You must excuse me, then, madam; I really cannot enter upon it. I never thought T loved Lucy so much;—I only want my child to be with me. She and I are all that I are left together now; but she has deserted me at the last moment, for I fear I am near it.”

“But, Sir Thomas, if you would only hear me for a few minutes, I could satisfy you that —”

“But I cannot hear you, Mrs. Mainwaring; I cannot hear you; I am not in a state to do so; I feel feverish, and exceedingly ill.”

“Five minutes would do, Sir Thomas.”

“Five minutes! five centuries of torture! I must ring the bell, Mrs. Mainwaring, if you attempt to force this subject on me. I should be sorry to treat you rudely, but you must see at once that I am quite unable to talk of anything calculated to disturb me. I have a tendency of blood to the head—I am also nervous and irritable. Put it off, my dear madam. I trust you shall have another and a better opportunity. Do ring, and desire Lucy to come to me.”

Mrs. Mainwaring really became alarmed at the situation of the baronet, and felt, from this request to have his daughter sent to him, which looked like delirium, that he was not in a state to enter upon or hear anything that might disappoint or disturb him. She consequently rose to take her leave, which she did after having expressed her sincere regret at his indisposition, as she termed it.

“I wish it was only indisposition, Mrs. Mainwaring, I wish it was. Present my respects to your husband, and I wish you and him all happiness;” and so with another courtesy, Mrs. Mainwaring took her leave.

After she had gone, Gibson once more attended the bell.

“Well, Gibson,” said his master, sitting up and flinging his nightcap aside, “did you see that old grindress? Zounds and the devil, what are women? The old mantrap has got married at these years! Thank heaven, my grandmother is dead, or God knows what the devil might put into her old noddle.”

“Women are very strange cattle, certainly, sir,” replied Gibson, with a smirk, “and not age itself will keep them from a husband.”

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“Lucy—Miss Gourlay, I mean—is with her; I am certain of it. The girl was always very much attached to her, and I know the sly old devil has been sent to negotiate with me, but I declined. I knew better than to involve myself in a controversy with an old she prig who deals in nothing but maxims, and morals, and points of duty. I consequently sent her off in double quick time, as they say. Get me some burgundy and water. I really am not well. There is something wrong, Gibson, whatever it is; but I think it’s nothing but anxiety. Gibson, listen. I have never been turned from my purpose yet, and I never shall. Miss Gourlay must be Countess of Cullamore, or it is a struggle for life and death between her and me; either of us shall die, or I shall have my way. Get me the burgundy and water,” and Gibson, with his sleek bow, went to attend his orders.

Mrs. Mainwaring having some purchases to make and some visits to pay, and feeling that her unexpectedly brief visit to Sir Thomas had allowed her time for both, did not immediately return to call upon Lucy, fearing that she might only disturb the interview between her and Lady Gourlay.

Lucy, as the servant said, was shown up to the drawing-room, where she amused herself as well as she could, by examining some fine paintings, among which was one of her late uncle. The features of this she studied with considerable attention, and could not help observing that, although they resembled collectively those of her father, the deformity of the one eye only excepted, yet the general result was strikingly different. All that was harsh, and coarse, and repulsive in the countenance of her father, was here softened down into an expression of gentleness, firmness, and singular candor, whilst, at the same time, the family likeness could not for a moment be questioned or mistaken.

Whilst thus occupied, a foot was heard, as if entering the drawing-room, and naturally turning round, she beheld the stranger before her. The surprise of each was mutual, for the meeting was perfectly unexpected by either. A deep blush overspread Lucy’s exquisite features, which almost in a moment gave way to a paleness that added a new and equally delightful phase to her beauty.

“Good heavens, my dear Lucy,” exclaimed the stranger, “do I find you here! I had heard that the families were estranged; but on that very account I feel the more deeply delighted at your presence under Lady Gourlay’s roof. This happiness comes to me with a double sense of enjoyment, from the fact of its being unexpected.”

The alternations of red and white still continued as Lucy replied, her sparkling eye chastened down by the veil of modesty as she spoke: “I am under Lady Gourlay’s roof for the first time in my life. Indeed, I have come here to make an experiment, if I may use the expression, upon the goodness of her heart. The amiable lady with whom I now reside suggested to me to do so, a suggestion which I embraced with delight. I have been here only a few minutes, and await her ladyship’s return, which they tell me may be expected immediately.”

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“It would indeed be unfortunate,” replied the stranger, “that two individuals so nearly connected by family, and what is more, the possession of similar virtues, should not be known to each other.”

This compliment brought a deeper tinge of color to Lucy’s cheek, who simply replied, “I have often wished most sincerely for the pleasure—the honor, I should say—of her acquaintance; but unfortunately the ill-feeling that has subsisted between the families, or rather between a portion of them, has hitherto prevented it. If I were now under my father’s roof a visit here were out of the question; but you know, Charles, I cannot, and I ought not, to inherit his resentments.”

“True, my dear Lucy, and I am glad to see you here for many, many reasons. No, your father’s resentments would perish for want of nurture in a heart like yours. But, Lucy, there is a subject in which I trust we both feel a dearer and a deeper interest than that of family feud. I am aware of this hateful union which your father wishes to bring about between you and this Lord Dunroe. I have been long aware of it, as you know; but need I say that I place every reliance, all honorable confidence, in your truth and attachment?”

He had approached, and gently taking her hand in his as he spoke, he uttered these words in a tone so full at once of tenderness and that sympathy to which he knew her sufferings on this point had entitled her, that Lucy was considerably affected, although she restrained her emotions as well as she could.

“If it were not so,” she replied, in a voice whose melody was made more touchingly beautiful by the slight tremor which she endeavored to repress, “if it were not so, Charles, I would not now be a fugitive. from my father’s roof.”

The stranger’s eye sparkled with the rapturous enthusiasm of love, as the gentle girl, all blushes, gave expression to an assurance so gratifying, so delicious to his heart.

“Dearest Lucy,” said he, “I fear I am unworthy of you. Oh, could you but know how those words of yours have made my heart tremble with an excess of transport which language fails to express, you would also know that the affection with which I love you is as tender, as pure, as unselfish, as ever warmed the heart of man. And yet, as I said, I fear it is unworthy of you. I know your father’s character, his determination, the fierce force of his will, and the energy with which he pursues every object on which he sets his heart or ambition. I say I know all this, and I sometimes fear the consequences. What can the will of only one pure, gentle, and delicate heart avail against the united powers of ambition, authority, persuasion, force, determination, perhaps violence? What, I repeat, can a gentle heart like yours ultimately avail against such a host of difficulties? And it is for this reason that I say I am unworthy of you, for I fear—and you know that perfect love casteth out all fear.”

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“My dear Charles, if love were without fear it would lose half its tenderness. An eternal sunshine, would soon sicken the world. But as for your apprehensions of my solitary heart failing against such difficulties as it must encounter, you seem to omit one slight element in calculating your terrors, and that simple element is a host in itself.”

“Which is?”

“Love for you, dear Charles. I know you may probably feel that this avowal ought to be expressed with more hesitation, veiled over by the hypocrisy of language, disguised by the hackneyed forms of mere sentiment, uttered like the assertions of a coquette, and degraded by that tampering with truth which makes the heart lie unto itself. Oh, yes!—-perhaps, Charles, you may think that because I fail to express what I feel in that spirit of ambiguity which a love not confident in the truth, purity, and rectitude of its own principles must always borrow—that because my heart fails to approach yours by the usual circuitous route with which ordinary hearts do approach—yes, you may imagine for all these reasons that my affection is not—but—” and here she checked herself—-“why,” she added, with dignity, whilst her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled, “why should I apologize for the avowal of a love of which I am not ashamed, and which has its strongest defence in the worth and honor of its object?”

Tears of enthusiasm rushed down her cheeks as she spoke, and her lover could only say, “Dearest Lucy, most beloved of my heart, your language, your sentiments, your feelings—so pure, so noble, so far above those commonplaces of your sex, only cause me to shrink almost into nothing when I compare or contrast myself with you. Let, however, one principle guide us—the confidence that our love is mutual and cannot be disturbed. I am for the present placed in circumstances that are exceedingly painful. In point of fact, I am wrapped in obscurity and shadow, and there exists, besides, a possibility that I may not become, in point of fortune, such a man as you might possibly wish to look upon as your husband.”

“If you are now suffering your fine mind, Charles, to become unconsciously warped by the common prejudices of life, I beseech you to reflect upon the heart to which you address yourself. Society presents not a single prejudice which in any degree aids or supports virtue, and truth, and honor, that I do not cherish, and wish you to cherish; but if you imagine that you will become less dear to me because you may fail to acquire some of the artificial dignities or honors of life, then it is clear that you know not how to estimate the spirit and character of Lucy Grourlay.”

“I know you will be severely tried, my dear Lucy.”

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“Know me aright, Charles. I have been severely tried. Many a girl, I am sorry to say, would forget Dunroe’s profligacy in his rank. Many a girl, in contemplating the man, could see nothing but the coronet; for ambition—the poorest, the vainest, and the most worthless of all kinds of ambition—that of rank, title, the right of precedence—is unfortunately cultivated as a virtue in the world of fashion, and as such it is felt. Be it so, Charles; let me remain unfashionable and vulgar. Perish the title if not accompanied by worth; fling the gaudy coronet aside if it covers not the brow of probity and honor. Retain those, dear Charles—retain worth, probity, and honor—and you retain a heart that looks upon them as the only titles that confer true rank and true dignity.”

The stranger gave her a long gaze of admiration, and exclaimed, deeply affected,

“Alas, my Lucy, you are, I fear, unfit for the world. Your spirit is too pure, too noble for common life. Like some priceless gem, it sparkles with the brilliancy of too many virtues for the ordinary mass of mankind to appreciate.”

“No such thing, Charles: you quite overrate me; but God forbid that the possession of virtue and good dispositions should ever become a disqualification for this world. It is not so; but even if it were, provided I shine in the estimation of my own little world, by which I mean the affection of him to whom I shall unite my fate, then I am satisfied: his love and his approbation shall constitute my coronet and my honor.”

The stranger was absolutely lost in admiration and love, for he felt that the force of truth and sincerity had imparted an eloquence and an energy to her language that were perfectly fascinating and irresistible.

“My dear life,” said he, “the music of your words, clothing, as it does, the divine principles they utter, must surely resemble the melody of heaven’s own voices. For my part, I feel relaxed in such a delicious rapture as I have never either felt or dreamt of before—entranced, as it were, in a sense of your wonderful beauty and goodness. But, dearest Lucy, allow me to ask on what terms are you with your father? Have you heard from him? Have you written to him? Is he aware of your present residence?”

“No,” she replied; “he is not aware of my present residence, but I have written to him. I wished to set his mind at rest as well as I could, and to diminish his anxiety as far as in me lay. Heaven knows,” she added, bursting into tears, “that this unnatural estrangement between father and daughter is most distressing. I am anxious to be with papa, to render him, in every sense, all the duties of a child, provided only he will not persist in building up the superstructure of rank upon my own unhappiness. Have you seen him?” she inquired, drying her eyes, a task in which she was tenderly assisted by the stranger.

“I saw him,” he replied, “for a short time;” but the terms in which he explained the nature of the interview between himself and the baronet were not such as could afford her a

distinct impression of all that took place, simply because he wished to spare her the infliction of unnecessary pain.

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“And now, Lucy,” he added, “I feel it necessary to claim a large portion of your approbation.”

She looked at him with a smile, but awaited his explanation.

“You will scarcely credit me when I assure you that I have had a clew to your place of residence, or concealment, or whatever it is to be termed, since the first morning of your arrival there, and yet I disturbed you not, either by letter or visit. Thus you may perceive how sacred your lightest wish is to me.”

“And do you imagine that I am insensible to this delicate generosity?” she asked—“oh, no; indeed, I fully appreciate it; but now, Charles, will you permit me to ask how, or when, or where you have been acquainted with my aunt Gourlay, for I was not aware that you had known each other?”

“This, my dear Lucy,” he replied, smiling, “you shall have cleared up along with all my other mysteries. Like every riddle, although it may seem difficult now, it will be plain enough when told.”

“It matters not, dear Charles; I have every confidence in your truth and honor, and that is sufficient.”

He then informed her briefly, that he should be under the necessity of going to France for a short space, upon business of the deepest importance to himself.

“My stay, however,” he added, “will not be a very long one; and I trust, that after my return, I shall be in a position to speak out my love. Indeed, I am anxious for this, dear Lucy, for I know how strong the love of truth and candor is in your great and generous heart. And yet, for the sake of one good and amiable individual, or rather, I should say, of two, the object of my journey to France will not be accomplished without the deepest pain to myself. It is, I may say here, to spare the feelings of the two individuals in question, that I have preserved the strict incognito which I thought necessary since my arrival in this country.”

“Farewell until then, my dear Charles; and in whatever object you may be engaged, let me beg that you will not inflict a wanton or unnecessary wound upon a good or amiable heart; but I know you will not—it is not in your nature.”

“I trust not,” he added, as he took his leave. “I cannot wait longer for lady Gourlay; but before I go, I will write a short note for her in the library, which will, for the present, answer the same purpose as seeing her. Farewell, then, dearest and best of girls!—-farewell, and be as happy as you can; would that I could say, as I wish you, until we meet again.”

And thus they separated.

The scene that had just taken place rendered every effort at composure necessary on the part of Lucy, before the return of Lady Gourlay. This lady, strange as it may seem, she had yet never seen or met, and she now began to reflect upon the nature of the visit she had made her, as well as of the reception she might get. If it were possible that her father had made away with her child on the one hand, could

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it be possible, on the other, that Lady Gourlay would withhold her resentment from the daughter of the man who had made her childless? But, no; her generous heart could not for a moment admit the former possibility. She reasoned not from what she had felt at his hands, but as a daughter, who, because she abhorred the crime imputed to him, could not suppose him capable of committing it. His ambition was all for herself. Neither, she felt, would Lady Gourlay, even allowing for the full extent of her suspicions, confound the innocent daughter with the offending parent. Then her reputation for meekness, benevolence, patience, charity, and all those virtues which, without effort, so strongly impress themselves upon the general spirit of social life, spoke with a thousand tongues on her behalf. Yes, she was glad she came; she felt the spirit of a virtuous relationship strongly in her heart; and in that heart she thanked the amiable Mrs. Mainwaring for the advice she had given her.

A gentle and diffident tap at the door interrupted the course of her reflections; and the next moment, a lady, grave, but elegant in appearance, entered. She courtesied with peculiar grace, and an air of the sweetest benignity, to Lucy, who returned it with one in which humility, reverence, and dignity, were equally blended. Neither, indeed, could for a single moment doubt that an accomplished and educated gentlewoman stood before her. Lucy, however, felt that it was her duty to speak first, and account for a visit so unexpected.

“I know not,” she said, “as yet, how to measure the apology which I ought to make to Lady Gourlay for my presence here. My heart tells me that I have the honor of addressing that lady.”

“I am, indeed, madam, that unhappy woman.”

Lucy approached her, and said, “Do not reject me, madam; pardon me—love me—pity me;—I am Lucy Gourlay.”

Lady Gourlay opened her arms, exclaiming, as she did it, in a voice of the deepest emotion, “My dear niece—my child—my daughter if you will;” and they wept long and affectionately on each other’s bosoms.

“You are the only living individual,” said Lucy, after some time, “whom I could ask to pity me; but I am not ashamed to solicit your sympathy. Dear, dear aunt, I am very unhappy. But this, I fear, is wrong; for why should I add my sorrows to the weight of misery which you yourself have been compelled to bear? I fear it is selfish and ungenerous to do so.”

“No, my child; whatever the weight of grief or misery which we are forced, perhaps, for wise purposes, to bear, it is ordained, for purposes equally wise and beneficent, that

every act of sympathy with another's sorrow lessens our own. Dear Lucy, let me, if you can, or will be permitted to do so, be a loving mother to you, and stand to my heart in relation to the child I have lost; or think that your own dear mother still survives in me."

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This kindness and affection fairly overcame Lucy, who sat down on a sofa, and wept bitterly. Lady Gourlay herself was deeply affected for some minutes, but, at length, resuming composure, she sat beside Lucy, and, taking her hand, said: "I can understand, my dear child, the nature of your grief; but be comforted. Your heart, which was burdened, will soon become lighter, and better spirits will return; so, I trust, will better times. It is not from the transient and unsteady, and too often painful, incidents of life, that we should attempt to draw consolation, but from a fixed and firm confidence in the unchangeable purposes of God."

"I wish, dear Lady Gourlay—dear aunt—"

"Yes, that is better, my love."

"I wish I had known you before; of late I have been alone—with none to advise or guide me; for, she, whose affectionate heart, whose tender look, and whose gentle monition, were ever with me—she—alas, my dear aunt, how few know what the bitterness is—-when forced to struggle against strong but misguided wills, whether of our own or others'; to feel that we are without a mother—that that gentle voice is silent forever; that that well in the desert of life—a mother's heart—is forever closed to us; that that protecting angel of our steps is departed from us—never, never to return."

As she uttered these words in deep grief, it might have been observed, that Lady Gourlay shed some quiet but apparently bitter tears. It is impossible for us to enter into the heart, or its reflections; but it is not, we think, unreasonable to suppose that while Lucy dwelt so feelingly upon the loss of her mother, the other may have been thinking upon that of her child.

"My dear girl," she exclaimed, "let the affectionate compact which I have just proposed be ratified between us. My heart, at all events, has already ratified it. I shall be as a mother to you, and you shall be to me as a daughter."

"I know not, my dear aunt," replied Lucy, "whether to consider you more affectionate than generous. How few of our sex, after—after—that is, considering the enmities—in fact, how a relative, placed as you unhappily are, would take me to her heart as you have done."

"Perhaps, my child, I were incapable of it, if that heart had never been touched and softened by affliction. As it is, Lucy, let me say to you, as one who probably knows the world better, do not look, as most young persons like you do, upon the trials you are at present forced to suffer, as if they were the sharpest and heaviest in the world. Time, my love, and perhaps other trials of a still severer character, may one day teach you to think that your grief and impatience were out of proportion to what you then underwent. May He who afflicts his people for their good, prevent that this ever should be so in your case; but, even if it should, remember that God loveth whom he chasteneth. And above

all things, my dear child, never, never, never despair in his providence. Dry your eyes, my love," she added, with a smile of affection and encouragement, that Lucy felt to be contagious by its cheering influence upon her; "dry your tears, and turn round to the light until I contemplate more clearly and distinctly that beauty of which I have heard so much."

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Lucy obeyed her with all the simplicity of a child, and turned round so as to place herself in the position required by the aunt; but whilst she did so, need we say that the blushes followed each other beautifully and fast over her timid but sparkling countenance?

“I do not wonder, my dear girl, that public rumor has borne its ample testimony to your beauty. I have never seen either it or your figure surpassed; but it is here, my dear,” she added, placing her hand upon her heart, “where the jewel that gives value to so fair a casket lies.”

“How happy I am, my dear aunt,” replied Lucy, anxious to change the subject, since I know you. The very consciousness of it is a consolation.”

“And I trust, Lucy, we shall all yet be happy. When the dispensations ripen, then comes the harvest of the blessings.”

The old footman now entered, saying: “Here is a note, my lady,” and he presented one, “which the gentleman desired me to deliver on your ladyship’s return.”

Lady Gourlay took the note, saying: “Will you excuse me, my dear niece?—this, I believe, is on a subject that is not merely near to, but in the innermost recesses of my heart.”

Lucy now took that opportunity on her part of contemplating the features of her aunt; but, as we have already described them elsewhere, it is unnecessary to do so here. She was, however, much struck with their chaste but melancholy beauty; for it cannot be disputed, that sorrow and affliction, while they impair the complexion of the most lovely, very frequently communicate to it a charm so deep and touching, that in point of fact, the heart that suffers within is taught to speak in the mournful, grave, and tender expression, which they leave behind them as their traces. As Lucy surveyed her aunt’s features, which had been moulded by calamity into an expression of settled sorrow—an expression which no cheerfulness could remove, however it might diminish it, she was surprised to observe at first a singular degree of sweetness appear; next a mild serenity; and lastly, she saw that that serenity gradually kindled into a radiance that might, in the hands of a painter, have expressed the joy of the Virgin Mother on finding her lost Son in the Temple. This, however, was again succeeded by a paleness, that for a moment alarmed Lucy, but which was soon lost in a gush of joyful tears. On looking at her niece, who did not presume to make any inquiry as to the cause of this extraordinary emotion, Lady Gourlay saw that her eyes at least were seeking, by the wonder they expressed, for the cause of it.

“May the name,” she exclaimed, “of the just and merciful God be praised forever! Here, my darling, is a note, in which I am informed upon the best authority, that my child—my boy, is yet alive—and was seen but very recently. Dear God of all goodness, is my weak and worn heart capable of bearing this returning tide of happiness!”

Nature, however, gave way; and after several struggles and throbbings, she sank into insensibility. To ring for assistance, to apply all kinds of restoratives; and to tend her until she revived, and afterwards, were offices which Lucy discharged with equal promptitude and tenderness.

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On recovering, she took the hand of the latter in hers, and said, with a smile full of gratitude, joy, and sweetness, “Our first thanks are always due to God, and to him my heart offers them up; but, oh, how feebly! Thanks to you, also, Lucy, for your kindness; and many thanks for your goodness in giving me the pleasure of knowing you. I trust that we shall both see and enjoy better and happier days. Your visit has been propitious to me, and brought, if I may so say, an unexpected dawn of happiness to the widowed mother’s heart.”

Lucy was about to reply, when the old footman came to say that the lady who had accompanied her was waiting below in the chaise. She accordingly bade her farewell, only for a time she said, and after a tender embrace, she went down to Mrs. Mainwaring who respectfully declined on that occasion to be presented to Lady Gourlay, in consequence of the number of purchases she had yet to make, and the time it would occupy to make them.

CHAPTER XXVIII. Innocence and Affection overcome by Fraud and Hypocrisy

—Lucy yields at Last.

Not many minutes after Mrs. Mainwaring’s interview with the baronet, Gibson entered the library, and handed him a letter on which was stamped the Ballytrain postmark. On looking at it, he paused for a moment:

“Who the d------ can this come from?” he said. “I am not aware of having any particular correspondence at present, in or about Ballytrain. Here, however, is a seal; let me see what it is. What the d------, again? are these a pair of asses’ ears or wings? Certainly, if the impression be correct, the former; and what is here? A fox. Very good, perfectly intelligible; a fox, with a pair of asses’ ears upon him! intimating a combination of knavery and folly. ’Gad, this must be from Crackenfudge, of whom it is the type and exponent. For a thousand, it contains a list of his qualifications for the magisterial honors for which he is so ambitious. Well, well; I believe every man has an ambition for something. Mine is to see my daughter a countess, that she may trample with velvet slippers on the necks of those who would trample on hers if she were beneath them. This fellow, now, who is both slave and tyrant, will play all sorts of oppressive pranks upon the poor, by whom he knows that he is despised; and for that very reason, along with others, will he punish them. That, however, is, after all, but natural; and on this very account, curse me, but I shall try and shove the beggarly scoundrel

up to the point of his paltry ambition. I like ambition. The man who has no object of ambition of any kind is unfit for life. Come, then, wax, deliver up thy trust.'"

With a dark grin of contempt, and a kind of sarcastic gratification, he perused the document, which ran as follows:

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“My dear Sir Tomas,—In a letter, which a’ had the honer of receiving from you, in consequence of your very great kindness in condescending to kick me out of your house, on the occasion of my last visit to Red Hall, you were pleased to express a wish that a’ would send you up as arthentic a list as a’ could conveniently make up of my qualifications for the magistracey. Deed, a’m sore yet, Sir Tomas, and wouldn’t it be a good joke, as my friend Dr. Twig says, if the soreness should remain until it is cured by the Komission, which he thinks would wipe out all recollection of the pain and the punishment. And he says, too, that this application of it would be putting it to a most proper and legutimate use; the only use, he insists, to which it ought to be put. But a’ don’t go that far, because a’ think it would be an honerable dockiment, not only to my posterity, meaning my legutimate progenitors, if a’ should happen to have any; but, also and moreover, to the good taste and judgment, and respect for the honer and integrity of the Bench, manifested by those who attributed to place me on it.

“A’ now come to Klaim No. I, for the magistracey: In the first place a’m not without expeyrience, having been in the habit of acting as a magistrate in a private way, and upon my own responsibility, for several years. A’ established a kourt in a little vilage, which—and this is a strong point in my feavor now-a-days—which a’ meself have depopilated; and a’ trust that the depopilation won’t be ovelueked. To this kourt a’ compeled all me taunts to atend. They were obliged to summon one another as often as they kould, and much oftener than they wished, and for the slightest kauses. A’ presided in it purseondlly; and a’ll tell you why. My system was a fine system, indeed. That is to say, a’ fined them ether on the one side or the tother, but most generally on both, and then a’ put the fines into my own pocet. My tenints a’ know didn’t like this kind of law very much—but if they didn’t a’ did; and a’ made them feel that a’ was their landlord. No man was a faverite with me that didn’t frequent my kourt, and for this resin, in order to stand well with me, they fought like kat and dog. Now, you know, it was my bisness to enkorage this, for the more they fought and disputed, the more a’ fined them.

“In fact, a’ done everything in my power, to enlitin my tenints. For instance, a’ taught them the doktrine of trespiss. If a’ found that a stranger tuck the sheltry side of my hedge, to blow his nose, I fined him half-a-crown, as can be proved by proper and undeniable testomony. A’ mention all these matters to satisfy you that a’ have practis as a magistrate, and won’t have my duties to lern when a’m called upon to discharge them.

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“Klaim No. II. is as follows: A’m very unpopilar with the people, which is a great thing in itself, as a’ think no man ought to be risen to the bench that’s not unpopilar; because, when popilar, he’s likely to feavor them, and symperthize with them—wherein his first duty is always to konsider them in the rong. Nether am a’ popilar with the gentry and magistrates of the kountry, because they despise me, and say that a’m this, that and tother; that a’m mean and tyrannical; that a’ changed my name from pride, and that a’m overbearing and ignorant. Now this last charge of ignorance brings me to Klaim No. III.

“Be it nown to you, then, Sir Tomas, that a’ received a chollege eddycation, which is an anser in full to the play of ignorance. In fact, a’ devoted meself to eddycation till my very brain began to go round like a whurli-gig; and many people say, that a’ never rekovered the proper use of it since. Hundres will tell you that they would shed their blood upon the truth of it; but let any one that thinks so transact bisness with me, or bekome a tenint of mine, and he’ll find that a’ can make him bleed in proving the reverse.

“A’ could prove many other klaims equally strong, but a’ hope it’s not necessary to seduce any more. A’ do think, if the Lord Chanceseller knew of my qualifications, a’ wouldn’t be long off the bench. If, then, Sir Tomas, you, who have so much influence, would write on my behalf, and rekomend me to the custus rascalorum as a proper kandi-date, I could not fail to sukceed in reaching the great point of my ambition, which is, to be accommodated with a seat—anything would satisfy me—even a close-stool—-upon the magisterial bench. Amen, Sir Tomas.

“And have the honer to be,

“Your obedient and much obliged, and very thankful servant for what a’ got, as well as for what a’ expect, Sir Tomas,

“Periwinkle Crackenfudge.”

Sir Thomas—having perused this precious document, which, by the way, contains no single fact that could not be substantiated by the clearest testimony, so little are they at head-quarters acquainted with the pranks that are played off on the unfortunate people by multitudes of petty tyrants in remote districts of the country—Sir Thomas, we say, having perused the aforesaid document, grinned—almost laughed—with a satirical enjoyment of its contents.

“Very good,” said he; “excellent: confound me, but Crackenfudge must get to the bench, if it were only for the novelty of the thing. I will this moment recommend him to Lord Cullamore, who is *custos rotulorum* for the county, and who would as soon, by the way, cut his right hand off as recommend him to the Chancellor, if he knew the extent of his ‘klaims,’ as the miserable devil spells it. Yes, I will recommend him, if it were only to vex my brother baronet, Sir James B-----, who is humane, and kind, and popular, forsooth, and a staunch advocate for purity of the bench, and justice to the people! No

doubt of it; I shall recommend you, Crackenfudge, and cheek by jowl with the best among them, upon the same magistorial bench, shall the doughty Crackenfudge sit."

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He instantly sat down to his writing-desk, and penned as strong a recommendation as he could possibly compose to Lord Cullamore, after which he threw himself again upon the sofa, and exclaimed:

“Well, that act is done, and an iniquitous one it is; but no matter, it is gone off to the post, and I’m rid of him.’ Now for Lucy, and my ambition; she is unquestionably with that shameless old woman who could think of marrying at such an age. She is with her; she will hear of my illness, and as certain as life is life, and death death, she will be here soon.”

In this he calculated aright, and he felt that he did so. Mrs. Mainwaring, on the evening of their visit to the city, considered it her duty to disclose, fully and candidly, to Lucy, the state of her father’s health, that is, as it appeared to her on their interview. Lucy, who knew that he was subject to sudden attacks upon occasions of less moment, not only became alarmed, but experienced a feeling like remorse for having, as she said, abandoned him so undutifully.

“I will return immediately,” she said, weeping; “he is ill: you say he speaks of me tenderly and affectionately—oh, what have I done! Should this illness prove serious—-fatal—my piece of mind were gone forever. I should consider myself as a parricide—as the direct cause of his death. My God! perhaps even now I am miserable for life—-forever—forever!”

Mrs. Mainwaring soothed her as well as she could, but she refused to hear comfort, and having desired Alley Mahon to prepare their slight luggage, she took an affectionate and tearful leave of Mrs. Mainwaring, bade *adieu* to her husband, and was about to get into the chaise, which had been ordered from the inn in Wicklow, when Mrs. Mainwaring said:

“Now, my dear Lucy, if your father should recover, and have recourse to any abuse of his authority, by attempting again to force your inclinations and consummate your misery, remember that my door, my arms, my heart, shall ever be open to you. I do not, you will observe, suggest any act of disobedience on your part; on the contrary, I am of opinion that you should suffer everything short of the last resort, by which I mean this hateful marriage with Dunroe, sooner than abandon your father’s roof. This union is a subject on which I must see him again. Poor Lord Cullamore I respect and venerate, for I have reason to believe that he has, for one contemplated error, had an unhappy if not a remorseful life. In the meantime, even in opposition to your father’s wishes, I say it, and in confirmation of your strongest prejudices------”

“It amounts to antipathy, Mrs. Mainwaring—to hatred, to abhorrence.”

“Well, my dear child, in confirmation of them all, I implore, I entreat, I conjure, and if I had authority, I would say, I command you not to unite your fate with that young profligate.”

“Do not fear me, Mrs. Mainwaring; but at present I can think of nothing but poor papa and his illness; I tremble, indeed, to think how I shall find him; and, my God, to reflect that I am the guilty cause of all this!”

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They then separated, and Lucy, accompanied by Alley, proceeded to town at a pace as rapid as the animals that bore them could possibly accomplish.

On arriving in town, she was about rushing upstairs to throw herself in her father's arms, when Gibson, who observed her, approached respectfully, and said:

"This haste to see your father, Miss Gourlay, is very natural; but perhaps you will be good enough to wait a few moments, until he is prepared to receive you. The doctor has left strict orders that he shall not see any person; but, above all things, without being announced."

"But, Gibson—first, how is he? Is he very ill?"

Gibson assumed a melancholy and very solemn look, as he replied, "He is, indeed, ill, Miss Gourlay; but it would not become me to distress you—especially as I hope your presence will comfort him; he is perpetually calling for you."

"Go, Gibson, go," she exclaimed, whilst tears, which she could not restrain, gushed to her eyes. "Go, be quick; tell him I am here."

"I will break it to him, madam, as gently as possible," replied this sedate and oily gentleman; "for, if made acquainted with it too suddenly, the unexpected joy might injure him."

"Do not injure him, then," she exclaimed, earnestly; "oh, do not injure him—but go; I leave it to your own discretion."

Lucy immediately proceeded to her own room, and Gibson to the library, where he found the baronet in his nightcap and morning gown, reading a newspaper.

"I have the paragraph drawn up, Gibson," said he, with a grim smile, "stating that I am dangerously ill; take and copy it, and see that it be inserted in to-morrow's publication."

"It will not be necessary, sir," replied the footman; "Miss Gourlay is here, and impatient to see you."

"Here!" exclaimed her father with a start; "you do not say she is in the house?"

"She has just arrived, sir, and is now in her own room."

"Leave me, Gibson," said the baronet, "and attend promptly when I ring;" and Gibson withdrew. "Why," thought he to himself, "why, do I feel as I do? Glad that I have her once more in my power, and this is only natural; but why this kind of terror—this awe of that extraordinary girl? I dismissed that prying scoundrel of a footman, because I could not bear that he should observe and sneer at this hypocrisy, although I know he is

aware of it. What can this uncomfortable sensation which checks my joy at her return mean? Is it that involuntary homage which they say vice is compelled to pay to purity, truth, and virtue? I know not; but I feel disturbed, humbled with an impression like that of guilt—an impression which makes me feel as if there actually were such a thing as conscience. As my objects, however, are for the foolish girl's advancement, I am determined to play the game out, and for that purpose, as I know now by experience that neither harshness nor violence will do, I shall have recourse to tenderness and affection. I must touch her heart, excite her sympathy, and throw myself altogether upon her generosity. Come then—and now for the assumption of a new character."

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Having concluded this train of meditation, he rang for Gibson, who appeared.

“Gibson, let Miss Gourlay know that, ill as I am, I shall try to see her: be precise in the message, sir; use my own words.”

“Certainly, Sir Thomas,” replied the footman, who immediately withdrew to deliver it.

The baronet, when Gibson went out again, took a pair of pillows, with which the sofa was latterly furnished, in order to maintain the appearance of illness, whenever it might be necessary, and having placed them under his head, laid himself down, pulled the nightcap over his brows, and affected all the symptoms of a man who was attempting to struggle against some serious and severe attack.

In this state he lay, when Lucy entering the room, approached, in a flood of tears, exclaiming, as she knelt by the sofa, “Oh, papa—dear papa, forgive me;” and as she spoke, she put her arms round his neck, and kissed him affectionately. “Dear papa,” she proceeded, “you are ill—very ill, I fear; but will you not forgive your poor child for having abandoned you as she did? I have returned, however, to stay with you, to tend you, to soothe and console you as far as any and every effort of mine can. You shall have no nurse but me, papa. All that human hands can do to give you ease—all that the sincerest affection can do to sustain and cheer you, your own Lucy will do. But speak to me, papa; am I not your own Lucy still?”

Her father turned round, as if by a painful effort, and having looked upon her for some time, replied, feebly, “Yes, you are—you are my own Lucy still.”

This admission brought a fresh gush of tears from the affectionate girl, who again exclaimed, “Ah, papa, I fear you are very ill; but those words are to me the sweetest that ever proceeded from your lips. Are you glad to see me, papa?—but I forget myself; perhaps I am disturbing you. Only say how you feel, and if it will not injure you, what your complaint is.”

“My complaint, dear Lucy, most affectionate child—for I see you are so still, notwithstanding reports and appearances—”

“Oh, indeed, I am, papa—indeed I am.”

“My complaint was brought on by anxiety and distress of mind—I will not say why—I did, I know, I admit, wish to see you in a position of life equal to your merits; but I cannot talk of that—it would disturb me; it is a subject on which, alas! I am without hope. I am threatened with apoplexy or paralysis, Lucy, the doctor cannot say which; but the danger, he says, proceeds altogether from the state of my mind, acting, it is true, upon a plethoric system of body; but I care not, dear Lucy—I care not, now; I am indifferent to life. All my expectations —all a father’s brilliant plans for his child, are now over. The

doctor says that ease of mind might restore, but I doubt it now; I fear it is too late. I only wish I was better prepared for the change which I know I shall soon be forced to make. Yet I feel, Lucy, as if I never loved you until now—I feel how dear you are to me now that I know I must part with you so soon."

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Lucy was utterly incapable of resisting this tenderness, as the unsuspecting girl believed it to be. She again threw her arms around him, and wept as if her very heart would break.

“This agitation, my darling,” he added, “is too much for us both. My head is easily disturbed; but—but—send for Lucy,” he exclaimed, as if touched by a passing delirium, “send for my daughter. I must have Lucy. I have been harsh to her, and I cannot die without her forgiveness.”

“Here, papa—dearest papa! Recollect yourself; Lucy is with you; not to forgive you for anything, but to ask; to implore to be forgiven.”

“Ha!” he said, raising his head a little, and looking round like a man awakening from sleep. “I fear I am beginning to wander. Dear Lucy—yes, it is you. Oh, I recollect. Withdraw, my darling; the sight of you—the joy of your very appearance—eh—eh—yes, let me see. Oh, yes; withdraw, my darling; this interview has been too much for me—I fear it has—but rest and silence will restore me, I hope. I hope so—I hope so.”

Lucy, who feared that a continuance of this interview might very much aggravate his illness, immediately took her leave, and retired to her own room, whither she summoned Alley Mahon. This blunt but faithful attendant felt no surprise in witnessing her grief; for indeed she had done little else than weep, ever since she heard of her father’s illness.

“Now don’t cry so much, miss,” she said; “didn’t I tell you that your grief will do neither you nor him any good? Keep yourself cool and quiet, and spake to him like a raisonable crayture, what you are not, ever since you herd of his being sick. It isn’t by shedding tears that you can expect to comfort him, as you intend to do, but by being calm, and considerate, and attentive to him, and not allowin’ him to see what you suffer.”

“That is very true, Alice, I admit,” replied Lucy; but when I consider that it was my undutiful flight from him that occasioned this attack, how can I free myself from blame? My heart, Alice, is divided between a feeling of remorse for having deserted him without sufficient cause, and grief for his illness, and in that is involved the apprehension of his loss. After all, Alice, you must admit that I have no friend in the world but my father. How, then, can I think of losing him?”

“And even if God took him,” replied Alley, “which I hope after all isn’t so likely—”

“What do you mean, girl?” asked Lucy, ignorant that Alley only used a form of speech peculiar to the people, “what language is this of my father?”

“Why, I hope it’s but the truth, miss,” replied the maid; “for if God was to call him to-morrow—which may God forbid! you’d find friends that would take care of you and protect you.”

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“Yes; but, Alice, if papa died, I should have to reproach myself with his death; and that consideration would drive me distracted or kill me. I am beginning to think that obedience to the will of a parent is, under all circumstances, the first duty of a child. A parent knows better what is for our good than we can be supposed to do. At all events, whatever exceptions there may be to this rule, I care not. It is enough, and too much, for me to reflect that my conduct has been the cause of papa’s illness. His great object in life was to promote my happiness. Now this was affection for me. I grant he may have been mistaken, but still it was affection; and consequently I cannot help admitting that even his harshness, and certainly all that he suffered through the very violence of his own passions, arose from the same source—affection for me.”

“Ah,” replied Alley, “it’s aisy seen that your heart is softened now; but in truth, miss, it was quare affection that would make his daughter miserable, bekase he wanted her to become a great lady. If he was a kind and raisonable father, he would not force you to be unhappy. An affectionate father would give up the point rather than make you so; but no; the truth is simply this, he wanted to gratify himself more than he did you, or why would he act as he did?”

“Alice,” replied Lucy, “remember that I will not suffer you to speak of my father with disrespect. You forget yourself, girl, and learn from me now, that in order to restore him to peace of mind and health, in order to rescue him from death, and oh,” she exclaimed involuntarily, “above all things from a death, for which, perhaps, he is not sufficiently prepared—as who, alas, is for that terrible event!—yes in order to do this, I am ready to yield an implicit obedience to his wishes: and I pray heaven that this act on my part may not be too late to restore him to his health, and relieve his mind from the load of care which presses it down upon my account.”

“Good Lord, Miss Gourlay,” exclaimed poor Alley, absolutely frightened by the determined and vehement spirit in which these words were uttered, “surely you wouldn’t think of makin’ a saickerfice of yourself that way?”

“That may be the word, Alice, or it may not; but if it be a sacrifice, and if the sacrifice is necessary, it shall be made—I shall make it. My disobedience shall never break my father’s heart.”

“I don’t wish to speak disrespectfully of your father, miss; but I think he’s an ambitious man.”

“And perhaps the ambition which he feels is a virtue, and one in which I am deficient. You and I, Alice, know but little of life and the maxims by which its great social principles are regulated.”

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“Faith, spake for yourself, miss; as for me, I’m the very girl that has had my experience. No less than three did I manfully refuse, in spite of both father and mother. First there was big Bob Broghan, a giant of a fellow, with a head and pluck upon him that would fill a mess-pot. He had a chape farm, and could afford to wallow like a swine in filth and laziness. And well becomes the old couple, I must marry him, whether I would or not. Be aisy, said I, it’s no go; when I marry a man, it’ll be one that’ll know the use of soap and wather, at all events. Well, but I must; I did not know what was for my own good; he was rich, and I’d lead a fine life with him. Scrape and clane him for somebody else, says I; no such walkin’ dungheap for me. Then they came to the cudgel, and flaked me; but it was in a good cause, and I tould them that if I must die a marthyr to cleanliness, I must; and at last they dropped it, and so I got free of Bob Broghan.

“The next was a little fellow that kept a small shop of hucksthery, and some groceries, and the like o’ that. He was a near, penurious devil, hard and scraggy lookin’, with hunger in his face and in his heart, too; ay, and besides, he had the name of not bein’ honest. But then his shop was gettin’ bigger and bigger, and himself richer and richer every day. Here’s your man, says the old couple. Maybe not, says I. No shingawn that deals in light weights and short measures for me. My husband must be an honest man, and not a keen shaving rogue like Barney Buckley. Well, miss, out came the cudgel again, and out came I with the same answer. Lay on, says I; if I must die a marthyr to honesty, why I must; and may God have mercy on me for the same, as he will. Then they saw that I was a rock, and so there was an end of Barney Buckley, as well as Bob Broghan.

“Well and good; then came number three, a fine handsome young man, by name Con Coghlan. At first I didn’t much like him, bekase he had the name of being too fond of money, and it was well known that he had disappointed three or four girls that couldn’t show guinea for guinea with him. The sleeveen gained upon me, however, and I did get fond of him, and tould him to speak to my father, and so he did, and they met once or twice to make the match; but, ah, miss, every one has their troubles. On the last meetin’, when he found that my fortune wasn’t what he expected, he shogged off wid himself; and, mother o’ mercy, did ever I think it would come to that?” Here she wiped her eyes, and then with fresh spirit proceeded, “He jilted me, Miss—the desateful villain jilted me; but if he did, I had my revenge. In less than a year he came sneakin’ back, and tould my father that as he couldn’t get me out of his head, he would take me with whatever portion they could give me. The fellow was rich, Miss, and so the ould couple, ready to bounce at him, came out again. Come, Alley, here’s Con Coghlan back. Well, then, says I, he knows the road home again, and let him take it. One good turn desarves another. When he could get me he wouldn’t take me, and now when he would take me, he won’t get me; so I think we’re even.

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“Out once more came the cudgel, and on they laid; but now I wasn’t common stone but whitestone. Lay on, say I; I see, or rather I feel, that the crown is before me. If I must die a marthyr to a dacent spirit, why I must; and so God’s blessing be with you all. I’ll shine in heaven for this yet.

“I think now, Miss, you’ll grant that I know something about life.”

“Alice,” replied Lucy, “I have often heard it said, that the humblest weeds which grow contain virtues that are valuable, if they were only known. Your experience is not without a moral, and your last lover was the worst, because he was mean; but when I think of him—the delicate, the generous, the disinterested, the faithful, the noble-hearted—alas, Alice!” she exclaimed, throwing herself in a fresh paroxysm of grief upon the bosom of her maid, “you know not the incredible pain—the hopeless agony—of the sacrifice I am about to make. My father, however, is the author of my being, and as his very life depends upon my strength of mind now, I shall, rather than see him die whilst I selfishly gratify my own will—yes, Alice, I shall—I shall—and may heaven give me strength for it!—I shall sacrifice love to duty, and save him; that is, if it be not already too late.”

“And if he does recover,” replied Alice, whose tears flowed along with those of her mistress, but whose pretty eye began to brighten with indignant energy as she spoke, “if he does recover, and if ever he turns a cold look, or uses a harsh word to you, may I die for heaven if he oughtn’t to be put in the public stocks and made an example of to the world.”

“The scene, however, will be changed then, Alice; for the subject matter of all our misunderstandings will have been removed. Yet, Alice, amidst all the darkness and suffering that lie before me, there is one consolation”—and as she uttered these words, there breathed throughout her beautiful features a spirit of sorrow, so deep, so mournful, so resigned, and so touching, that Alley in turn laid her head on her bosom, exclaiming, as she looked up into her eyes, “Oh, may the God of mercy have pity on you, my darling mistress! what wouldn’t your faithful Alley do to give you relief? and she can’t;” and then the affectionate creature wept bitterly. “But what is the consolation?” she asked, hoping to extract from the melancholy girl some thought or view of her position that might inspire them with hope or comfort.

“The consolation I allude to, Alice, is the well-known fact that a broken heart cannot long be the subject of sorrow; and, besides, my farewell of life will not be painful; for then I shall be able to reflect with peace that, difficult as was the duty imposed upon me, I shall have performed it. Now, dear Alice, withdraw; I wish to be alone for some time, that I may reflect as I ought, and endeavor to gain strength for the sacrifice that is before me.”

Her eye as she looked upon Alley was, though filled with a melancholy lustre, expressive at the same time of a spirit so lofty, calm, and determined, that its whole character partook of absolute sublimity. Alley, in obedience to her words, withdrew; but not without an anxious and earnest effort at imparting comfort.

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When her maid had retired, Lucy began once more to examine her position, in all its dark and painful aspects, and to reflect upon the destiny which awaited her, fraught with unexampled misery as it was. Though well aware, from former experience, of her father's hypocritical disguises, she was too full of generosity and candor to allow her heart to entertain suspicion. Her nature was one of great simplicity, artlessness, and truth. Truth, above all things, was her predominant virtue; and we need not say, that wherever it resides it is certain to become a guarantee for the possession of all the rest. Her cruel-hearted father, himself false and deceitful, dreaded her for this love of truth, and was so well acquainted with her utter want of suspicion, that he never scrupled, though frequently detected, to impose upon her, when it suited his purpose. This, indeed, was not difficult; for such was his daughter's natural candor and truthfulness, that if he deceived her by a falsehood to-day, she was as ready to believe him to-morrow as ever. His last heartless act of hypocrisy, therefore, was such a deliberate violation of truth as amounted to a species of sacrilege; for it robbed the pure shrine of his own daughter's heart of her whole happiness. Nay, when we consider the relations in which they stood, it might be termed, as is beautifully said in Scripture, "a seething of the kid in the mother's milk."

As it was, however, her father's illness disarmed her generous and forgiving spirit of every argument that stood in the way of the determination she had made. His conduct she felt might, indeed, be the result of one of those great social errors that create so much misery in life; that, for instance, of supposing that one must ascend through certain orders of society, and reach a particular elevation before they can enjoy happiness. This notion, so much at variance with the goodness and mercy of God, who has not confined happiness to any particular class, she herself rejected; but, at the same time, the modest estimate which she formed of her own capacity to reason upon or analyze all speculative opinions, led her to suppose that she might be wrong, and her father right, in the inferences which they respectively drew. Perhaps she thought her reluctance to see this individual case through his medium, arose from some peculiar idiosyncrasy of intellect or temperament not common to others, and that she was setting a particular instance against a universal truth.

That, however, which most severely tested her fortitude and noble sense of what we owe a parent, resulted from no moral or metaphysical distinctions of human duty, but simply and directly from what she must suffer by the contemplated sacrifice. She was born in a position of life sufficiently dignified for ordinary ambition. She was surrounded by luxury—had received an enlightened education—had a heart formed for love—for that pure and exalted passion, which comprehends and brings into

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action all the higher qualities of our being, and enlarges all our capacities for happiness. God and nature, so to speak, had gifted her mind with extraordinary feeling and intellect, and her person with unusual grace and beauty; yet, here, by this act of self-devotion to her father, she renounced all that the human heart with such strong claims upon the legitimate enjoyments of life could expect, and voluntarily entered into a destiny of suffering and misery. She reflected upon and felt the bitterness of all this; but, on the other hand, the contemplation of a father dying in consequence of her disobedience—dying, too, probably in an unprepared state—whose heart was now full of love and tenderness for her; who, in fact, was in grief and sorrow in consequence of what he had caused her to suffer. We say she contemplated all this, and her great heart felt that this was the moment of mercy.

"It is resolved!" she exclaimed; "I will disturb him for a little. There is no time now for meanly wrestling it out, for ungenerous hesitation and delay. Suspense may kill him; and whilst I deliberate, he may be lost. Father, I come, Never again shall you reproach me with disobedience. Though your ambition may be wrong, yet who else than I should become the victim of an error which originates in affection for myself? I yield at last, as is my duty; now your situation makes it so; and my heart, though crushed and broken, shall be an offering of peace between us. Farewell, now, to love—to love legitimate, pure, and holy!—farewell to all the divine charities and tendernesses of life which follow it—farewell to peace of! heart—to the wife's pride of eye, to the husband's tender glance—farewell—farewell to everything in this wretched life but the hopes of heaven! I come, my father—I come. But I had forgotten," she said, "I must not see him without permission, nor unannounced, as Gibson said. Stay, I shall ring for Gibson."

"Gibson," said she, when he had made his appearance, "try if your master could see me for a moment; say I request it particularly, and that I shall scarcely disturb him. Ask it as a favor, unless he be very ill indeed—and even then do so."

Whilst Gibson went with this message, Lucy, feeling that it might be dangerous to agitate her father by the exhibition of emotion, endeavored to compose herself as much as she could, so that by the time of Gibson's return, her appearance was calm, noble, and majestic. In fact, the greatness—the heroic spirit—of the coming sacrifice emanated like a beautiful but solemn light from her countenance, and on being desired to go in, she appeared full of unusual beauty and composure.

On entering, she found her father much in the same position: his head, as before, upon the pillows, and the nightcap drawn over his heavy brows.

"You wished to see me, my dear Lucy. Have you any favor to ask, my child? If so, ask whilst I have recollection and consciousness to grant it. I can refuse you nothing now,

Lucy. I was wrong ever to struggle with you. It was too much for me, for I am now the victim; but even that is well, for I am glad it is not you."

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When he mentioned the word victim, Lucy felt as if a poniard had gone through her heart; but she had already resolved that what must be done should be done generously, consequently, without any ostentation of feeling, and with as little appearance of self-sacrifice as possible.

It is not for us, she said to herself, to exaggerate the value of the gift which we bestow, but rather to depreciate it, for it is never generous to magnify an obligation.

“I have a favor to ask, papa,” said the generous and considerate girl.

“It is granted, my darling Lucy, before I hear it,” he replied. “What is it? Oh how happy I feel that you have returned to me; I shall not now pass away my last moments on a solitary deathbed. But what is your request, my love?”

“You have to-day, papa, told me that the danger of your present attack proceeds from the anxious state of your mind. Now, my request is, that I may be permitted to make that state easier; to remove that anxiety, and, if possible, all other anxiety and care that press upon you. You know, papa, the topic upon which we have always differed; now, rather than any distress of feeling connected with it should stand in the way of your recovery, I wish to say that you may I count upon my most perfect obedience.”

“You mean the Dunroe business, dear Lucy?”

“I mean the Dunroe business, papa.”

“And do you mean to say that you are willing and ready to marry him?”

The reply to this was indeed the coming away of the branch by which she had hung on the precipice of life. On hearing the question, therefore, she paused a little; but the pause did not proceed from any indisposition to answer it, but simply from what seemed to be the refusal of her natural powers to enable her to do so. When about to speak, she felt as if all her physical strength had abandoned her; as if her will, previously schooled to the task, had become recusant. She experienced a general chill and coldness of her whole body; a cessation for a moment or two of the action of the heart, whilst her very sight became dim and indistinct. She thought, however, in this unutterable moment of agony and despair, that she must act; and without feeling able to analyze either her thoughts or sensations, in this terrible tumult of her spirit, she heard herself repeat the reply, “I am, papa.”

For a moment her father forgot his part, and started up into a sitting posture with as much apparent energy as ever. Another moment, however, was sufficient to make him feel his error.

“Oh,” said he, “what have I done? Let me pause a little, my dear Lucy; that effort to express the joy you have poured into my heart was nearly too much for me. You make

this promise, Lucy, not with a view merely to ease my mind and contribute to my recovery; but, should I get well, with a firm intention to carry it actually into execution?”

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“Such, papa, is my intention—my fixed determination, I should say; but I ought to add, that it is altogether for your sake, dear papa, that I make it. Now let your mind feel tranquillity and ease; dismiss every anxiety that distresses you, papa; for you may believe your daughter, that there is no earthly sacrifice compatible with her duties as a Christian which she would not make for your recovery. This interview is now, perhaps, as much as your state of health can bear. Think, then, of what I have said, papa; let it console and strengthen; and then it will, I trust, help at least to bring about your recovery. Now, permit me to withdraw.”

“Wait a moment, my child. It is right that you should know the effect of your goodness before you go. I feel already as if a mountain were removed from my heart—even now I am better. God bless you, my own dearest Lucy; you have saved your father. Let this consideration comfort you and sustain you. Now you may go, my love.”

When Lucy withdrew, which she did with a tottering step, she proceeded to her own chamber, which, now that the energy necessary for the struggle had abandoned her, she entered almost unconsciously, and with a feeling of rapidly-increasing weakness. She approached the bell to ring for her maid, which she was able to do with difficulty; and having done so, she attempted to reach the sofa; but exhausted and overwrought nature gave way, and she fell just sufficiently near it to have her fall broken and her head supported by it, as she lay there apparently lifeless. In this state Alley Mahon found her; but instead of ringing an alarm, or attempting to collect a crowd of the servants to witness a scene, and being besides a stout as well as a discreet and sensible girl, she was able to raise her up, place her on a sofa, until, by the assistance of cold water and some patience, she succeeded in restoring her to life and consciousness.

“On opening her eyes she looked about, and Alley observed that her lips were parched and dry.

“Here, my darling mistress,” said the affectionate girl, who now wept bitterly, “here, swallow a little cold water; it will moisten your lips, and do you good.”

She attempted to do so, but Ally saw that her hand trembled too much to bring the water to her own lips. On swallowing it, it seemed to relieve her a little; she then looked up into Alley’s face, with a smile of thanks so unutterably sweet and sorrowful, that the poor girl’s tears gushed out afresh.

“Take courage, my darling mistress,” she replied; “I know that something painful has happened; but for Christ’s blessed sake, don’t look so sorrowful and broken-hearted, or you will—”

“Alice,” said she, interrupting her, in a calm, soft voice, like low music, “open my bosom—open my bosom, Alice; you will find a miniature there; take it out; I wish to look upon it.”

“O thin,” said the girl, as she proceeded to obey her, “happy is he that rests so near that pure and innocent and sorrowful heart; and great and good must he be that is worthy of it.”

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There was in the look which Lucy cast upon her when she had uttered these words a spirit of gentle but affectionate reproof; but she spoke it not.

“Give it to me, Alice,” she said; “but unlock it first; I feel that my hands are too feeble to do so.”

Alice unlocked the miniature, and Lucy then taking it from her, looked upon it for a moment, and then pressing it to her lips with a calm emotion, in which grief and despair seemed to mingle, she exclaimed,

“Alas! mamma, how much do I now stand in need of your advice and consolation! The shrine in which your affection and memory dwelt, and against whose troubled pulses your sweet and serene image lay, is now broken. There, dearest mamma, you will find nothing in future but affliction and despair. It has been said, that I have inherited your graces and your virtues, most beloved parent; and if so, alas! in how remote a degree, for who could equal you? But how would it have wining your gentle and loving heart to know that I should have inherited your secret griefs and sufferings? Yes, mamma, both are painted on that serene brow; for no art of the limner could conceal their mournful traces, nor remove the veil of sorrow which an unhappy destiny threw over your beauty. There, in that clear and gentle eye, is still the image of your love and sympathy—there is that smile so full of sweetness and suffering. Alas, alas! how closely do we resemble each other in all things. Sweet and blessed saint, if it be permitted, descend and let your spirit be with me—to guide, to soothe, and to support me; your task will not be a long one, beloved parent. From this day forth my only hope will be to join you. Life has nothing now but solitude and sorrow. There is no heart with which I can hold communion; for my grief, and the act of duty which occasions it, must be held sacred from all.”

She kissed the miniature once more, but without tears, and after a little, she made Alley place it where she had ever kept it—next her heart.

“Alice,” said she, “I trust I will soon be with mamma.”

“My dear mistress,” replied Alice, “don’t spake so. I hope there’s many a happy and pleasant day before you, in spite of all that has come and gone, yet.”

She turned upon the maid a look of incredulity so hopeless, that Alley felt both alarmed and depressed.

“You do not know what I suffer, Alice,” she replied, “but I know it. This miniature of mamma I got painted unknown to—unknown to—” (here we need not say that she meant her father) “—any one except mamma, the artist, and myself. It has laid next my heart ever since; but since her death it has been the dearest thing to me on earth—one

only other object perhaps excepted. Yes," she added, with a deep sigh, "I hope I shall soon be with you, mamma, and then we shall never be separated any more!"

Alley regretted to perceive that her grief now had settled down into the most wasting and dangerous of all; for it was of that dry and silent kind which so soon consumes the lamp of life, and dries up the strength of those who unhappily fall under its malignant blight.

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Lucy's journey, however, from Wicklow, the two interviews with her father, the sacrifice she had so nobly made, and the consequent agitation, all overcame her, and after a painful struggle between the alternations of forgetfulness and memory, she at length fell into a troubled slumber.

CHAPTER XXIX. Lord Dunroe's Affection for his Father

—Glimpse of a new Character—Lord Gullamore's Rebuke to his Son, who greatly refuses to give up his Friend.

A considerable period now elapsed, during which there was little done that could contribute to the progress of our narrative. Summer had set in, and the Cullamore family, owing to the failing health of the old nobleman, had returned to his Dublin residence, with an intention of removing to Glenshee, as soon he should receive the advice of his physician. From the day on which his brother's letter reached him, his lordship seemed to fall into a more than ordinary despondency of mind. His health for years had been very infirm, but from whatsoever cause it proceeded, he now appeared to labor under some secret presentiment of calamity, against which he struggled in vain. So at least he himself admitted. It is true that age and a constitution enfeebled by delicate health might alone, in a disposition naturally hypochondriac, occasion such anxiety; as we know they frequently do even in the youthful. Be this as it may, one thing was evident, his lordship began to sink more rapidly than he had ever done before; and like most invalids of his class, he became wilful and obstinate in his own opinions. His doctor, for instance, advised him to remove to the delightful air of Glenshee Castle; but this, for some reason or other, he peremptorily refused to do, and so long as he chose to remain in town, so long were Lady Emily and her aunt resolved to stay with him. Dunroe, also, was pretty regular in inquiries after his health; but whether from a principle of filial affection, or a more flagitious motive, will appear from the following conversation, which took place one morning after breakfast, between himself and Norton.

"How is your father this morning, my lord?" inquired that worthy gentleman. "I hope he is better."

"A lie, Norton," replied his lordship—"a lie, as usual. You hope no such thing. The agency which is to follow on the respectable old peer's demise bars that—eh?"

"I give you my honor, my lord, you do me injustice. I am in no hurry with him on that account; it would be unfeeling,and selfish."

"Now, Tom," replied the other, in that kind of contemptuous familiarity which slavish minions or adroit knaves like Norton must always put up with from such men, "now, Tom, my good fellow, you know the case is this—you get the agency to the Cullamore

property the moment my right honorable dad makes his exit. If he should delay that exit for seven years to come, then you will be exactly seven years short of the period in which you will fleece me and my tenants, and put the wool on yourself."

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“Only your tenants, my lord, if you please. I may shear them, a little, I trust; but you can’t suppose me capable of shearing—”

“My lordship. No, no, you are too honest; only you will allow me to insinuate, in the meantime, that I believe you have fleeced me to some purpose already. I do not allude to your gambling debts, which, with my own, I have been obliged to pay; but to other opportunities which have come in your way. It doesn’t matter, however; you are a pleasant and a useful fellow, and I believe that although you clip me yourself a little, you would permit no one else to do so. And, by the way, talking of the respectable old peer, he is anything but a friend of yours, and urged me strongly to send you to the devil, as a cheat and impostor.”

“How is that, my lord?” asked Norton, with an interest which he could scarcely disguise.

“Why, he mentioned something of a conversation you had, in which you told him, you impudent dog—and coolly to his face, too—that you patronized his son while in France, and introduced him to several distinguished French noblemen, not one of whom, he had reason to believe, ever existed except in your own fertile and lying imagination.”

“And was that all?” asked Norton, who I began to entertain apprehensions of Morty O’Flaherty; “did he mention nothing else?”

“No,” replied Dunroe; “and you scoundrel, was not that a d—d deal too much?”

Norton, now feeling that he was safe from Morty, laughed very heartily, and replied,

“It’s a fact, sure enough; but then, wasn’t it on your lordship’s account I bounced? The lie, in point of fact, if it can be called one, was, therefore, more your lordship’s lie than mine.”

“How do you mean by ’if it can be called one’?”

“Why, if I did not introduce you to real noblemen, I did to some spurious specimens, gentlemen who taught you all the arts and etiquette of the gaming-table, of which, you know very well, my lord, you were then so shamefully ignorant, as to be quite unfit for the society of gentlemen, especially on the continent.”

“Yes, Tom, and the state of my property now tells me at what cost you taught me. You see these tenants say they have not money, plead hard times, failure of crops, and depreciation of property.”

“Ay, and so they will plead, until I take them in hand.”

“And, upon my soul, I don’t care how soon that may be.”

“Monster of disobedience,” said Norton, ironically, “is it thus you speak of a beloved parent, and that parent a respectable old peer? In other words, you wish him in kingdom come. Repent, my lord—retract those words, or dread ’the raven of the valley’.”

“Faith, Tom, there’s no use in concealing it. It’s not that I wish him gone; but that I long as much to touch the property at large, as you the agency. It’s a devilish tough affair, this illness of his.”

“Patience, my lord, and filial affection.”

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“I wish he would either live or die; for, in the first case, I could marry this brave and wealthy wench of the baronet’s, which I can’t do now, and he in such a state of health. If I could once touch the Gourlay cash, I were satisfied. The Gourlay estates will come to me, too, because there is no heir, and they go with this wench, who is a brave wench, for that reason.”

“So she has consented to have you at last?”

“Do you think, Tom, she ever had any serious intention of declining the coronet? No, no; she wouldn’t be her father’s daughter if she had.”

“Yes; but your lordship suspected that the fellow who shot you had made an impression in that quarter.”

“I did for a time—that is, I was fool enough to think so; she is, however, a true woman, and only played him off against me.”

“But why does she refuse to see you?”

“She hasn’t refused, man; her health, they tell me, is not good of late; of course, she is only waiting to gain strength for the interview, that is all. Ah, Tom, my dear fellow, I understand women a devilish deal better than you do.”

“So you ought; you have had greater experience, and paid more for it. What will you do with the fair blonde, though. I suppose the matrimonial compact will send her adrift.”

“Suppose no such thing, then. I had her before matrimony, and I will have her after it. No, Tom, I am not ungrateful; fore or aft, she shall be retained. She shall never say that I acted unhandsomely by her, especially as she has become a good girl and repented. I know I did her injustice about the player-man. On that point she has thoroughly satisfied me, and I was wrong.”

Norton gave him a peculiar look, one of those looks which an adept in the ways of life, in its crooked paths and unprincipled impostures, not unfrequently bestows upon the poor aristocratic dolt whom he is plundering to his face. The look we speak of might be mistaken for surprise—it might be mistaken for pity—but it was meant for contempt.

“Of course,” said he, “you are too well versed in the ways of the world, my lord, and especially in those of the fair sex, to be imposed upon. If ever I met an individual who can read a man’s thoughts by looking into his face, your lordship is the man. By the way, when did you see your father-in-law that is to be?”

“A couple of days ago. He, too, has been ill, and looks somewhat shaken. It is true, I don’t like the man, and I believe nobody does; but I like very well to hear him talk of deeds, settlements, and marriage articles. He begged of me, however, not to insist on

seeing his daughter until she is fully recovered, which he expects will be very soon; and the moment she is prepared for an interview, he is to let me know. But, harkee, Tom, what can the old earl want with me this morning, think you?"

"I cannot even guess," replied the other, "unless it be to prepare you for—"

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“For what?”

“Why, it is said that the fair lady with whom you are about to commit the crime of matrimony is virtuous and religious, as well as beautiful and so forth; and, in that case, perhaps he is about to prepare you for the expected conference. I cannot guess anything else, unless, perhaps, it may be the avarice of age about to rebuke the profusion and generosity of youth. In that case, my lord, keep your temper, and don’t compromise your friends.”

“Never fear, Tom; I have already fought more battles on your account than you could dream of. Perhaps, after all, it is nothing. Of late he has sent for me occasionally, as if to speak upon some matter of importance, when, after chatting upon the news of the day or lecturing me for supporting an impostor—meaning you—he has said he would defer the subject on which he wished to speak, until another opportunity. Whatever it is, he seems afraid of it, or perhaps the respectable old peer is doting.”

“I dare say, my lord, it is very natural he should at these years; but if he,” proceeded Norton, laughing, “is doting now, what will you be at his years? Here, however, is his confidential man, Morty O’Flaherty.”

O’Flaherty now entered, and after making a bow that still smacked strongly of Tipperary, delivered his message.

“My masther, Lord Cullamore, wishes to see you, my lord. He has come down stairs, and is facing the sun, the Lord be praised, in the back drawin’-room.”

“Go, my lord,” said Norton; “perhaps he wishes you to make a third luminary. Go and help him to face the sun.”

“Be my sowl, Mr. Norton, if I’m not much mistaken, it’s the father he’ll have to face. I may as well give you the hard word, my lord—troth, I think you had better be on your edge; he’s as dark as midnight, although the sun is in his face.”

His lordship went out, after having given two or three yawns, stretched himself, and shrugged his shoulders, like a man who was about to enter upon some unpleasant business with manifest reluctance.

“Ah,” exclaimed Morty, looking after him, “there goes a cute boy—at last, God forgive him, he’s of that opinion himself. What a pity there’s not more o’ the family; they’d ornament the counthry.”

“Say, rather, Morty, that there’s one too many.”

“Faith, and I’m sure, Barney, you oughtn’t to think so. Beg pardon—Mr. Norton.”

“Morty, curse you, will you be cautious? But why should I not think so?”

“For sound raisons, that no man knows better than yourself.”

“I’m not the only person that thinks there’s one too many of the family, Morty. In that opinion I am ably supported by his lordship, just gone out there.”

“Where! Ay, I see whereabouts you are now. One too many—faith, so the blessed pair of you think, no doubt.”

“Eight, Morty; if the devil had the agency of the ancient earl’s soul, I would soon get that of his ancient property; but whilst he lives it can’t be accomplished. What do you imagine the old bawble wants with the young one?”

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“Well, I don’t know; I’m hammerin’ upon that for some time past, and can’t come at it.”

“Come, then, let us get the materials first, and then put them on the anvil of my imagination. *Imprimis*—which means, Morty, *in the first place*, have you heard anything?”

“No; nothing to speak of.”

“Well, in the second place, have you seen or observed anything?”

“Why, no; not much.”

“Which means—both your answers included—that you have both heard and seen—so I interpret ‘nothing to speak of,’ on the one hand, and your ‘not much,’ on the other. Out with it; two heads are better than one: what you miss, I may hit.”

“The devil’s no match for you, Bar—Mr. Norton, and it’s hard to expect Dunroe should. I’ll tell you, then—for, in troth, I’m as anxious to come at the meanin’ of it myself as you can be for the life of you. Some few months ago, when we were in London, there came a man to me.”

“Name him, Morty.”

“His name was M’Bride.”

“M’Bride—proceed.”

“His name was M’Bride. His face was tanned into mahogany, just as every man’s is that has lived long in a hot country. ‘Your name,’ says he, ’is O’Flaherty, I understand?’”

“‘Morty O’Flaherty, at your sarvice,’ says I, ’and how are you, sir? I’m happy to see you; only in the mane time you have the advantage of me.’”

“‘Many thanks to you,’ said he, ’for your kind inquiries; as to the advantage, I won’t keep it long; only you don’t seem to know your relations.’”

“‘Maybe not,’ says I, ’they say it’s a wise man that does. Are you one o’ them?’”

“‘I’m one o’ them, did you ever hear of ould Kid Flaherty?’”

“’Well, no; but I did of Buck Flaherty, that always went in boots and buckskin breeches, and wore two watches and a silver-mounted whip.’”

“’Well, you must know that Kid was a son’—and here he pointed his thumb over his left shoulder wid a knowin’ grin upon him—’was a son of the ould Buck’s. The ould Buck’s

wife was a Murtagh; now she again had a cousin named M'Shaughran, who was married upon a man by name M'Faddle. M'Faddle had but one sisther, and she was cousin to Frank M'Fud, that suffered for—but no matther—the M'Swiggins and the M'Fuds were cleaveens to the third cousins of Kid Flaherty's first wife's sister-in-law, and she again was married in upon the M'Brides of Newton Nowhere—so that you see you and I are thirty-second cousins at all events.'"

"'Well, anyway he made out some relationship between us, or at least I thought he did—and maybe that was as good—and faith may be a great deal better, for if ever a man had the look of a schemer about him the same customer had. At any rate we had some drink together, and went on very well till we got befuddled, which, it seems, is his besetting sin. It was clearly his intention, I could see, to make me tipsy, and I dare say he might a done so, only for a slight mistake he made in first getting tipsy himself."

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“Well, but I’m not much the wiser of this,” observed Norton. “What are you at?”

“Neither am I,” replied Morty; “and as to what I’m at—I dunna what the devil I’m at. That’s just what I want to know.”

“Go on,” said the other, “we must have patience. Who did this fellow turn out to be?”

“He insisted he was a relation of my own, as I tould you.”

“Who the devil cares whether he was or not! What was he, then?”

“Ay; what was he?—that’s what I’m askin’ you.”

“Proceed,” said Norton; “tell it your own way.”

“He said he came from the Aist Indies beyant; that he knew some members of his lordship’s family there; that he had been in Paris, and that while he was there he larned to take French lave of his masther.”

“But who was his master?”

“That he would not tell me. However, he said he had been in Ireland for some time before, where he saw an aunt of his, that was half mad; and then he went on to tell me that he had been once at sarvice wid my masther, and that if he liked he could tell him a secret; but then, he said, it wouldn’t be worth his while, for that he would soon know it.”

“Very clear, perfectly transparent, nothing can be plainer. What a Tipperary sphinx you are; an enigma, half man, half beast, although there is little enigma in that, it is plain enough. In the meantime, you bog-trotting oracle, say whether you are humbugging me or not.”

“Devil a bit I’m humbuggin’ you; but proud as you sit there, you have trotted more bogs and horses than ever I did.”

“Well, never mind that, Morty. What did this end in?”

“End in!—why upon my conscience I don’t think it’s properly begun yet.”

“Good-by,” exclaimed Norton, rising to go, or at least pretending to do so. “Many thanks in the meantime for your information—it is precious, invaluable.”

“Well, now, wait a minute. A few days ago I seen the same schemer skulkin’ about the house as if he was afeared o’ bein’ seen; and that beef and mutton may be my poison, wid health to use them, but I seen him stealin’ out of his lordship’s own room. So, now make money o’ that; only when you do, don’t be puttin’ it in circulation.”

“No danger of that, Morty, in any sense. At all events, I don’t deal in base coin.”

“Don’t you, faith. I wondher what do you call imposin’ Barney Bryan, the horse-jockey, on his lordship, for Tom Norton, the gentleman? However, no matther—that’s your own affair; and so long as you let the good ould lord alone among you—keep your secret—-I’m not goin’ to interfere wid you. None of your travellers’ tricks upon him, though.”

“No, not on him, Morty; but concerning this forthcoming marriage, if it takes place, I dare say I must travel; I can’t depend upon Dunroe’s word.”

“Why, unlikelier things has happened, Mr. Norton. I think you’ll be forced to set out.”

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“Well, I only say that if Mr. Norton can prevent it, it won’t happen. I can wind this puppy of a lord, who has no more will of his own than a goose, nor half so much; I say I can wind him round my finger; and if I don’t get him to make himself, in any interview he may have with her, so egregiously ridiculous, as to disgust her thoroughly, my name’s not Norton—hem—ha, ha, ha!”

“Well, your name’s not Norton—very good. In the mane time more power to you in that; for by all accounts it’s a sin and a shame to throw away such a girl upon him.”

Norton now having gained all he could from his old acquaintance, got up, and was about to leave the room, when Morty, looking at him significantly, asked,

“Where are you bound for now, if it’s a fair question?”

“I will tell you, then, Morty—upon an affair that’s anything but pleasant to me, and withal a little dangerous: to buy a horse for Dunroe.”

“Troth, you may well say so; in God’s name keep away from horses and. jockeys, or you’ll be found out; but, above all things, don’t show your face on the Curragh.”

“Well, I don’t know. I believe, after all, there’s no such vast distinction there between the jockeys and the gentlemen. Sometimes the jockey swindles himself up into a gentleman, and sometimes the gentleman swindles himself down to a jockey. So far there would be no great mistake; the only thing to be dreaded is, discovery, so far as it affects the history which I gave of myself to Dunroe and his father. Then there is the sale of some races against me on that most elastic sod; and I fear they are not yet forgotten. Yes, I shall avoid the Curragh; but you know, a fit of illness will easily manage that. However, pass that by; I wish I knew what the old peer and the young one are discussing.”

“What now,” said Norton to himself, after Morty had gone, “can this M’Bride be scheming about in the family? There’s a secret here, I’m certain. Something troubles the old peer of late, whatever it is. Well, let me see; I’ll throw myself in the way of this same M’Bride, and it will go hard with me or I’ll worm it out of him. The knowledge of it may serve me. It’s a good thing to know family secrets, especially for a hanger-on like myself. One good effect it may produce, and that is, throw worthy Lord Dunroe more into my power. Yes, I will see this M’Bride, and then let me alone for playing my card to some purpose.”

Dunroe found his father much as Morty had described him—enjoying the fresh breeze and blessed light of heaven, as both came in upon him through the open window at which he sat.

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The appearance of the good old man was much changed for the worse. His face was paler and more emaciated than when we last described it. His chin almost rested on his breast, and his aged-looking hands were worn away to skin and bone. Still there was the same dignity about him as ever, only that the traces of age and illness gave to it something that was still more venerable and impressive. Like some portrait, by an old master, time, whilst it mellowed and softened the colors, added that depth and truthfulness of character by which the value I is at once known. He was sitting in an arm-chair, with a pillow for his head to rest upon when he wished it; and on his son's entrance he asked him to wheel it round nearer the centre of the room, and let down the window.

"I hope you are better this morning, my lord?" inquired Dunroe.

"John," said he in reply, "I cannot say that I am better, but I can that I am worse."

"I am sorry to hear that, my lord," replied the other, "the season is remarkably fine, and the air mild and cheerful."

"I would much rather the cheerfulness were here," replied his father, putting his wasted hand upon his heart; "but I did not ask you here to talk about myself on this occasion, or about my feelings. Miss Gourlay has consented to marry you, I know."

"She has, my lord."

"Well, I must confess I did her father injustice for a time. I ascribed his extraordinary anxiety for this match less to any predilection of hers—for I thought it was otherwise—-than to his ambition. I am glad, however, that it is to be a marriage, although I feel you are utterly unworthy of her; and if I did not hope that her influence may in time, and in a short time, too, succeed in bringing about a wholesome reformation in your life and morals, I would oppose it still as far as lay in my power. It is upon this subject I wish to speak with you."

Lord Dunroe bowed with an appearance of all due respect, but at the same time wished in his heart that Norton could be present to hear the lecture which he had so correctly prognosticated, and to witness the ability with which he should bamboozle the old peer.

"I assure you, my lord," he replied, "I am very willing and anxious to hear and be guided by everything you shall say. I know I have been wild—indeed, I am very sorry for it; and if it will satisfy you, my lord, I will add, without hesitation, that it is time I should turn over a new leaf—hem!"

"You have, John, been not merely wild—for wildness I could overlook without much severity—but you have been profligate in morals, profligate in expenditure, and profligate in your dealings with those who trusted in your integrity. You have been

intemperate; you have been licentious; you have been dishonest; and as you have not yet abandoned any one of these frightful vices, I look upon your union with Miss Gourlay as an association between pollution and purity."

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“You are very severe, my lord.”

“I meant to be so; but am I unjust? Ah, John, let your own conscience answer that question.”

“Well, my lord, I trust you will be gratified to hear that I am perfectly sensible of the life I have led—ahem?”

“And what is that but admitting that you know the full extent of your vices?—unless, indeed, you have made a firm resolution to give them up.”

“I have made such a resolution, my lord, and it is my intention to keep it. I know I can do little of myself, but I trust that where there is a sincere disposition, all will go on swimmingly, as the Bible says—ahem!”

“Where does the Bible say that all will go on swimmingly?”

“I don’t remember the exact chapter and verse, my lord,” he replied, affecting a very grave aspect, “but I know it is somewhere in the Book of Solomon—ahem!—ahem! Either in Solomon or Exodus the Prophet, I am not certain which. Oh, no, by the by, I believe it is in the dialogue that occurs between Jonah and the whale.”

His father looked at him as if to ascertain whether his worthy son were abandoned enough to tamper, in the first place, with a subject so solemn, and, in the next, with the anxiety of his own parent, while laboring, under age and infirmity, to wean him from a course of dissipation and vice. Little indeed did he suspect that his virtuous offspring was absolutely enacting his part, for the purpose of having a good jest to regale Norton with in the course of their evening’s potations.

Let it not be supposed that we are overstepping the modesty of nature in this scene. There is scarcely any one acquainted with life who does not know that there are hundreds, thousands, of hardened profligates, who would take delight, under similar circumstances, to quiz the governor—as a parent is denominated by this class—even at the risk of incurring his lasting displeasure, or of altogether forfeiting his affection, rather than lose the opportunity of having a good joke to tell their licentious companions, when they meet. The present age has as much of this, perhaps, as any of its predecessors, if not more. But to return.

“I know not,” observed Lord Cullamore, “whether this is an ironical affectation of ignorance, or ignorance itself; but on whichever horn of the dilemma I hang you, Dunroe, you are equally contemptible and guilty. A heart must be deeply corrupted, indeed, that can tempt its owner to profane sacred things, and cast an aged and afflicted parent into ridicule. You are not aware, unfortunate young man, of the precipice on which you stand, or the dismay with which I could fill your hardened heart, by two or

three words speaking. And only that I was not a conscious party in circumstances which may operate terribly against us both, I would mention them to you, and make you shudder at the fate that is probably before you."

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“I really think,” replied his son, now considerably alarmed by what he had heard, “that you are dealing too severely with me. I am not, so far as I know, profaning anything sacred; much less would I attempt to ridicule your lordship. But the truth is, I know little or nothing of the Bible, and consequently any mistaken references to it that I may sincerely make, ought not to be uncharitably misinterpreted—ahem! ’We are going on swimmingly’ as Jonah said to the whale, or the whale to Jonah, I cannot say which, is an expression which I have frequently heard, and I took it for granted that it was a scriptural quotation. Your lordship is not aware, besides, that I am afflicted with a very bad memory.”

“Perfectly aware of it, Dunroe: since I have been forced to observe that you forget every duty of life. What is there honorable to yourself or your position in the world, that you ever have remembered? And supposing now, on the one hand, that you may for the present only affect a temporary reformation, and put in practice that worst of vices, a moral expediency, and taking it for granted, on the other, that your resolution to amend is sincere, by what act am I to test that sincerity?”

“I will begin and read the Bible, my lord, and engage a parson to instruct me in virtue. Isn’t that generally the first step?”

“I do not forbid you the Bible, nor the instructions of a pious clergyman; but I beg to propose a test that will much more satisfactorily establish that sincerity. First, give up your dissipated and immoral habits; contract your expenditure within reasonable limits; pay your just debts, by which I mean your debts of honesty, not of honor—unless they have been lost to a man of honor, and not to notorious swindlers; forbear to associate any longer with sharpers and blacklegs, whether aristocratic or plebeian; and as a first proof of the sincerity you claim, dismiss forever from your society that fellow, Norton, who is, I am sorry to say, your bosom friend and boon companion.”

“With every condition you have proposed, my lord, I am willing and ready to comply, the last only excepted. I am sorry to find that you have conceived so strong and unfounded a prejudice against Mr. Norton. You do not know his value to me, my lord. He has been a Mentor to me—saved me thousands by his ability and devotion to my interests. The fact is, he is my friend. Now I am not prepared to give up and abandon my friend without a just cause; and I regret that any persuasion to such an act should proceed from you, my lord. In all your other propositions I shall obey you implicitly; but in this your lordship must excuse me. I cannot do it with honor, and therefore cannot do it at all.”

“Ah, I see, Dunroe, and I bitterly regret to see it—this fellow, this Norton, has succeeded in gaining over you that iniquitous ascendancy which the talented knave gains over the weak and unsuspicious fool. Pardon me, for I speak plainly. He has studied your disposition and habits; he has catered for your enjoyments; he has availed himself of your weaknesses; he has flattered your vanity; he has mixed himself up in the

management of your affairs; and, in fine, made himself necessary to your existence; yet you will not give him up?”

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“My lord, I reply to you in one word—he IS MY FRIEND.”

A shade of bitterness passed over the old man’s face as he turned a melancholy look upon Dunroe.

“May you never live, Dunroe,” he said, “to see your only son refuse to comply with your dying request, or to listen with an obedient I spirit to your parting admonition. It is true, I am not, I trust, immediately dying, and yet why should I regret it? But, at the same time, I feel that my steps are upon the very threshold of death—a consideration which ought to insure obedience to my wishes in any heart not made callous by the worst experiences of life.”

“I would comply with your wishes, my lord,” replied Dunroe, “with the sincerest pleasure, and deny myself anything to oblige you; but in what you ask there is a principle involved, which I cannot, as a man of honor, violate. And, besides, I really could not afford to part with him now. My affairs are in such a state, and he is so well acquainted with them, that to do so would ruin me.”

His father, who seemed wrapt in some painful reflection, paid no attention to this reply, which, in point of fact, contained, so far as Norton was concerned, a confirmation of the old man’s worst suspicions. His chin had sunk on his breast, and looking into the palms of his hands as he held them clasped together, he could not prevent the tears from rolling slowly down his furrowed cheeks. At length he exclaimed:

“My child, Emily, my child! how will I look upon thee! My innocent, my affectionate angel; what, what, oh what will become of thee? But it cannot be. My guilt was not premeditated. What I did I did in ignorance; and why should we suffer through the arts of others? I shall oppose them step by step should they proceed. I shall leave no earthly resource untried to frustrate their designs; and if they are successful, the cruel sentence may be pronounced, but it will be over my grave. I could never live to witness the sufferings of my darling and innocent child. My lamp of life is already all but exhausted—this would extinguish it forever.”

He then raised his head, and after wiping away the tears, spoke to his son as follows:

“Dunroe, be advised by me; reform your life; set your house in order, for you know not, you see not, the cloud which is likely to burst over our heads.”

“I don’t understand you, my lord.”

“I know you do not, nor is it my intention that you should for the present; but if you are wise, you will be guided by my instructions and follow my advice.”

When Dunroe left him, which he did after some formal words of encouragement and comfort, to which the old man paid little attention, turning toward the door, which his son

on going out had shut, he looked as if his eye followed him beyond the limits of the room, and exclaimed:

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“Alas! why was I not born above the ordinary range of the domestic affections? Yet so long as I have my darling child—who is all affection—why should I complain on this account? Alas, my Maria, it is now that thou art avenged for the neglect you experienced at my hands, and for the ambition that occasioned it. Cursed ambition! Did the coronet I gained by my neglect of you, beloved object of my first and only affection, console my heart under the cries of conscience, or stifle the grief which returned for you, when that ambition was gratified? Ah, that false and precipitate step! How much misery has it not occasioned me since I awoke from my dream! Your gentle spirit seemed to haunt me through life, but ever with that melancholy smile of tender and affectionate reproach with which your eye always encountered mine while living. And thou, wicked woman, what has thy act accomplished, if it should be successful? What has thy fraudulent contrivance effected? Sorrow to one who was ever thy friend—grief, shame, and degradation to the innocent!”

Whilst the old man indulged in these painful and melancholy reflections, his son, on the other hand, was not without his own speculations. On retiring to his dressing-room, he began to ponder over the admonitory if not prophetic words of his father.

“What the deuce can the matter be?” he exclaimed, surveying himself in the glass; “a good style of face that, in the meantime. Gad, I knew she would surrender in form, and I was right. Something is wrong with—that gold button—yes, it looks better plain—the old gentleman—something’s in the wind—in the meantime I’ll raise this window—or why should he talk so lugubriously as he does? Upon my soul it was the most painful interview I ever had. There is nothing on earth so stupid as the twaddle of a sick old lord, especially when repenting for his sins. Repentance! I can’t at all understand that word; but I think the style of the thing in the old fellow’s hands was decidedly bad—-inartistic, as they say, and without taste; a man, at all events, should repent like a gentleman. As far as I can guess at it, I think there ought to be considerable elegance of manner in repentance—a kind of genteel ambiguity, that should seem to puzzle the world as to whether you weep for or against the sin; or perhaps repentance should say—as I suppose it often does—’D—n me, this is no humbug; this, look you, is a grand process—I know what I’m about; let the world look on; I have committed a great many naughty things during my past life; I am now able to commit no more; the power of doing so has abandoned me; and I call gods and men to witness that I am very sorry for it.’—Now, that, in my opinion, would be a good style of thing. Let me see, however, what the venerable earl can mean. I am threatened, am I? Well, but nothing can affect the title; of that I’m sure when the cue, ‘exit old peer,’ comes; then, as to the property; why, he is one of the wealthiest men in the Irish peerage, although he is an English one also. Then, what the deuce can his threats mean? I don’t know—perhaps he does not know himself; but, in any event, and to guard against all accidents, I’ll push on this marriage as fast as possible; for, in case anything unexpected and disagreeable should happen, it will be a good move to have something handsome—something certain, to fall back upon.”

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Having dressed, he ordered his horse, and rode out to the Phoenix Park, accompanied by his shadow, Norton, who had returned, and heard with much mirth a full history of the interview, with a glowing description of the stand which Dunroe made for himself.

CHAPTER XXX. A Courtship on Novel Principles.

Having stated that Sir Thomas Gourlay requested Dunroe to postpone an interview with Lucy until her health should become reestablished, we feel it necessary to take a glance at the kind of life the unfortunate girl led from the day she made the sacrifice until that at which we have arrived in this narrative. Since that moment of unutterable anguish her spirits completely abandoned her. Naturally healthy she had ever been, but now she began to feel what the want of it meant; a feeling which to her, as the gradual precursor of death, and its consequent release from sorrow, brought something like hope and consolation. Yet this was not much; for we know that to the young heart entering upon the world of life and enjoyment, the prospect of early dissolution, no matter by what hopes or by what resignation supported, is one so completely at variance with the mysterious gift of existence and the natural tenacity with which we cling to it, that, like the drugs which we so reluctantly take during illness, its taste upon the spirit is little else than bitterness itself. Lucy's appetite failed her; she could not endure society, but courted solitude, and scarcely saw any one, unless, indeed, her father occasionally, and her maid Alley Mahon, when her attendance was necessary. She became pale as a shadow, began to have a wasted appearance, and the very fountains of her heart seemed to have dried up, for she found it impossible to shed a tear. A dry, cold, impassive agony, silent, insidious, and exhausting, appeared to absorb the very elements of life, and reduce her to a condition of such physical and morbid incapacity as to feel an utter inability, or at all events disinclination, to complain.

Her father's interviews with her were not frequent. That worthy man, however, looked upon all her sufferings as the mere pinings of a self-willed girl, lovesick and sentimental, such as he had sometimes heard of, or read in books, and only worthy to be laughed at and treated with contempt. He himself was now progressing in an opposite direction, so far as health was concerned, to that of his daughter. In other words, as she got ill, he gradually, and with a progress beautifully adapted to the accomplishment of his projects, kept on recovering. This fact was Lucy's principal, almost her sole consolation; for here, although she had sacrificed herself, she experienced the satisfaction of seeing that the sacrifice was not in vain.

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But, after all, and notwithstanding his base and ungodly views of life, let us ask, had the baronet no painful visitations of remorse in contemplating the fading form and the silent but hopeless agony of his daughter? Did conscience, which in his bosom of stone indulged in an almost unbroken slumber, never awaken to scourge his hardened spirit with her whip of snakes, and raise the gloomy curtain that concealed from him the dark and tumultuous fires that await premeditated guilt and impenitence? We answer, he was man. Sometimes, especially in the solemn hours of night, he experienced brief periods, not of remorse, much less of repentance, but of dark, diabolical guilt—-conscious guilt, unmitigated by either penitence or remorse, as might have taught his daughter, could she have known them, how little she herself suffered in comparison with him. These dreadful moments remind one of the heavings of some mighty volcano, when occasioned by the internal stragglings of the fire that is raging within it, the power and fury of which may be estimated by the terrible glimpses which rise up, blazing and smouldering from its stormy crater.

“What am I about?” he would say. “What a black prospect does life present to me! I fear I am a bad man. Could it be possible now, that there are thousands of persons in life who have committed great crimes in the face of society, who, nevertheless, are not responsible for half my guilt? Is it possible that a man may pass through the world, looking on it with a plausible aspect, and yet become, from the natural iniquity of his disposition and the habitual influence of present and perpetual evil within him, a man of darker and more extended guilt than the murderer or robber? Is it, then, the isolated crime, the crime that springs from impulse, or passion, or provocation, or revenge?—or is it the black unbroken iniquity of the spirit, that constitutes the greater offence, or the greater offender against society? Am I, then, one of I those reprobates of life in whom there is everything adverse to good and friendly to evil, yet who pass through existence with a high head, and look upon the public criminal and felon with abhorrence or affected compassion? But why investigate myself? Here I am; and that fact is the utmost limit to which my inquiries and investigations can go. I am what I am: besides, I did not form nor create myself. I am different from my daughter, she is different from me. I am different from most people. In what? May I not have a destined purpose in creation to fulfil; and is it not probable that my natural disposition has been bestowed upon me for the purpose of fulfilling it? Yet if all were right, how account for these dreadful and agonizing glimpses of my inner life which occasionally visit me? But I dare say every man feels them. What are they, after all, but the superstitious operations of conscience—of that grim spectre which is conjured up by the ridiculous fables of the priest and nurse? Conscience! Why, its fearful tribunal is no test of truth. The wretched anchorite will often experience as much remorse if he neglect to scourge his miserable carcass, as the murderer who sheds the blood of man—or more. Away with it! I am but a fool for allowing it to disturb me at all, or mar my projects.”

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In this manner would he attempt to reason himself out of these dreadful visitations, by the shallow sophistry of the sceptic and infidel.

The time, however, he thought, was now approaching when it was necessary that something should be done with respect to Lucy's approaching marriage. He accordingly sent for her, and having made very affectionate inquiries after her health, for he had not for a moment changed the affected tenderness of his manner, he asked if she believed herself capable of granting an interview to Lord Dunroe. Lucy, now that escape from the frightful penalty of her obedience was impossible, deemed it, after much painful reflection, better to submit with as little apparent reluctance as possible.

"I fear, papa," she said, in tones that would have touched and softened any heart but that to which she addressed herself, "I fear that it is useless to wait until I am better. I feel my strength declining every day, without any hope of improvement. I may therefore as well see him now as at a future time."

"My dear Lucy, I know that you enter into this engagement with reluctance. I know that you do it for my sake; and you may rest assured that your filial piety and obedience will be attended with a blessing. After marriage you will find that change of scene, Dunroe's tenderness, and the influence of enlivening society, will completely restore your health and spirits. Dunroe's a rattling, pleasant fellow; and notwithstanding his escapades, has an excellent heart. Tut, my dear child, after a few months you will yourself smile at these girlish scruples, and thank papa for forcing you into happiness."

Lucy's large eyes had been fixed upon him while he spoke, and as he concluded, two big tears, the first she had shed for weeks, stood within their lids. They seemed, however, but visionary; for although they did fall they soon disappeared, having been absorbed, as it were, into the source from which they came, by the feverish heat of her brain.

"It is enough, papa," she said; "I am willing to see him—willing to see him whenever you wish. I am in your hands, and neither you nor he need apprehend any further opposition from me."

"You are a good girl, Lucy; and you may believe me again that this admirable conduct of yours will have its reward in a long life of future happiness."

"Future happiness, papa," she replied, with a peculiar emphasis on the word; "I hope so. May I withdraw, sir?"

"You may, my dear child. God bless and reward you, Lucy. It is to your duty I owe it that I am a living man—that you have a father."

When she had gone, he sat down to his desk, and without losing a moment sent a note to Dunroe, of which the following is a copy:

“My dear Lord Dunroe,—I am happy to tell you that Lucy is getting on famously.

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“Of course you know, I suppose, that these vaporish affections are, with most young girls, nothing but the performance of the part which they choose to act before marriage; the mere mists of the morning, poor wenches, which only prognosticate for themselves and their husbands an unclouded day. All this make-believe is very natural; and it is a good joke, besides, to see them pout and look grave, and whine and cry, and sometimes do the hysteric, whilst they are all the time dying in secret, the hypocritical baggages, to get themselves transformed into matrons. Don’t, therefore, be a whit surprised or alarmed if you find Miss Lucy in the pout—she is only a girl, after all, and has her little part to play, as well as the best of them. Still, such a change is often in reality a serious one to a young woman; and you need not be told that no animal will allow itself to be caught without an effort. When you see her, therefore, pluck up your spirits, rattle away, laugh and jest, so as, if possible, to get her into good humor, and there is no danger of you. Or stay—I am wrong. Had you followed this advice, it would have played the deuce with you. Don’t be merry. On the contrary, pull a long face—be grave and serious; and if you can imitate the manner of one of those fellows who pass for young men of decided piety, you were nothing but a made man. Have you a Bible? If you have, commit half-a-dozen texts to memory, and intersperse them judiciously through your conversation. Talk of the vanity of life, the comforts of religion, and the beauty of holiness. But don’t overdo the thing either. Just assume the part of a young person on whose mind the truth is beginning to open, because Lucy knows now very well that these rapid transitions are suspicious. At all events, you will do the best you can; and if you are here to-morrow—say about three o’clock—she will see you.

“Ever, my dear Dunroe,

“Faithfully, your father-in-law that is to be,

“Thomas Gourlay.”

This precious epistle Dunroe found upon his table after returning from his ride in the Phoenix Park; and having perused it, he immediately rang for Norton, from whom he thought it was much too good a thing to be concealed.

“Norton,” said he, “I am beginning to think that this black fellow, the baronet, is not such a disgraceful old scoundrel as I had thought him. There’s not a bad thing in its way—-read it.”

Norton, after throwing his eye over it, laughed heartily.

“Egad,” said he, “that fellow has a pretty knowledge of life; but it is well he recovered himself in the instructions, for, from all that I have heard of Miss Gourlay, his first code would have ruined you, sure enough.”

“I am afraid I will break down, however, in the hypocrisy. I failed cursedly with the old peer, and am not likely to be more successful with her.”

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“Indeed, I question whether hypocrisy would sit well upon one who has been so undisguised an offender. The very assumption of it requires some training. I think a work to be called ‘Preparations for Hypocrisy’ would be a great book to the general mass of mankind. You cannot bound at one step from the licentious to the hypocritical, unless, indeed, upon the convenient principle of instantaneous conversion. The thing must be done decently, and by judicious gradations, nor is the transition attended with much difficulty, in consequence of the natural tendency which hypocrisy and profligacy always have to meet. Still, I think you ought to attempt the thing. Get by heart, as her father advises, half-a-dozen serious texts of Scripture, and drop one in now and then, such as, ’All flesh is grass.’ ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ ’He that marrieth not doth well, but he that marrieth doth better.’ To be sure, there is a slight inversion of text here, but then it is made more appropriate.”

“None of these texts, however,” replied his lordship, “except the last, are applicable to marriage.”

“So much the better; that will show her that you can think of other and more serious things.”

“But there are very few things more serious, my boy.”

“At all events,” proceeded the other, “it will be original, and originality, you know, is your *forte*. I believe it is supposed that she has no great relish for this match, and is not overburdened with affection for you?”

“She must have changed, though,” replied his lordship, “or she wouldn’t have consented.”

“That may be; but if she should candidly tell you that she does not like you—why, in that case, your originality must bear you out. Start some new and original theory on marriage; say, for instance, that your principle is not to marry a girl who does love you, but rather one who feels the other way. Dwell fearfully on the danger of love before marriage: and thus strike out strongly upon the advantages of indifference—honest indifference. By this means you will meet all her objections, and be able to capsize her on every point.”

“Norton,” said his lordship, “I think you are right. My originality will carry the day; but in the meantime you must give me further instructions on the subject, so that I may be prepared at all points.”

“By the by, Dunroe, you will be a happy fellow. I am told she is a magnificent creature; beautiful, sensible, brilliant, and mistress of many languages.”

“Not to be compared with the blonde, though.”

“I cannot say,” replied Norton, “having not yet seen her. You will get very fond of her, of course.”

“Fond—’gad, I hope it will never come to that with me. The moment a man suffers himself to become fond of his wife, he had better order his Bible and Prayer-book at once—it is all up with him.”

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“I grant you it’s an unfortunate condition to get into; and the worst of it is, that once you are in, it is next to an impossibility to get out. Of course, you will take care to avoid it, for your own sake, and, if you have no objection, for mine. Perhaps her ladyship may take a fancy to support the venerable peer against me in recommending the process of John Thrustout. If so, Dunroe, whatever happiness your marriage may bring yourself, it will bring nothing but bitterness and calamity to me. I am now so much accustomed—-so much—so much—hang it, why conceal it?—so much attached and devoted to you—-that a separation would be the same as death to me.”

“Never fear, Norton,” replied Dunroe, “I have not yielded to my father on this point, neither shall I to my wife. Happen what may, my friend must never be given up for the whim of any one. But, indeed, you need entertain no apprehensions. I am not marrying the girl for love, so that she is not likely to gain any ascendancy whatever over me. It is her fortune and property that have attracted my affections, just as the title she will enjoy has inveigled those of the old father.”

Norton, in deep emotions of gratitude, ably sustained, had already seized the hand of his patron, and was about to reply—but the effort was too much for him; his heart was too full; he felt a choking; so, clapping his handkerchief to his face with one hand, and the other upon his heart, he rushed out of the room, lest Dunroe might perceive the incredible force of his affection for him.

The next day, when Dunroe made his appearance in the drawing-room, Lucy, before descending, felt as one may be supposed to do who stands upon the brow of a precipice, conscious at the same time that not only is retreat from this terrible position impossible, but that the plunge must be made. On this occasion she experienced none of that fierce energy which sometimes results from despair, and which one might imagine to have been in accordance with her candid and generous character, when driven as she was to such a step. On the contrary, she felt calm, cold, and apathetic. Her pulse could scarcely be perceived by Alley Mahon; and all the physical powers of life within her seemed as if about to suspend their functions. Her reason, however, was clear, even to torture. Those tumultuous vibrations of the spirit—those confused images and unsettled thoughts of the brain; and all those excited emotions of the heart, that are usually called into existence in common minds by such scenes, would have been to her as a relief, in comparison to what she experienced. In her case there was a tranquillity of agony—a quiet, unresisting submission—a gentle bowing of the neck to the stake, at the sacrifice that resulted from the clear perception of her great mind, which thus, by its very facility of apprehension, magnified the torture she suffered. Whilst descending the stairs, she felt such a sinking of the soul within her, as the unhappy wretch does who ascends from those which lead to that deadly platform from which is taken the terrible spring into eternity.

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On entering the room she saw herself in the large mirror that adorned the mantel-piece, and felt for the first time as if all this was some dreadful dream. The reality, however, of the misery she felt was too strongly in her heart to suffer this consoling fiction, painful even though it was, to remain. The next moment she found Lord Dunroe doing her homage and obeisance,—an obeisance which she returned with a lady-like but melancholy grace, that might have told to any other observer the sufferings she felt, and the sacrifice she was making.

Dunroe, with as much politeness as he could assume, handed her to the sofa, close to which he drew a chair, and opened the dialogue as follows:

“I am sorry to hear that you have not been well, Miss Gourlay. Life, however, is uncertain, and we should always be prepared—at least, so says Scripture. All flesh is grass, I think is the expression—ahem.”

Lucy looked at him with a kind of astonishment; and, indeed, we think our readers will scarcely feel surprised that she did so; the reflection being anything but adapted to the opening of a love scene.

“Your observation, my lord,” she replied, “is very true—too true, for we rarely make due preparation for death.”

“But I can conceive, readily enough,” replied his lordship, “why the man that wrote the Scripture used the expression. Death, you know Miss Gourlay, is always represented as a mower, bearing a horrible scythe, and an hour-glass. Now, a mower, you know, cuts down grass; and there is the origin of the similitude.”

“And a very appropriate one it is, I think,” observed Lucy.

“Well, I dare say it is; but somewhat vulgar though. I should be disposed to say, now, that the man who wrote that must have been a mower himself originally.”

Lucy made no reply to this sapient observation. His lordship, however, who seemed to feel that he had started upon a wrong principle, if not a disagreeable one, went on:

“It is not, however, to talk of death, Miss Gourlay, that we have met, but of a very different and much more agreeable subject—marriage.”

“To me, my lord,” she replied, “death is the more agreeable of the two.”

“I am sorry to hear that, Miss Gourlay; but I think you are in low spirits, and that accounts for it. Your father tells me, however, that I have your permission to urge my humble claims. He says you have kindly and generously consented to look upon me, all unworthy as I feel I am, as your future husband.”

“It is true, my lord, I have consented to this projected union; but I feel that it is due to your lordship to state that I have done so under very painful and most distressing circumstances. It is better I should speak now, my lord, than at a future day. My father’s mind has been seized by an unaccountable ambition to see me your wife. This preyed upon him so severely that he became dangerously ill.” Here, however, from delicacy to the baronet, she checked herself, but added, “Yes, my lord, I have consented; but, understand me—you have not my affections.”

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“Why, as to that, Miss Gourlay, I have myself peculiar opinions; and I am glad that they avail me here. You will think it odd, now, that I had made my mind up never to marry a woman who loved me. This is really fortunate.”

“I don’t understand you, my lord.”

“Well, I suppose you don’t; but I shall make myself intelligible as well as I can. Love before marriage, in my opinion, is exceedingly dangerous to future happiness; and I will tell you why I think so. In the first place, a great deal of that fuel which feeds the post-matrimonial flame is burned away and wasted unnecessarily; the imagination, too, is raised to a ridiculous and most enthusiastic expectation of perpetual bliss and ecstasy; then comes disappointment, coolness, indifference, and the lights go out for want of the fuel I mentioned; and altogether the domestic life becomes rather a dull and tedious affair. The wife wonders that the husband is no longer a, lover; and the husband cannot for the soul of him see all the—the—the—ahem!—I scarcely know what to call them—-that enchanted him before marriage. Then, you perceive, that when love is necessary, the fact comes out that it was most injudiciously expended before the day of necessity. Both parties feel, in fact, that the property has been prematurely squandered—like many another property—and when it is wanted, there is nothing to fall back upon. I wish to God affection could be funded, so that when a married couple found themselves low in pocket in that commodity they could draw the interest or sell out at once.”

“And what can you expect, my lord, from those who marry without affection?” asked Lucy.

“Ten chances for happiness,” replied his lordship, “for one that results from love. When such persons meet, mark you, Miss Gourlay, they are not enveloped in an artificial veil of splendor, which the cares of life, and occasionally a better knowledge of each other, cause to dissolve from about them, leaving them stripped of those imaginary qualities of mind and person which never had any existence at all, except in their hypochondriac brains, when love-stricken; whereas, your honest, matter-of-fact people come together—first with indifference, and, as there is nothing angelic to be expected on either side, there is consequently no disappointment. There has, in fact, been no sentimental fraud committed—no swindle of the heart—for love, too, like its relation, knavery, has its black-legs, and very frequently raises credit upon false pretences; the consequence is, that plain honesty begins to produce its natural effects.”

“Can this man,” thought Lucy, “have been taking lessons from papa? And pray, my lord,” she proceeded, “what are those effects which marriage without love—produces?”

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“Why, a good honest indifference, in the first place, which keeps the heart easy and somewhat indolent withal. There is none of that sharp jealousy which is perpetually on the spy for offence. None of that pulling and pouting—falling out and falling in—which are ever the accessories of love. On the contrary, honest indifference minds the family—honest indifference, mark, buys the beef and mutton, reckons the household linen—-eschews parties and all places of fashionable resort, attends to the children—sees them educated, bled, blistered, *et cetera*, when necessary; and, what is still better, looks to their religion, hears them their catechism, brings them, in their clean bibs and tuckers, to church, and rewards that one who carries home most of the sermon with a large lump of sugar-candy.”

“These are very original views of marriage, my lord.”

“Aha!” thought his lordship, “I knew the originality would catch her.”

“Why, the fact is, Miss Gourlay, that I believe—at least I think I may say—that originality is my forte. I have a horror against everything common.”

“I thought so, my lord,” replied Lucy; “your sense, for instance, is anything but common sense.”

“You are pleased to flatter me, Miss Gourlay, but you speak very truly; and that is because I always think for myself—I do not wish to be measured by a common standard.”

“You are very right; my lord; it would be difficult, I fear, to find a common standard to measure you by. One would imagine, for instance, that you have been on this principle absolutely studying the subject of matrimony. At least, you are the first person I have ever met who has succeeded in completely stripping it of common sense, and there I must admit your originality.”

“Gad!” thought his lordship, “I have her with me—I am getting on famously.”

“They would imagine right, Miss Gourlay; these principles are the result of a deep and laborious investigation into that mysterious and awful topic. Honest indifference has no intrigues, no elopements, no disgraceful trials for criminal conversation, no divorces. No; your lovers in the yoke of matrimony, when they tilt with each other, do it sharply, with naked weapons; whereas, the worthy indifferents, in the same circumstances, have a wholesome regard for each other, and rattle away only with the scabbards. Upon my honor, Miss Gourlay, I am quite delighted to hear that you are not attached to me. I can now marry upon my own principles. It is not my intention to coax, and fondle, and tease you after marriage; not at all. I shall interfere as little as possible with your habits, and you, I trust, as little with mine. We shall see each other only occasionally, say at church, for instance, for I hope you will have no objection to accompany me there. Neither man

nor woman knows what is due to society if they pass through the world without the comforts of religion. All flesh—ahem!—no—sufficient unto the day—as Scripture says."

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“My lord, I think marriage a solemn subject, and—”

“Most people find it so, Miss Gourlay.”

—“And on that account that it ought to be exempted from ridicule.”

“I perfectly agree with you, Miss Gourlay: it is indeed a serious subject, and ought not to be sported with or treated lightly.”

“My lord,” said Lucy, “I must crave your attention for a few moments. I believe the object of this interview is to satisfy you that I have given the consent which my father required and entreated of me. But, my lord, you are mistaken. Our union cannot take place upon your principles, and for this reason, there is no indifference in the case, so far, at least, as I am concerned. It would not become me to express here, under my father’s roof, the sentiments which I feel. Your own past life, my lord—your habits, your associates, may enable you to understand them. It is enough to say, that in wedding you I wed misery, wretchedness, despair; so that, in my case, at least, there is no ‘sentimental fraud’ committed.”

“Not a bit of it, Miss Gourlay; your conduct, I say, is candid and honorable; and I am quite satisfied that the woman who has strength of mind and love of truth to practice this candor before marriage, gives the best security for fidelity and all the other long list of matrimonial virtues afterwards. I am perfectly charmed with your sentiments. Indeed I was scarcely prepared for this. Our position will be delightful. The only thing I have any apprehension of is, lest this wholesome aversion might gradually soften into fondness, which, you know, would be rather unpleasant to us both.”

“My lord,” replied Lucy, rising up with disdain and indignation glowing in her face, “there is one sentiment due to every woman whose conduct is well regulated and virtuous—-that sentiment is, respect. From you on this occasion, at least, and on this subject especially, I had thought myself entitled to it. I find I have been mistaken, however. Such a sentiment is utterly incompatible with the heartless tirade of buffoonery in which you have indulged. This dialogue is very painful, my lord. I have already intimated to you that I am prepared to fulfil the engagement into which my father has entered with you. I know—I feel what the result will be—you are to consider me your victim, my lord, as well as your wife.”

“Excuse me, Miss Gourlay, I was utterly unconscious of any buffoonery. Upon my honor, I expressed on the subject of matrimony no principles that I do not feel; but as to your charge of disrespect, I solemnly assure you there is not an individual of your sex in existence whom I respect more highly; nor do I believe there is a lady living more signally entitled to it from all who have the honor to know her.”

“Then, if you be serious, my lord, it betrays a painful equality between your understanding and your heart. No man with such a heart should enter into the state of matrimony at all; and no man with an understanding level to such principles is capable either of communicating or receiving happiness.”

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“Well, then, suppose I say that I shall submit myself in everything to your wishes?”

“Then I should reply, that the husband capable of doing so would experience from me a sentiment little short of contempt. What, my lord! so soon to abandon your favorite principles! That is a proof, I fear, that, after all, you place but little value on them.”

“Well, but I know I have not been so good a boy as I ought to have been; I have been naughty now and then; and as I intend to reform, I shall make you my guide and adviser. I assure you, I am perfectly serious in the reformation. It shall be on quite an original scale. I intend to repent, Miss Gourlay; but, then, my repentance won’t be commonplace repentance. I shall do the thing with an aristocratic feeling—or, in other words, I shall repent like a man of honor and a gentleman.”

“Like anything but a Christian, my I presume.”

“Just so; I must be original or die. I will give up everything; for, after all. Miss Gourlay, what is there more melancholy than the vanity of life—unless, indeed, it be the beauty of holiness—ahem! All flesh—no—I repeated that sweet text before. He that marrieth doth well; but he that marrieth not doth better. Sufficient unto the day—No, hang it, I think I misquoted it. I believe it runs correctly—He that giveth ’way, does well; but he that giveth not way, does better: then, I believe, comes in, Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. What beautiful and appropriate texts are to be found in Scripture, Miss Gourlay! By the way, the man that wrote it was a shrewd fellow and a profound thinker. The only pity is, that the work’s anonymous.”

Lucy rose, absolutely sickened, and said, “My lord, excuse me. The object of our interview has been accomplished, and as I am far from well, you will permit me to withdraw. In the meantime, pray make whatever arrangements and hold, whatever interviews may be necessary in this miserable and wretched business; but henceforth they must be with my father.”

“You are surely not going, Miss Gourlay?”

She replied not, but turning round, seemed to reflect for a moment, after which she spoke as follows:

“I cannot bring myself to think, my lord, after the unusual opinions you have expressed, that you have been for one moment serious in the conversation which has taken place between us. Their strangeness and eccentricity forbid me to suppose this; and if I did not think that it is so, and that, perhaps, you are making an experiment upon my temper and judgment, for some purpose at present inconceivable; and if I did not think, besides, notwithstanding these opinions, that you may possess sufficient sense and feeling to perceive the truth and object of what I am about to say, I would not remain one moment

longer in your society. I request, therefore, that you will be serious for a little, and hear me with attention, and, what is more, if you can, with sympathy.

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My lord, the highest instance of a great and noble mind is to perform a generous act; and when you hear from my own lips the circumstances which I am about to state, I would hope to find you capable of such an act. I am now appealing to your generosity—your disinterestedness—your magnanimity (and you ought to be proud to possess these virtues)—to all those principles that honor and dignify our nature, and render man a great example to his kind. My lord, I am very unhappy—I am miserable—I am wretched; so completely borne down by suffering that life is only a burden, which I will not be able long to bear; and you, my lord, are the cause of all this anguish and agony."

"Upon my honor, Miss Gourlay, I am very much concerned to hear it. I would rather the case were otherwise, I assure you. Anything that I can do, I needn't say, I shall be most happy to do; but proceed, pray."

"My lord, I throw myself upon your generosity; do you possess it? Upon your feeling as a man, upon your honor as a gentleman. I implore, I entreat you, not to press this unhappy engagement. I implore you for my sake, for the sake of humanity, for the sake of God; and if that will not weigh with you, then I ask it for the sake of your own honor, which will be tarnished by pressing it on. I have already said that you possess not my affections, and that to a man of honor and spirit ought to be sufficient; but I will go farther, and say, that if there be one man living against a union with whom I entertain a stronger and more unconquerable aversion than another, you are that man."

"But you know, Miss Gourlay, if I may interrupt you for a moment, that that fact completely falls into my principles. There is only one other circumstance wanting to make the thing complete; but perhaps you will come to it; at least I hope so. Pray, proceed, madam; I am all attention."

"Yes," she replied, "I shall proceed; because I would not that my conscience should hereafter reproach me for having left anything undone to escape this misery. My lord, I implore you to spare me; force me not over the brow of this dreadful precipice; have compassion on me—have generosity—act with honor."

"I would crown you with honor, if I could, Miss Gourlay."

"You are about to crown me with fire, my lord; to wring my spirit with torture; to drive me into distraction—despair—madness. But you will not do so. You know that I cannot love you. I am not to blame for this; our affections are not always under our own control. Have pity on me, then, Lord Dunroe. Go to my father, and tell him that you will not be a consenting party to my misery—and accessory to my death. Say what is true; that as I neither do nor can love you, the honor of a gentleman, and the spirit of a man, equally forbid you to act ungenerously to me and dishonorably to yourself. What man, not base and mean, and sunk farther down in degradation of spirit than contempt could

reach him, would for a moment think of marrying a woman who, like me, can neither love nor honor him? Go, my lord; see my father; tell him you are a man—an Irish gentleman—”

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“Pardon me, Miss Gourlay, I do not wish to be considered such.”

—“That justice, humanity, self-respect, and a regard for the good opinion of the world, all combine to make you release me from this engagement.”

“Unfortunately, Miss Gourlay, I have it not in my power, even if I were willing, to release you from this engagement. I am pledged to your father, and cannot, as a man of honor and a gentleman, recede from that pledge. All these objections and difficulties only bring you exactly up to my theory, or very near it. We shall marry upon very original principles; so that altogether the whole affair is very gratifying to me. I had expectations that there was a prior attachment; but that would be too much to hope for. As it is, I am perfectly satisfied.”

“Then, my lord, allow me to add to your satisfaction by assuring you that my heart is wholly and unalterably in possession of another; that that other knows it; and that I have avowed my love for him with the same truth and candor with which I now say that I both loathe and despise you.”

“I perceive you are excited, Miss Gourlay; but, believe me, all this sentimental affection for another will soon disappear after marriage, as it always does; and your eyes will become open to a sense of your enviable position. Yes, indeed, you will live to wonder at these freaks of a heated imagination; and I have no doubt the day will come when you will throw your arms about my neck, and exclaim, ’My dear Dunroe, or Cullamore (you will then be my countess, I hope), what a true prophet you have been! And what a proof it was of your good sense to overcome my early folly! I really thought at the time that I was in love with another; but you knew better. Shan’t we spend the winter in England, my love? I am sick of this dull, abominable country, where nobody that one can associate with is to be met; and you mustn’t forget the box at the Opera. Yes; we shall have an odd scene or so occasionally of that sort of thing; and no doubt be as happy as our neighbors.”

Lucy turned upon him one withering look, in which might be read hatred, horror, contempt; after which she slightly inclined her head, and without speaking, for she had now become incapable of it, withdrew to her own apartment, in a state of feeling which the reader may easily imagine.

“Alice,” said she to her maid, and her cheek, that had only a little before been so pale, now glowed with indignation like fire as she spoke, “Alice, I have degraded myself; I am sunk forever in my own opinion since I saw that heartless wretch.”

“How is that, miss?” asked Alice; “such a thing can’t be.”

“Because,” replied Lucy, “I was mean enough to throw myself on his very compassion —on his honor—on his generosity—on his pride as a man and a gentleman—but he

has not a single virtue;" and she then, with cheeks still glowing, related to her the principal part of their conversation.

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“And that was the reply he gave you, miss?” observed Alley; “in truth, it was more like the answer of a sheriff’s bailiff to some poor woman who had her cattle distrained for rent, and wanted to get time to pay it.”

“Alice,” she exclaimed, “I hope in God I may retain my senses, or, rather, let them depart from me, for then I shall not be conscious of what I do. Matters are far worse than I had even imagined—desperate—full of horror. This man is a fool; his intellect is beneath the very exigencies of hypocrisy, which he would put on if he could. His infamy, his profligacy, can proceed even from no perverted energy of character, and must therefore be associated with contempt. There is a lively fatuity about him that is uniformly a symptom of imbecility. Among women, at least, it is so, and I have no doubt but it is the same with men. Alice, I know what my fate will be. It is true, you may see me married to him; but you will see me drop dead at the altar, or worse than that may happen. I shall marry him; but to live his wife!—oh! to live the wife of that man! the thing would be impossible; death in any shape a thousand times sooner! Think, Alice, how you should feel if your husband were despised and detested by the world; think of that, Alice. Still, there might be consolation even there, for the world might be wrong; but think, Alice, if he deserved that contempt and detestation—think of it; and that you yourself knew he was entitled, to nothing else but that and infamy at its hands! Oh, no!—not one spark of honor—not one trace of feeling—of generosity—of delicacy—of truth—not one moral point to redeem him from contempt. He may be a lord, Alice, but he is not a gentleman. Hardened, vicious, and stupid, I can see he is, and altogether incapable of comprehending what is due to the feelings of a lady, of a woman, which he I outrages without even the consciousness of the offence. But, Alice, oh Alice! when I think—when I compare him with—and may Heaven forgive me for the comparison!—when I compare him with the noble, the generous, the delicate, the true-hearted, and intellectual gentleman who has won and retains, and ever will retain, my affections, I am sick almost to death at the contrast. Satan, Alice, is a being whom we detest and fear, but cannot despise. This mean profligate, however, is all vice, and low vice; for even vice sometimes has its dignity. If you could conceive Michael the Archangel resplendent with truth, brightness, and the glory of his divine nature, and compare him with the meanest, basest, and at the same time wickedest spirit that ever crawled in the depths of perdition, then indeed you might form an opinion as to the relative character of this Dunroe and my noble lover. And yet I cannot weep, Alice; I cannot weep, for I feel that my brain is burning, and my heart scorched. And now, for my only melancholy consolation!”

She then pulled from her bosom the portrait of her mother, by the contemplation of which she felt the tumult of her heart gradually subside; but, after having gazed at it for some time, she returned it to its place next her heart; the consolation it had transiently afforded her passed away, and the black and deadly gloom which had already withered her so much came back once more.

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CHAPTER XXXI. The Priest goes into Corbet's House very like a Thief

—a Sederunt, with a Bright look up for Mr. Gray.

It is unnecessary to say that the priest experienced slight regret at the mistake which had been instrumental in bringing him into collision with a man, who, although he could not afford them any trace of unfortunate Fenton, yet enabled them more clearly to identify the baronet with his fate. The stranger, besides, was satisfied from the evidence of the pound note, and Trailcudgel's robbery, that his recent disappearance was also owing to the same influence. Still, the evidence was far from being complete, and they knew that if Fenton even were found, it would be necessary to establish his identity as the heir of Sir Edward Gourlay. No doubt they had made a step in advance, and, besides, in the right direction; but much still remained to be done; the plot, in fact, must be gradually, but clearly, and regularly developed; and in order to do so, they felt that they ought, if the thing could be managed, to win over some person who had been an agent in its execution.

From what Skipton had disclosed to Father M'Mahon, both that gentleman and the stranger had little doubt that old Corbet could render them the assistance required, if he could only be prevailed upon to speak. It was evident from his own conversation that he not only hated but detested Sir Thomas Gourlay; and yet it was equally clear that some secret influence prevented him from admitting any knowledge or participation in the child's disappearance. Notwithstanding the sharp caution of his manner, and his disavowal of the very knowledge they were seeking, it was agreed upon that Father M'Mahon should see him again, and ascertain whether or not he could be induced in any way to aid their purpose. Nearly a week elapsed, however, before the cunning old ferret could be come at. The truth is, he had for many a long year been of opinion that the priest entertained a suspicion of his having been in some way engaged, either directly or indirectly, in the dark plots of the baronet, if not in the making away with the child. On this account then, the old man never wished to come in the priest's way whenever he could avoid it; and the priest himself had often remarked that whenever he (old Corbet), who lived with the baronet for a couple of years, after the child's disappearance, happened to see or meet him in Ballytrain, he always made it a point to keep his distance. In fact, the priest happened on one occasion, while making a visit to see Quin, the monomaniac, and waiting in the doctor's room, to catch a glimpse of Corbet passing through the hall, and on inquiring who he was from one of the keepers, the fellow, after some hesitation, replied, that he did not know.

By this time, however, the mysterious loss of the child had long passed out of the public mind, and as the priest never paid another visit to the asylum, he also had ceased to think of it. It is quite possible, indeed, that the circumstance would never again have recurred to him had not the stranger's inquiries upon this very point reminded him that

Corbet was the most likely person he knew to communicate information upon the subject. The reader already knows with what success that application had been made.

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Day after day had elapsed, and the priest, notwithstanding repeated visits, could never find him at home. The simple-hearted man had whispered to him in the watch-house, that he wished to speak to him upon that very subject—a communication which filled the old fellow with alarm, and the consequence was, that he came to the resolution of not seeing him at all, if he could possibly avoid it.

One day, however, when better than a week had passed, Father M'Mahon entered his shop, where he found a woman standing', as if she expected some person to come in. His wife was weighing huckstery with her back to the counter, so that she was not aware of his presence. Without speaking a word he passed as quietly as possible into the little back parlor, and sat down. After about fifteen minutes he heard a foot overhead passing stealthily across the room, and coming to the lobby, where there was a pause, as if the person were listening. At length the foot first came down one stair very quietly, then another, afterwards a third, and again there was a second pause, evidently to listen as before. The priest kept his eyes steadily on the staircase, but was placed in such a position that he could see without being visible himself. At length Corbet's long scraggy neck was seen projecting like that of an ostrich across the banisters, which commanded a view of the shop through the glass door. Seeing the coast, as he thought, clear, he ventured to speak.

"Is he gone?" he asked, "for I'll take my oath I saw him come up the street."

"You needn't trust your eyes much longer, I think," replied his wife, "you saw no such man; he wasn't here at all."

"Bekaise I know it's about that poor boy he's coming; and sure, if I stir in it, or betray the others, I can't keep the country; an', besides, I will lose my pension."

Having concluded these words he came down the stairs into the little parlor we have mentioned, where he found Father M'Mahon sitting, his benevolent features lit up with a good deal of mirth at the confusion of Corbet, and the rueful aspect he exhibited on being caught in the trap so ingeniously laid for him.

"Dunphy," said the priest, for by this name he went in the city, "you are my prisoner; but don't be afraid in the mane time—better my prisoner than that of a worse man. And now, you thief o' the world, why did you refuse to see me for the last week? Why keep me trotting day after day, although you know I wanted to speak with you? What have you to say for yourself?"

Corbet, before replying, gave a sharp, short, vindictive glance at his wife, whom he suspected strongly of having turned traitress, and played into the hands of the enemy.

“Troth, your reverence, I was sorry to hear that you had come so often;” and as he spoke, another glance toward the shop seemed to say, “You deceitful old wretch, you have betrayed and played the devil with me.”

“I don’t at all doubt it, Anthony,” replied the priest, “the truth being that you were sorry I came at all. Come I am, however, and if I were to wait for twelve months, I wouldn’t go without seeing you. Call in Mrs. Dunphy till I spake to her, and ask her how she is.”

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“You had better come in, ma’am,” said the old fellow, in a tone of voice that could not be misunderstood; “here’s Father M’Mahon, who wants to spake to you.”

“Arra, get out o’ that!” she replied; “didn’t I tell you that he didn’t show his round rosy face to-day yet; but I’ll go bail he’ll be here for all that—sorra day he missed for the last week, and it’s a scandal for you to thrate him as you’re doin’—sorra thing else.”

“Stop your goster,” said Dunphy, “and come in—isn’t he inside here?”

The woman came to the door, and giving a hasty and incredulous look in, started, exclaiming, “Why, then, may I never sin, but he is. Musha! Father M’Mahon, how in the name o’ goodness did you get inside at all?”

“Aisily enough,” he replied; “I only made myself invisible for a couple of minutes, and passed in while you were weighing something for a woman in the shop.”

“Troth, then, one would think you must a’ done so, sure enough, for the sorrow a stim of you I seen anyhow.”

“O, she’s so attentive to her business, your reverence,” said Anthony, with bitter irony, “that she sees nothing else. The lord mayor might drive his coach in, and she wouldn’t see him. There’s an ould proverb goin’ that says there’s none so blind as thim that won’t see. Musha, sir, wasn’t that a disagreeable turn that happened you the other morning?”

“But it didn’t last long, that was one comfort. The Lord save me from ever seeing such another sight. I never thought our nature was capable of such things; it is awful, even to think of it. Yes, terrible to reflect, that there were unfortunate wretches there who will probably be hurried into eternity without repenting for their transgressions, and making their peace with God;” and as he concluded, Corbet found that the good pastor’s eye was seriously and solemnly fixed upon him.

“Indeed—it’s all true, your reverence—it’a all true,” he replied.

“Now, Anthony,” continued the priest, “I have something very important to spake to you about; something that will be for your own benefit, not only in this world, but in that awful one which is to come, and for which we ought to prepare ourselves sincerely and earnestly. Have you any objection that your wife should be present, or shall we go upstairs and talk it over there?”

“I have every objection,” replied Corbet; “something she does know, but—”

“O thank goodness,” replied the old woman, very naturally offended at being kept out of the secret, “I’m not in all your saicrets, nor I don’t wish to know them, I’m sure. I believe you find some of them a heavy burden; at any rate.”

“Come, then,” said the priest, “put on your hat and take a walk with me as far as the Brazen Head inn, where I’m stopping. We can have a private room there, where there will be no one to interrupt us.”

“Would it be the same thing to you, sir, if I’d call on you there about this time tomorrow?”

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“What objection have you to come now?” asked the priest. “Never put off till tomorrow what can be done to-day, is a good old proverb, and applies to things of weightier importance than belong to this world.”

“Why, then, it’s a little business of a very particular nature that I have to attend to; and yet I don’t know,” he added, “maybe I’ll be a betther match for them afther seeing you. In the mane time,” he proceeded, addressing his wife, “if they should come here to look for me, don’t say where I’m gone, nor, above all things, who I’m with. Mark that now; and tell Charley, or Ginty, whichever o’ them comes, that it must be put off till to-morrow —do you mind, now?”

She merely nodded her head, by way of attention.

“Ay,” he replied, with a sardonic grin, “you’ll be alive, as you were a while ago, I suppose.”

They then proceeded on their way to the Brazen Head, which they reached without any conversation worth recording.

“Now, Anthony,” began the priest, after they had seated themselves comfortably in a private room, “will you answer me truly why you refused seeing me? why you hid or absconded whenever I went to your house for the last week?”

“Bekaise I did not wish to see you, then.”

“Well, that’s the truth,” said the priest, “and I know it. But why did you not wish to see me?” he inquired; “you must have had some reason for it.”

“I had my suspicions.”

“You had, Anthony; and you’ve had the same suspicions this many a long year—ever since the day I saw you pass through the hall in the private mad-house in—.”

“Was that the time Mr. Quin was there? asked Anthony, unconsciously committing himself from the very apprehension of doing so by giving a direct answer to the question.

“Ah! ha! Anthony, then you knew Mr. Quin was there. That will do; but there’s not the slightest use in beating about the bush any longer. You have within the last half-hour let your secret out, within my own ears, and before my own eyes. And so you have a pension from the Black Baronet; and you, an old man, and I fear a guilty one, are receiving the wages of iniquity and corruption from that man—from the man that first brought shame and everlasting disgrace, and guilt and madness into and upon your family and name—a name that had been without a stain before. Yes; you have sold yourself as a slave—a bond-slave—have become the creature and instrument of his

vices—the clay in his hands that he can mould as he pleases, and that he will crush and trample on, and shiver to pieces, the moment his cruel, unjust, and diabolical purposes are served."

Anthony's face was a study, but a fearful study, whilst the priest spoke. As the reverend gentleman went on, it darkened into the expression of perfect torture; he gasped and started as if every word uttered had given him a mortal stab; his keen old eye nickered with scintillations of unnatural and turbid fire, until the rebuke was ended.

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The priest had observed this, and naturally imputed the feeling to an impression of remorse, not, it is true, unmingled with indignation. We may imagine his surprise, therefore, on seeing that face suddenly change into one of the wildest and most malignant delight. A series of dry, husky hiccoughs, or what is termed the black laugh, rapidly repeated, proceeded from between his thin jaws, and his eyes now blazed with an expression of such fiery and triumphant vengeance, that the other felt as if some fiendish incarnation of malignity, and not a man, sat before him.

“Crush me!” he exclaimed, “crush me, indeed! Wait a little. What have I been doin’ all this time? I tell you that I have been every day for this many a long year windin’ myself like a serpent about him, till I get him fairly in my power; and when I do—then for one sharp, deadly sting into his heart:—ay, and, like the serpent, it’s in my tongue that sting lies—from that tongue the poison must come that will give me the revenge that I’ve been long waitin’ for.”

“You speak,” replied the priest, “and, indeed, you look more like an evil spirit than a man, Anthony. This language is disgraceful and unchristian, and such as no human being should utter. How can you think of death with such principles in your heart?”

“I’ll tell you how I think on death: I’m afeared of it when I think of that poor, heartbroken woman, Lady Gourlay; but when I think of him—of him—I do hope and expect that my last thought in this world will be the delightful one that I’ve had my revenge on him.”

“And you would risk the misery of another world for the gratification of one evil passion in this! Oh, God help you, and forgive you, and turn your heart!”

“God help me, and forgive me, and turn my heart! but not so far as he is consarned. I neither wish it, nor pray for it, and what’s more, if you were fifty priests, I never will. Let us drop this subject, then, for so long as we talk of him, I feel as if the blood in my ould veins was all turned into fire.”

The priest saw and felt that this was true, and resolved to be guided by the hint he had unconsciously received. To remonstrate with him upon Christian principles, in that mood of mind, would, he knew, be to no purpose. If there were an assailable point about him, he concluded, from his own words, that it was in connection with the sufferings of Lady Gourlay, and the fate of her child. On this point, therefore, he resolved to sound him, and ascertain, without, if possible, alarming him, how far he would go on—whether he felt disposed to advance at all, or not.

“Well,” said the priest, “since you are resolved upon an act of vengeance—against which, as a Christian priest and a Christian man, I doubly protest—I think it only right that you should perform an act of justice also. You know it is wrong to confound the innocent with the guilty. There is Lady Gourlay, with the arrow of grief, and probably despair, rankling in her heart for years. Now, you could restore that woman to

happiness—you could restore her lost child to happiness, and bid the widowed mother's heart leap for joy."

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“It isn’t for that I’d do it, or it would, maybe, be done long ago; but I’m not sayin’ I know where her son is. Do you think now, if I did, that it wouldn’t gratify my heart to pull down that black villain—to tumble him down in the eyes of all the world with disgrace and shame, from the height he’s sittin’ on, and make him a world’s wondher of villany and wickedness?”

“I know very well,” replied the priest, who, not wishing to use an unchristian argument, thought it still too good to be altogether left out, “I know very well that you cannot restore Lady Gourlay’s son, without punishing the baronet at the same time. If you be guided by me, however, you will think only of what is due to the injured lady herself.”

“Do you think, now,” persisted Corbet, not satisfied with the priest’s answer, and following up his interrogatory, “do you think, I say, that I wouldn’t ‘a’ dragged him down like a dog in the kennel, long ago, if I knew where his brother’s son was.”

“From your hatred to Sir Thomas Gourlay,” replied the other, “I think it likely you would have tumbled him long since if you could.”

“Why,” exclaimed Corbet, with another sardonic and derisive grin, “that’s a proof of how little you know of a man’s heart. Do you forget what I said awhile ago about the black villain—that I have been windin’ myself about him for years, until I get him fairly into my power? When that time comes, you’ll see what I’ll do.”

“But will that time soon come?” asked the other. “Recollect that you are now an old man, and that old age is not the time to nourish projects of vengeance. Death may seize you—may take you at a short notice—so that it is possible you may never live to execute your devilish purpose on the one hand, nor the act of justice toward Lady Gourlay on the other. Will that time soon come, I ask?”

“So far I’ll answer you. It’ll take a month or two—not more. I have good authority for what I’m sayin’.”

“And what will you do then?”

“I’ll tell you that,” he replied; and rising up, he shut his two hands, turning in his thumbs, and stretching his arms down along his body on each side, he stooped down, and looking directly and fully into the priest’s eyes, he replied, “I’ll give him back his son.”

“Tut!” returned the clergyman, whose honest heart, and sympathies were all with the widow and her sorrows; “I was thinking of Lady Gourlay’s son. In the mane time, that’s a queer way of punishing the baronet. You’ll give him back his son?—pooh!”

“Ay,” replied Corbet, “that’s the way I’ll have my revenge; and maybe it’ll be a greater one than you think. That’s all.”

This was accompanied by a sneer and a chuckle, which the ambiguous old sinner could not for the blood of him suppress. “And now,” he added, “I must be off.”

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“Sir,” said Father M’Mahon, rising up and traversing the room with considerable heat, “you have been tampering with the confidence I was disposed to place in you. Whatever dark game you are playing, or have been playing, I know not; but this I can assure you, that Lady Gourlay’s friends know more of your secrets than you suspect. I believe you to be nothing more nor less than a hardened old villain, whose heart is sordid, and base, and cruel—corrupted, I fear, beyond all hope of redemption. You have been playing with me, sir—sneering at me in your sleeve, during this whole dialogue. This was a false move, however, on your part, and you will find it so. I am not a man to be either played with or sneered at by such a snake-like and diabolical old scoundrel as you are. Listen, now, to me. You think your secret is safe; you think you are beyond the reach of the law; you think we know nothing of your former movements under the guidance and in personal company with the Black Baronet. Pray, did you think it impossible that there was above you a God of justice, and of vengeance, too, whose providential disclosures are sufficient to bring your villany to light? Anthony Corbet, be warned in time. Let your disclosures be voluntary, and they will be received with gratitude, with deep thanks, with ample rewards; refuse to make them, endeavor still further to veil the crimes to which I allude, and sustain this flagitious compact, and we shall drag them up your throat, and after forcing you to disgorge them, we shall send you, in your wicked and impenitent old age, where the clank of the felon’s chain will be the only music in your ears, and that chain itself the only garter that will ever keep up your Connemaras. Now begone, and lay to heart what I’ve said to you. It wasn’t my intention to have let you go without a bit of something to eat, and a glass of something to wash it down afterwards; but you may travel now; nothing stronger than pure air will cross your lips in this house, unless at your own cost.”

The old fellow seemed to hesitate, as if struck by some observation contained in the priest’s lecture.

“When do you lave town, sir?” he asked.

“Whenever it’s my convanience,” replied the other; “that’s none of your affair. I’ll go immediately and see Skipton.”

The priest observed that honest Anthony looked still graver at the mention of this name. “If you don’t go,” he added, “until a couple of days hence, I’d like to see you again, about this hour, the day afther tomorrow.”

“Whether I’ll be here, or whether I won’t is more than I know. I may be brought to judgment before then, and so may you. You may come then, or you may stay away, just as you like. If you come, perhaps I’ll see you, and perhaps I won’t. So now good-by! Thank goodness we are not depending on you!”

Anthony then slunk out of the room with a good deal of hesitation in his manner, and on leaving the hall-door he paused for a moment, and seemed disposed to return. At length he decided, and after lingering awhile, took his way toward Constitution Hill.

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This interview with the priest disturbed Corbet very much. His selfishness, joined to great caution and timidity of character, rendered him a very difficult subject for any man to wield according to his purposes. There could be no doubt that he entertained feelings of the most diabolical resentment and vengeance against the baronet, and yet it was impossible to get out of him the means by which he proposed to visit them upon him. On leaving Father M'Mahon, therefore, he experienced a state of alternation between a resolution to make disclosures and a determination to be silent and work out his own plans. He also feared death, it is true: but this was only when those rare visitations of conscience occurred that were awakened by superstition, instead of an enlightened and Christian sense of religion. This latter was a word he did not understand, or rather one for which he mistook superstition itself. Be this as it may, he felt uneasy, anxious, and irresolute, wavering between the right and the wrong, afraid to take his stand by either, and wishing, if he could, to escape the consequences of both. Other plans, however, were ripening as well as his, under the management of those who were deterred by none of his cowardice or irresolution. The consideration of this brings us to a family discussion; which it becomes our duty to detail before we proceed any further in our narrative.

On the following day, then, nearly the same party of which we have given an account in an early portion of this work, met in the same eating-house we have already described; the only difference being that instead of O'Donegan, the classical teacher, old Corbet himself was present. The man called Thomas Corbet, the eldest son Anthony, Ginty Cooper the fortune-teller, Ambrose Gray, and Anthony himself, composed this interesting sederunt. The others had been assembled for some time before the arrival of Anthony, who consequently had not an opportunity of hearing the following brief dialogue.

"I'm afraid of my father," observed Thomas; "he's as deep as a draw-well, and it's impossible to know what he's at. How are we to manage him at all?"

"By following his advice, I think," said Ginty. "It's time, I'm sure, to get this boy into his rights."

"I was very well disposed to help you in that," replied her brother; "but of late he has led such a life, that I fear if he comes into the property, he'll do either us or himself little credit; and what is still worse, will he have sense to keep his own secret? My father says his brother, the legitimate son, is dead; that he died of scarlet-fever many years ago in the country——and I think myself, by the way, that he looks, whenever he says it, as if he himself had furnished the boy with the fever. That, however, is not our business. If I had been at Red Hall, instead of keeping the house and place in town, it's a short time the other—or Fenton as he calls himself—would be at large. He's now undher a man that

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will take care of him. But indeed it's an easy task. He'll never see his mother's face again, as I well know. Scarman has him, and I give the poor devil about three months to live. He doesn't allow him half food, but, on the other hand, he supplies him with more whiskey than he can drink; and this by the baronet's own written orders. As for you, Mr. Gray, for we may as well call you so yet awhile, your conduct of late has been disgraceful."

"I grant it," replied Mr. Gray, who was now sober; "but the truth is, I really looked, after some consideration, upon the whole plan as quite impracticable. As the real heir, however, is dead—"

"Not the real heir, Amby, if you please. He, poor fellow, is in custody that he will never escape from again. Upon my soul, I often pitied him."

"How full of compassion you are!" replied his sister.

"I have very little for the baronet, however," he replied; "and I hope he will never die till I scald the soul in his body. Excuse me, Amby. You know all the circumstances of the family, and, of course, that you are the child of guilt and shame."

"Why, yes, I'm come on the wrong side as to birth, I admit; but if I clutch the property and title, I'll thank heaven every day I live for my mother's frailty."

"It was not frailty, you unfeeling boy," replied Ginty, "so much as my father's credulity and ambition. I was once said to be beautiful, and he, having taken it into his head that this man, when young, might love me, went to the expense of having me well educated. He then threw me perpetually into his society; but I was young and artless at the time, and believed his solemn oaths and promises of marriage."

"And the greater villain he," observed her brother; "for I myself did not think there could be danger in your intimacy, because you and he were foster-children; and, except in his case, I never knew another throughout the length and breadth of the country, where the obligation of that tie was forgotten."

"Well," observed Ambrose, "we must only make the best of our position. If I succeed, you shall, according to our written agreement, be all provided for. Not that I would feel very strongly disposed to do much for that enigmatical old grandfather of mine. The vile old ferret saw me in the lock-up the other morning, and refused to bail me out; ay, and threatened me besides."

"He did right," replied his uncle; "and if you're caught there again, I'll not only never bail you out, but wash my hands of the whole affair. So now be warned, and let it be for your good. Listen, then; for the case in which you stand is this: there is Miss Gourlay

and Dunroe going to be married after all; for she has returned to her father, and consented to marry the young lord. The baronet, too, is ill, and I don't think will live long. He is burned out like a lime-kiln; for, indeed, like that, his whole life has been nothing

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but smoke and fire. Very well; now pay attention. If we wait until these marriage articles are drawn up, the appearance or the discovery of this heir here will create great confusion; and you may take my word that every opposition will be given, and every inquiry made by Dunroe, who, as there seems to be no heir, will get the property; for it goes, in that case, with Miss Gourlay. Every knot is more easily tied than untied. Let us produce the heir, then, before the property's disposed of, and then we won't have to untie the knot—to invalidate the marriage articles. So far, so good—that's our plan. But again, there's the baronet ill; should he die before we establish this youth's rights, think of our difficulty. And, thirdly, he's beginning to suspect our integrity, as he is pleased to call it. That strange gentleman, Ginty, has mentioned circumstances to him that he says could come only from my father or myself, or you."

"Proceed," replied his sister, "proceed; I may look forward to the fulfilment of these plans; but I will never live to see it."

"You certainly are much changed for the worse," replied her brother, "especially since your reason has been restored to you. In the meantime, listen. The baronet is now ill, although Gibson says there's no danger of him; he's easier in his mind, however, in consequence of this marriage, that he has, for life or death, set his heart on; and altogether this is the best time to put this vagabond's pretensions forward."

"Thank you, uncle," replied Ambrose, with a clouded brow. "In six months hence, perhaps, I'll be no vagabond."

"Ay, in sixty years hence you will; and indeed, I fear, to tell you the truth, that you'll never be anything else. That, however, is not the question now. We want to know what my father may say—whether he will agree with us, or whether he can or will give us any better advice. There is one thing, at least, we ought to respect him for; and that is, that he gave all his family a good education, although he had but little of that commodity himself, poor man."

He had scarcely concluded, when old Anthony made his appearance, with that mystical expression on his face, half sneer, half gloom, which would lead one to conclude that his heart was divided between remorse and vengeance.

"Well," said he, "you're at work, I see—honestly employed, of course. Ginty, how long is Mr. Ambrose here dead now?"

"He died," replied her brother, "soon after the intention of changing the children took place. You took the hint, father, from the worthy baronet himself."

“Ay, I did; and I wish I had not. You died, my good young fellow, of scarlet-fever—let me see—but divil a much matther it is when you died; it’s little good you’ll come to, barrin’ you change your heart. They say, indeed, the divil’s children have the divil’s luck; but I say, the divil’s children have the divil’s face, too; for sure he’s as like the black fiend his father as one egg is to another.”

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“And that will strengthen the claim,” replied the young man, with a grin. “I don’t look too old, I hope?”

“There’s only two years’ difference between you and the boy, your brother, that’s dead,” said his mother. “But I wish we were well through with this. My past life seems to me like a dream. My contemplated revenge upon that bad man, and my ambition for this boy, are the only two principles that now sustain me. What a degraded life has Thomas Gourlay caused me to lead! But I really think that I saw into futurity; nay, I am certain of it; otherwise, what put hundreds of predictions into my lips, that were verified by the event?”

There was a momentary expression of wildness in her eye as she spoke, which the others observed with pain.

“Come, Ginty,” said her brother, “keep yourself steady now, at all events; be cool and firm, till we punish this man. If you want to know why you foretold so much, I’ll tell you. It was because you could put two and two together.”

“My whole life has been a blank,” she proceeded, “an empty dream—a dead, dull level; insanity, vengeance, ambition, all jostling and crossing each other in my unhappy mind; not a serious or reasonable duty of life discharged; no claim on society—no station in the work of life—an impostor to the world, and a dupe to myself; but it was he did it. Go on; form your plans—make them firm and sure; for, by Him who withdrew the light of reason from my spirit—by Him from whom it came, I will have vengeance. Father, I know you well, and I am your daughter.”

“You know me well, do you?” he replied, with his usual grin. “Maybe you do, and maybe you don’t; but let us proceed. The baronet’s son’s dead, you know.”

“But what makes you look as you do, father, when you say so? Your face seems to contradict your words. You know you have told us for years that he’s dead.”

“And I’m a liar, am I?” he replied, looking at him with a peculiar smile.

“No, I don’t say so; certainly not. But, still, you squeeze your face up in such a way that you don’t seem to believe it yourself.”

“Come, come,” continued the old man, “this is all useless. What do you intend to do? How do you intend to proceed?”

“We sent for you to advise us in that,” replied his son. “You are the oldest and the wisest here, and of course ought to possess the soundest judgment.”

“Well, then, my advice to you is, to go about your business; that is, to do any lawful business that you have to do, and not to bring yourselves to disgrace by puttin’ forrid

this drunken profligate, who will pitch us all to the devil when he gets himself safe, and tread in his black father's steps afterwards."

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“And you must assist us, father,” said Ginty, rising up, and pacing to and fro the room in a state of great agitation. “You, the first cause, the original author of my shame; you, to whose iniquitous avarice and vulgar ambition I fell a sacrifice, as much as I did to the profligacy and villany of Thomas Gourlay. But I care not—I have my ambition; it is a mother’s, and more natural on that account. I have also my vengeance to gratify; for, father, we are your children, and vengeance is the family principle. Father, you must assist us—you must join us—you must lend us your perjury—supply us with false oaths, with deceitful accounts, with all that is necessary; for, father, it is to work out your own principles—that I may be able to die smiling—smiling that I have overreached and punished him at last. That, you know, will be a receipt in full for my shame and madness. Now, I say, father, you must do this, or I will kneel down and curse you.”

The old man, as she proceeded, kept his eyes fixed upon her, first with a look of indifference; this, however, became agreeable and complacent; gradually his eye kindled as he caught her spirit, and when she had concluded, he ground his black old stumps of teeth together with a vindictive energy that was revolting, or at least would have been so to any others unless those that were present.

“Well, Ginty,” he replied, “I have turned it over in my mind, and as helpin’ you now will be givin’ the black fellow an additional stab, I’ll do it. Yes, my lad,” he added, grinning rather maliciously, by the way, at the object of his promised support, “I will make a present of you to your father; and a thankful man he ought to be to have the like of you. I was sometimes for you, and sometimes against you; but, at all events, the old fellow must have you—for the present at least.”

This was accompanied by another grin, which was, as usual, perfectly inexplicable to the others. But as he had expressed his assent and promised his assistance, they were glad to accept it on his own terms and in his own way.

“Well, then,” he proceeded, “now that we’ve made up our minds to go through with it, I’ll think over what’s to be done—what’s the best steps to take, and the best time and place to break it to him. This will require some time to think of it, and to put things together properly; so let us have a drop of something to drink, and we can meet again in few days.”

Having partaken of the refreshment which was ordered in, they soon afterwards separated until another opportunity.

Ambrose Gray, with whose real name the reader is already acquainted, took but little part, as may have been perceived, in the discussion of a project which so deeply affected his own interests. When it was first discovered to him by his mother and uncle, he was much struck even at the bare probability of such an event. Subsequent reflection, however, induced him to look upon the whole scheme as an empty bubble,

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that could not bear the touch of a finger without melting into air. It was true he was naturally cunning, but then he was also naturally profligate and vicious; and although not without intellect, yet was he deficient in self-command to restrain himself when necessary. Altogether, his character was bad, and scarcely presented to any one a favorable aspect. When affected with liquor he was at once quarrelsome and cowardly—always the first to provoke a fight, and the first, also, to sneak out of it.

Soon after the disappearance of Sir Edward Gourlay's heir, the notion of removing the baronet's own son occurred, not to his mother, nor to her brother, but to old Corbet, who desired his son Charles, then a young man, and the baronet's foster-brother, as a preparatory step to his ultimate designs, to inform him that his illegitimate son was dead. Sir Thomas at this time had not assumed the title, nor taken possession of the immense estates.

"Mr. Gourlay," said Charles, "that child is dead; I was desired to tell you so by my father, who doesn't wish to speak to you himself upon the subject."

"Well," replied Mr. Gourlay, "what affair is that of mine?"

"Why," said the other, "as the unfortunate mother is insane, and without means of providing decently for its burial, he thinks it only reasonable that you should furnish money for that purpose—he, I know, won't."

"What do you mean by providing decently?" asked Mr. Gourlay. "What stuff that is!—-throw the brat into a shell, and bury it. I am cursedly glad it's gone. There's half-a-crown, and pitch it into the nearest kennel. Why the deuce do you come to me with such a piece of information?"

Charles Corbet, being his father's son, looked at him, and we need not at any length describe the nature of that look nor the feeling it conveyed. This passed, but was not forgotten; and on being detailed by Charles Corbet to his father, the latter replied,

"Ah, the villain—that's his feelin', is it! Well, never mind, I'll punish him one day."

Some months after this he came into Mr. Gourlay's study, with a very solemn and anxious face, and said,

"I have something to say to you, sir."

"Well, Anthony, what is it you have to say to me?"

"Maybe I'm wrong, sir, and I know I oughtn't to alarm you or disturb your mind; but still I think I ought to put you on your guard."

“Confound your caution, sir; can’t you come out with whatever you have to say at once?”

“Would it be possible, sir, that there could be any danger of the child bein’ taken away like the other—like your brother’s?”

“What do you mean—why do you ask such a question?”

“Bekaise, sir, I observed for the last few days a couple of strange men peepin’ and pimpin’ about the place, and wherever the child went they kept dodgin’ afther him.”

“But why should any one think of taking him away?”

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“Hem!—well, I don’t know, sir; but you know that the heir was taken away.”

“Come, Anthony, be quiet—walls have ears; go on.”

“What ’ud you think if there was sich a thing as revinge in the world? I’m not suspectin’ any one, but at the same time, a woman’s revinge is the worst and deepest of all revinges. You know very well that she suspects you—and, indeed, so does the world.”

“But very wrongly, you know, Anthony,” replied the baronet, with a smile dark as murder.

“Why, ay, to be sure,” replied the instrument, squirting the tobacco spittle into the fire, and turning on him a grin that might be considered a suitable commentary upon the smile of his employer.

“But,” added Mr. Gourlay, “what if it should be the father, instead of the son, they want?”

“But why would they be dodgin’ about the child, sir?”

“True; it is odd enough. Well, I shall give orders to have him well watched.”

“And, with the help o’ God, I’ll put a mark upon him that’ll make him be known, at any rate, through all changes, barrin’ they should take his life.”

“How do you mean by a mark!” asked the other.

“I learnt it in the army, sir, when I was with Sir Edward. It’s done by gunpowder. It can do no harm, and will at any time durin’ his life make him known among millions. It can do no harm, at any rate, sir.”

“Very well, Anthony—very well,” replied Mr. Gourlay; “mark him as you like, and when it is done, let me see it.”

In about a fortnight afterwards, old Corbet brought his son to him, and raising his left arm, showed him the child’s initials distinctly marked on the under part of it, together with a cross and the family crest; all so plainly and neatly executed, that the father was surprised at it.

Nothing, however, happened at that time; vigilance began to relax as suspicion diminished, until one morning, about eight months afterwards, it was found that the child had disappeared. It is unnecessary to add, that every possible step was taken to discover him. Searches were made, the hue and cry was up, immense rewards were offered; but all in vain. From that day forth neither trace nor tidings of him could be found, and in the course of time he was given up, like the heir of the property, altogether for lost.

CHAPTER XXXII. Discovery of the Baronet's Son

—Who, however, is Shelved for a Time.

Lord Dunroe, as had already been agreed upon between him and her father, went directly to that worthy gentleman, that he might make a faithful report of the interview.

"Well, Dunroe," said the baronet, "what's the news? How did it go off?"

"Just as we expected," replied the other. "Vapors, entreaties, and indignation. I give you my honor, she asked me to become her advocate with you, in order to get released from the engagement. That was rather cool, wasn't it?"

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“And what did you say?”

“Why, the truth is, I conducted the affair altogether on a new principle. I maintained that love should not be a necessary element in marriage; vindicated the rights of honest indifference, and said that it was against my system to marry any woman who was attached to me.”

“Why, I remember preaching some such doctrine, in a bantering way, to her myself.”

“Guided by this theory, I met her at every turn; but, nevertheless, there was a good deal of animated expostulation, tears, solicitations, and all that.”

“I fear you have mismanaged the matter some way; if you have followed my advice, and done it with an appearance of common sense, so much the better. This would have required much tact, for Lucy is a girl very difficult to be imposed upon by appearances. I am the only person who can do so, but! that is because I approach her aided by my knowledge of her filial affection. As it is, however, these things are quite common. My own wife felt much the same way with myself, and yet we lived as happily as most people. Every young baggage must have her scenes and her sacrifices. Ah! what a knack they have got at magnifying everything! How do you do, my Lady Dunroe? half a dozen times repeated, however, will awaken her vanity, and banish all this girlish rodomontade.”

“‘Room for the Countess of Cullamore,’ will soon follow,” replied his lordship, laughing, “and that will be still better. The old peer, as Norton and I call him, is near the end of his journey, and will make his parting bow to us some of these days.”

“Did she actually consent, though?” asked the father, somewhat doubtfully.

“Positively, Sir Thomas; make your mind easy upon that point. To be sure, there were protestations and entreaties, and God knows what; but still the consent was given.”

“Exactly, exactly,” replied her father; “I knew it would be so. Well, now, let us not lose much time about it. I told those lawyers to wait a little for further instructions, because I was anxious to hear how this interview would end, feeling some apprehension that she might relapse into obstinacy; but now that she has consented, we shall go on. They may meet to-morrow, and get the necessary writings drawn up; and then for the wedding.”

“Will not my father’s illness stand a little in the way?” asked Dunroe.

“Not a bit; why should it? But he really is not ill, only getting feeble and obstinate. The man is in his dotage. I saw him yesterday, and he refused, most perversely, to sanction the marriage until some facts shall come to his knowledge, of which he is not quite certain at present. I told him the young people would not wait; and he replied, that if I

give you my daughter now, I shall do so at my peril; and that I may consider myself forewarned. I know he is thinking of your peccadilloes, my lord, for he nearly told me as much before. I think, indeed, he is certainly doting, otherwise there is no understanding him."

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“You are light, Sir Thomas; the fuss he makes about morality and religion is a proof that he is. In the meantime, I agree with you that there is little time to be lost. The lawyers must set to work immediately; and the sooner the better, for I am naturally impatient.”

They then shook hands very cordially, and Dunroe took his leave.

The reader may have observed that in this conversation the latter reduced his account of the interview to mere generalities, a mode of reporting it which was agreeable to both, as it spared each of them some feeling. Dunroe, for instance, never mentioned a syllable of Lucy’s having frankly avowed her passion for another; neither did Sir Thomas make the slightest allusion to the settled disinclination to marry him which he knew she all along felt. Indifferent, however, as Dunroe naturally was to high-minded feeling or principle, he could not summon courage to dwell upon this attachment of Lucy to another. A consciousness of his utter meanness and degradation of spirit in consenting to marry any woman under such circumstances, filled him with shame even to glance at it. He feared, besides, that if her knavish father had heard it, he would at once have attributed his conduct to its proper motives—that is to say, an eagerness to get into the possession and enjoyment of the large fortune to which she was entitled. He himself, in his conversations with the baronet, never alluded to the subject of dowry, but placed his anxiety for the match altogether to the account of love. So far, then, each was acting a fraudulent part toward the other.

The next morning, about the hour of eleven o’clock, Thomas Corbet—foster-brother to the baronet, though a much younger man—sent word that he wished to see him on particular business. This was quite sufficient; for, as Corbet was known to be more deeply in his confidence than any other man living, he was instantly admitted.

“Well, Corbet,” said his master, “I hope there is nothing wrong.”

“Sir Thomas,” replied the other, “you have a right to be a happy and a thankful man this morning; and although I cannot mention the joyful intelligence with which I am commissioned, without grief and shame for the conduct of a near relation of my own, yet I feel this to be the happiest day of my life.”

“What the deuce!” exclaimed the baronet, starting to his feet—“how is this? What is the intelligence?”

“Rejoice, Sir Thomas—rejoice and be thankful; but, in the meantime, pray sit down, if you please, and don’t be too much agitated. I know how evil news, or anything that goes in opposition to your will, affects you: the two escapes, for instance, of that boy.”

“Ha! I understand you now,” exclaimed the baronet, whilst the very eyes danced in his head with a savage delight that was frightful, and, for the sake of human nature, painful to look upon, “I understand you now, Corbet—he is dead! eh? Is it not so? Yes, yes—it

is—it is true. Well, you shall have a present of one hundred pounds for the intelligence. You shall, and that in the course of five minutes."

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“Sir Thomas,” replied Corbet, calmly, “have patience; the person, Fenton, you speak about, is still alive; but to all intents and purposes, dead to you and for you. This, however, is another and a far different affair. Your son has been found!”

The baronet’s brow fell: he looked grave, and more like a man disappointed than anything else. In fact, the feeling associated with the recovery of his son was not strong enough to balance or counteract that which he experienced in connection with the hoped-for death of the other. He recovered himself, however, and exclaimed,

“Found! Tom found!—little Tom found! My God! When—where—how?”

“Have the goodness to sit down, sir,” replied Corbet, “and I will tell you.”

The baronet took a seat, but the feeling of disappointment, although checked by the intelligence of his son, was not extinguished, and could still be read in his countenance. He turned his eyes upon Corbet and said,

“Well, Corbet, go on; he is not dead, though?”

“No, sir; thank God, he is not.”

“Who—who—are you speaking of? Oh, I forgot—proceed. Yes, Corbet, you are right; I am very much disturbed. Well, speak about my son. Where is he? In what condition of life? Is he a gentleman—a beggar—a profligate—what?”

“You remember, Sir Thomas—hem—you remember that unfortunate affair with my sister?”

Corbet’s face became deadly pale as he spoke, and his voice grew, by degrees, hollow and husky; yet he was both calm and cool, as far, at least, as human observation could form a conjecture.

“Of course I do; it was a painful business; but the girl was a fool for losing her senses.”

“Hear me, Sir Thomas. When her child died, you may remember my father sent me to you, as its parent, for the means of giving it decent interment. You cannot forget your words to me on that occasion. I confess I felt them myself as very offensive. What, then, must his mother have suffered—wild, unsettled, and laboring, as she was, under a desperate sense of the injury she had experienced at your hands?”

“But why have mentioned it to her?”

“I confess I was wrong there; but I did so to make her feel more severely the consequences of her own conduct. I did it more in anger to her than to you. My words, however, instead of producing violence or outrage on my sister, seemed to make her

settle down into a fearful silence, which none of us could get her out of for several days. It struck us that her unfortunate malady had taken a new turn, and so it did."

"Well? Well? Well?"

"Soon after that, your son, Master Thomas, disappeared. You may understand me now: it was she who took him."

"Ah! the vindictive vagabond!" exclaimed the baronet.

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“Have patience, Sir Thomas. She took your little boy with no kind intention toward him: her object was to leave you without a son; her object, in fact, was, at first, to murder him, in consequence of your want, as she thought, of all paternal affection for him she had just lost, and, in short, of your whole conduct toward her. The mother’s instinct, however, proved stronger than her revenge. She could not take away the child’s life for the thought of her own; but she privately placed him with an uncle of ours, a classical hedge-school-master, in a remote part of the kingdom, with whom he lived under a feigned name, and from whom he received a good education.”

“But where is he now?” asked the other. “How does he live? Why not bring him here?”

“He must first wait your pleasure, you know, Sir Thomas. He’s in town, and has been in town for some time, a student in college.”

“That’s very good, indeed; we must have him out of college, though. Poor Lucy will go distracted with joy, to know that she has now a brother. Bring him here, Corbet; but stop, stay—his appearance now—let me see—caution, Corbet—caution. We must look before us. Miss Gourlay, you know, is about to be married. Dunroe, I understand; he cares little or nothing personally about the girl—it is her fortune, but principally her inheritance, he loves. It is true, he doesn’t think that I even suspect this, much less feel certain of it. How does the young fellow look, though? Good looking—eh?”

“Exceedingly like his father, sir; as you will admit on seeing him.”

“He must have changed considerably, then; for I remember he was supposed to bear a nearer resemblance to his mother and her family, the only thing which took him down a little in my affection. But hold; hang it, I am disturbed more than I have been this long time. What was I speaking of, Corbet? I forgot—by the way, I hope this is not a bad sign of my health.”

“You were talking of Dunroe, sir, and Miss Gourlay’s marriage.”

“Oh, yes, so I was. Well—yes—here it is, Corbet—is it not possible that the appearance of this young man at this particular crisis—stepping in, as he does, between Dunroe and the very property his heart is set upon—might knock the thing to pieces? and there is all that I have had my heart set upon for years—that grand project of ambition for my daughter—gone to the winds, and she must put up with some rascally commoner, after all.”

“It is certainly possible, sir; and, besides, every one knows that Lord Dunroe is needy, and wants money at present very much.”

“In any event, Corbet, it is our best policy to keep this discovery a profound secret till after the marriage, when it can’t affect Miss Gourlay, or Lady Dunroe as she will then be.”

“Indeed, I agree with you, Sir Thomas; but, in the meantime, you had better see your son; he is impatient to come to you and his sister. It was only last night that the secret of his birth was made known to him.”

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“By what name does he go?”

“By the name of Ambrose Gray, sir; but I cannot tell you why my sister gave him such a name, nor where she got it. She was at the time very unsettled. Of late her reason has returned to her very much, thank God, although she has still touches of her unfortunate complaint; but they are slight, and are getting more so every time they come. I trust she will soon be quite well.”

The baronet fixed his eye upon the speaker with peculiar steadiness.

“Corbet,” said he, “you know you have lost a great deal of my confidence of late. The knowledge of certain transactions which reached that strange fellow who stopped in the Mitre, you were never able to account for.”

“And never will, sir, I fear; I can make nothing of that.”

“It must be between you and your father, then; and if I thought so—”

He paused, however, but feared to proceed with anything in the shape of a threat, feeling that, so far as the fate of poor Fenton was concerned, he still lay at their mercy.

“It may have been my father, Sir Thomas, and I am inclined to think it must, too, as there was no one else could. Our best plan, however, is to keep quiet and not provoke him. A very short time will put us out of his power. Fenton’s account with this world is nearly settled.”

“I wish, with all my heart, it was closed,” observed the other; “it’s a dreadful thing to feel that you are liable to every accident, and never beyond the reach of exposure. To me such a thing would be death.”

“You need entertain no apprehension, Sir Thomas. The young man is safe, at last; he will never come to light, you may rest assured. But about your son—will you not see him?”

“Certainly; order the carriage, and fetch; him—quietly and as secretly as you can, observe—his sister must see him, too; and in order to prepare her, I must first see her. Go now, and lose no time about it.”

“There is no necessity for a carriage, Sir Thomas; I can have him here in a quarter of an hour.”

Sir Thomas went to the drawing-room with the expectation of finding Lucy there—a proof that the discovery of his son affected him very much, and deeply; for, in general his habit when he wanted to speak with her was to have her brought to the library, which was his favorite apartment. She was not there, however, and without ringing, or making

any further inquiries, he proceeded to an elegant little boudoir, formerly occupied by her mother and herself, before this insane persecution had rendered her life so wretched. The chief desire of her heart now was to look at and examine and contemplate every object that belonged to that mother, or in which she ever took an interest. On this account, she had of late selected this boudoir as her favorite apartment; and here, lying asleep upon a sofa, her cheek resting upon one arm, the baronet found her. He approached calmly, and with a more extraordinary combination of feelings than perhaps he had ever experienced in his life, looked upon her; and whether it was the unprotected helplessness of sleep, or the mournful impress of suffering and sorrow, that gave such a touching charm to her beauty, or whether it was the united influence of both, it is difficult to say; but the fact was, that for an instant he felt one touch of pity at his heart.

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“She is evidently unhappy,” thought he, as he contemplated her; “and that face, lovely as it is, has become the exponent of misery and distress. Goodness me! how wan she is! how pale! and how distinctly do those beautiful blue veins run through her white and death-like temples! Perhaps, after all, I am wrong in urging on this marriage. But what can I do? I have no fixed principle from any source sufficiently authentic to guide me; no creed which I can believe. This life is everything to us; for what do we know, what can we know, of another? And yet, could it be that for my indifference to what is termed revealed truth, God Almighty is now making me the instrument of my own punishment? But how can I receive this doctrine? for here, before my eyes, is not the innocent suffering as much, if not more, than the guilty, even granting that I am so? And if I am perversely incredulous, is not here my son restored to me, as if to reward my unbelief? It is a mysterious maze, and I shall never get out of it; a curse to know that the most we can ever know is, that we know—nothing. Yet I will go on with this marriage. Pale as that brow is, I must see it encircled by the coronet of a countess; I must see her, as she ought to be, high in rank as she is in truth, in virtue, in true dignity. I shall force the world to make obeisance to her; and I shall teach her afterwards to despise it. She once said to me, ’And is it to gain the applause of a world you hate and despise, that you wish to exalt me to such a bawble?’—meaning the coronet. I replied, ‘Yes, and for that very reason.’ I shall not now disturb her.”

He was about to leave the room, when he! noticed that her bosom began suddenly and rapidly to heave, as if by some strong and fearful agitation; and a series of close, pain-fed sobbings proceeded from her half-closed lips. This tumult went on for a little, when at length it was terminated by one long, wild scream, that might be supposed to proceed from the very agony of despair itself; and opening her eyes, she started up, her! face, if possible, paler than before, and her eyes filled as if with the terror of some horrible vision.

“No,” she said, “the sacrifice is complete—I am your wife; but there is henceforth an eternal gulf between us, across which you shall never drag me.”

On gazing about her with wild and disturbed looks, she paused for moment, and, seeing her father, she rose up, and with a countenance changed from its wildness to one in which was depicted an expression so woe-begone, so deplorable, so full of sorrow, that it was scarcely in human nature, hardened into the induration of the world’s worst spirit, not to feel its irresistible influence. She then threw her arms imploringly and tenderly about his neck, and looking into his eyes as if she were supplicating for immortal salvation at his hands, she said, “Oh, papa, have compassion on me.”

“What’s the matter, Lucy? what’s the matter, my love?”

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But she only repeated the words, “Oh, papa, have pity on me! have mercy on me, papa! Save me from destruction—from despair—from madness!”

“You don’t answer me, child. You have been dreaming, and are not properly awake.”

Still, however, the arms—the beautiful arms—clung around his neck; and still the mournful supplication was repeated.

“Oh, papa, have pity upon me! Look at me! Am I not your daughter? Have mercy upon your daughter, papa!” And still she clung to him; and still those eyes, from which the tears now flowed in torrents, were imploring him, and gazing through his into the very soul within him; then she kissed his lips, and hung upon him as upon her last stay; and the soft but melting accents were again breathed mournfully and imploringly as before. “Oh, have pity upon me, beloved papa—have pity upon your child!”

“What do you mean, Lucy? what are you asking, my dear girl? I am willing to do anything I can to promote your happiness. What is it you want?”

“I fear to tell you, papa; but surely you understand me. Oh, relent! as you hope for heaven’s mercy, pity me. I have, for your sake, undertaken too much. I have not strength to fulfil the task I imposed on myself. I will die; you will see me dead at your feet, and then your last one will be gone. You will be alone; and I should wish to live for your sake, papa. Look upon me! I am your only child—your only child—your last, as I said; and do not make your last and only one miserable—miserable—mad! Only have compassion on me, and release me from this engagement.”

The baronet’s eye brightened at the last two or three allusions, and he looked upon her with a benignity that filled her unhappy heart with hope.

“Oh, speak, papa,” she exclaimed, “speak. I see, I feel that you are about to give me comfort—to fill my heart with joy.”

“I am, indeed, Lucy. Listen to me, and restrain yourself. You are not my only child!”

“What!” she exclaimed. “What do you mean, papa? What is it?”

“Have strength and courage, Lucy; and, mark me, no noise nor rout about what I am going to say. Your brother is found—my son Thomas is found—and you will soon see him; he will be here presently. Get rid of this foolish dream you’ve had, and prepare to receive him!”

“My brother!” she exclaimed, “my brother! and have I a brother? Then God has not deserted me; I shall now have a friend. My brother!—my brother! But is it possible, or am I dreaming still? Oh, where is he, papa? Bring me to him!—is he in the house? Or where is he? Let the carriage be ordered, and we will both go to him. Alas, what may

not the poor boy have suffered! What privations, what necessities, what distress and destitution may he not have suffered! But that matters little; come to him. In want, in rags, in misery, he is welcome—yes, welcome; and, oh, how much more if he has suffered."

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“Have patience, child; he will be here by and by. You cannot long to see him more than I do. But, Lucy, listen to me; for the present we must keep his discovery and restoration to us a profound secret.”

“A profound secret! and why so, papa? Why should we keep it secret? Is it not a circumstance which we should publish to the world with delight and gratitude? Surely you will not bring him into this house like a criminal, in secrecy and silence? Should the lawful heir of your name and property be suffered to enter otherwise than as becomes him? Oh, that I could see him! Will he soon be here?”

“How your tongue runs on, you foolish girl, without knowing what you say.”

“I know what I say, papa. I know—I feel—that he will be a friend to me—that he will share with me in my sorrows.”

“Yes, the sorrows of being made a countess.”

“And a wretched woman, papa. Yes, he will sympathize with, sustain, and console me. Dear, dear brother, how I wish to see you, to press you to my heart, and to give you a sister’s tenderest welcome!”

“Will you hear me, madam?” said he, sternly; “I desire you to do so.”

“Yes, papa; excuse me. My head is in a tumult of joy and sorrow; but for the present I will forget myself. Yes, papa, speak on; I hear you.”

“In the first place, then, it is absolutely necessary, for reasons which I am not yet at liberty to disclose to you, that the discovery of this boy should be kept strictly secret for a time.”

“For a time, papa, but not long, I hope. How proud I shall feel to go out with him. We shall be inseparable; and if he wants instructions, I shall teach him everything I know.”

“Arrange all that between you as you may, only observe me, I repeat. None in this house knows of his restoration but I, yourself, and Corbet. He must not live here; but he shall want neither the comforts nor the elegancies of life, at all events. This is enough for the present, so mark my words, and abide by them.”

He then left her, and retired to his private room, where he unlocked a cabinet, from which he took out some papers, and having added to them two or three paragraphs, he read the whole over, from beginning to end, then locked them up again, and returned to the library.

The reader may perceive that this unexpected discovery enabled the baronet to extricate himself from a situation of much difficulty with respect to Lucy; nor did he omit

to avail himself of it, in order to give a new turn to her feelings. The affectionate girl's heart was now in a tumult of delight, checked, however, so obviously by the gloomy retrospection of the obligation she had imposed upon herself, that from time to time she could not repress those short sobs by which recent grief, as in the case of children who are soothed after crying, is frequently indicated. Next to the hated marriage, however, that which pressed most severely

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upon her was the recollection of the manly and admirable qualities of him whom she had now forever lost, especially as contrasted with those of Dunroe. The former, for some time past, has been much engaged in attempting to trace Fenton, as well as in business connected with his own fortunes; and yet so high was his feeling of generosity and honor, that, if left to the freedom of his own will, he would have postponed every exertion for the establishment of his just rights until death should have prevented at least one honored individual from experiencing the force of the blow which must necessarily be inflicted on him by his proceedings.

At the moment when the baronet was giving such an adroit turn to the distracted state of his daughter's mind, the stranger resolved to see Birney, who was then preparing to visit France, as agent in his affairs, he himself having preferred staying near Lucy, from an apprehension that his absence might induce Sir Thomas Gourlay to force on her marriage. On passing through the hall of his hotel, he met his friend Father M'Mahon, who, much to his surprise, looked careworn and perplexed, having lost, since he saw him last, much of his natural cheerfulness and easy simplicity of character. He looked travel-stained, too, and altogether had the appearance of a man on whose kind heart something unpleasant was pressing.

"My excellent friend," said he, "I am heartily glad to see you. But how is this? you look as if something was wrong, and you have been travelling. Come upstairs; and if you have any lengthened stay to make in town, consider yourself my guest. Nay, as it is, you must stop with me. Here, Dandy—here, you Dulcimer, bring in this gentleman's luggage, and attend him punctually."

Dandy, who had been coming from the kitchen at the time, was about to comply with his orders, when he was prevented by the priest.

"Stop, Dandy, you thief. My luggage, sir! In truth, the only luggage I have is this bundle under my arm. As to my time in town, sir, I hope it won't be long; but, long or short, I must stop at my ould place, the Brazen Head, for not an hour's comfort I could have in any other place, many thanks to you. I'm now on my way to it; but I thought I'd give you a call when passing."

They then proceeded upstairs to the stranger's room, where breakfast was soon provided for the priest, who expressed an anxiety to know how the stranger's affairs proceeded, and whether any satisfactory trace of poor Fenton had been obtained.

"Nothing satisfactory has turned up in either case," replied the stranger. "No additional clew to the poor young fellow has been got, and still my own affairs are far from being complete. The loss of important documents obtained by myself in France will render it necessary for Birney to proceed to that country, in order to procure fresh copies. I had

intended to accompany him myself; but I have changed my mind on that point, and prefer remaining where I am. A servant in whom I had every confidence, but who, unfortunately, took to drink, and worse vices, robbed me of them, and has fled to America, with a pretty Frenchwoman, after having abandoned his wife."

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“Ay, ay,” replied the priest, “that is the old story; first drink, and after that wickedness of every description. Ah, sir, it’s a poor wretched world; but at the same time it is as God made it; and it becomes our duty to act an honest and a useful part in it, at all events.”

“You seemed depressed, sir, I think,” observed the stranger; “I hope there is nothing wrong. If there is, command my services, my friendship, my purse; in each, in all, command me.”

“Many thanks, many thanks,” returned the other, seizing him warmly by the hand, whilst the tears fell from his eyes. “I wish there were more in the world like you. There is nothing wrong with me, however, but what I will be able, I hope, to set right soon.”

“I trust you will not allow any false delicacy to stand in your way, so far as I am concerned,” said the stranger. “I possess not only the wish but the ability to serve you; and if—”

“Not now,” replied the priest; “nothing to signify is wrong with me. God bless you, though, and he will, too, and prosper your honorable endeavors. I must go now: I have to call on old Corbet, and if I can influence him to assist you in tracing that poor young man, I will do it. He is hard and cunning, I know; but then he is not insensible to the fear of death, which, indeed, is the only argument likely to prevail with him.”

“You should dine with me to-day,” said his friend, “but that I am myself engaged to dine with Dean Palmer, where I am to meet the colonel of the Thirty-third, and some of the officers. It is the first time I have dined out since I came to the country. The colonel is an old friend of mine, and can be depended on.”

“The dean is a brother-in-law of Lady Gourlay’s, is he not?”

“He is.”

“Yes, and what is better still, he is an excellent man, and a good Christian. I wish there were more like him in the country. I know the good done by him in my own neighborhood, where he has established, by his individual exertions, two admirable institutions for the poor—a savings’ bank and a loan fund—to the manifest, relief of every struggling man who is known to be industrious and honest; and see the consequences—he is loved and honored by all who know him, for he is perpetually doing good.”

“Your own bishop is not behindhand in offices of benevolence and charity, any more than Dean Palmer,” observed the stranger.

“In truth, you may say so,” replied, the other. “With the piety and humility of an apostle, he possesses the most childlike simplicity of heart; to which I may add, learning the most profound and extensive. His private charity to the poor will always cause himself

to be ranked among their number. I wish every dean and bishop in the two churches resembled the Christian men we speak of; it would be well for the country."

"Mr. Birney, I know, stands well with you. I believe, and I take it for granted, that he does also with the people."

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“You may be certain of that, my dear sir. He is one of the few attorneys who is not a rogue, but, what is still more extraordinary, an honest man and an excellent landlord. I will tell you, now, what he did some time ago. He has property, you know, in my parish. On that property an arrear of upwards of eight hundred pounds had accumulated. Now, this arrear, in consideration of the general depression in the value of agricultural produce, he not only wiped off, but abated the rents ten per cent. Again, when a certain impost, which shall be nameless (tithe), became a settled charge upon the lands, under a composition act, instead of charging it against the tenants, he paid it himself, never calling upon a tenant to pay one farthing of it. Now, I mention these things as an example to be held up and imitated by those who hold landed property in general, many of whom, the Lord knows, require such an example badly; but I must not stop here. Our friend Birney has done more than this.

“For the last fifteen years he has purchased for and supplied his tenants with flaxseed, and for which, at the subsequent gale time, in October, they merely repay him the cost price, without interest or any other charge save that of carriage.

“He also gives his tenantry, free of all charges, as much turf-bog as is necessary for the abundant supply of their own fuel.

“He has all along paid the poor-rates, without charging one farthing to the tenant.

“During a season of potato blight, he forgave every tenant paying under ten pounds, half a year’s rent; under twenty, a quarter’s rent; and over it, twenty per cent. Now, it is such landlords as this that are the best benefactors to the people, to the country, and ultimately to themselves; but, unfortunately, we cannot get them to think so; and I fear that nothing but the iron scourge of necessity will ever teach them their duty, and then, like most other knowledge derived from the same painful source, it will probably come too late. One would imagine a landlord ought to know without teaching, that, when he presses his tenantry until they fall, he must himself fall with them. In truth, I must be off now.”

“Well, then, promise to dine with me tomorrow.”

“If I can I will, then, with pleasure; but still it may be out of my power. I’ll try, however. What’s your hour?”

“Suit your own convenience: name it yourself.”

“Good honest old five o’clock, then; that is, if I can come at all, but if I cannot, don’t be disappointed. The Lord knows I’ll do everything in my power to come, at any rate; and if I fail, it won’t be my heart that will hinder me.”

When he had gone, the stranger, after a pause, rang his bell, and in a few moments Dandy Dulcimer made his appearance.

“Dandy,” said his master, “I fear we are never likely to trace this woman, Mrs. Norton, whom I am so anxious to find.”

“Begad, plaise your honor, and it isn’t but there’s enough of them to be had. Sure it’s a levy I’m houldin’ every day in the week wid them, and only that I’m engaged, as they say, I’d be apt to turn some o’ them into Mrs. Dulcimer.”

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“How is that, Dandy?”

“Why, sir, I gave out that you’re young and handsome, God pardon me.”

“How, sirra,” said his master, laughing, “do you mean to say that I am not?”

“Well, sir, wait till you hear, and then you may answer yourself; as for me, afther what I’ve seen, I’ll not undertake to give an opinion on the subject. I suppose I’m an ugly fellow myself, and yet I know a sartin fair one that’s not of that opinion—ahem!”

“Make yourself intelligible in the meantime,” said his master: “I don’t properly understand you.”

“That’s just what the Mrs. Nortons say, your honor. ’I don’t understand you, sir;’ and that is bekaise you keep me in the dark, and that I can’t explain to them properly what you want; divil a thing but an oracle you’ve made of me. But as to beauty—only listen, sir. This mornin’ there came a woman to me wid a thin, sharp face, a fiery eye that looked as if she had a drop in it, or was goin’ to fight a north-wester, and a thin, red nose that was nothing else than a stunner. She was, moreover, a good deal of the gentleman on the upper lip—not to mention two or three separate plantations of the same growth on different parts of the chin. Altogether, I was very much struck with her appearance.”

“You are too descriptive, Dandy,” said his master, after enjoying the description, however; “come to the point.”

“Ay, that’s just what she said,” replied Dandy, “coaxing the point of her nose wid her finger and thumb: ‘Come to the point,’ said she; ‘mention the services your master requires from me.’

“‘From you,’ says I, lookin’ astonished, as you may suppose—’from you, ma’am?’

“‘Yes, my good man, from me; I’m Mrs. Norton.’

“‘Are you indeed, ma’am?’ says I; ’I hope you’re well, Mrs. Norton. My master will be delighted to see you.’

“‘What kind of a man is he?’ she asked.

“‘Young and handsome, ma’am,’ says I; ‘quite a janious in beauty.’

“‘Well,’ says my lady, ’so far so good; I’m young and handsome myself, as you see, and I dare say we’ll live happily enough together;’ and as she spoke, she pushed up an old bodice that was tied round something that resembled a dried skeleton, which it only touched at points, like a reel in a bottle, strivin’, of course, to show off a good figure; she then winked both eyes, as if she was meetin’ a cloud o’ dust, and agin shuttin’ one, as if

she was coverin' me wid a rifle, whispered, 'You'll find me generous maybe, if you desarve it. I'll increase your allowances afther our marriage.'

"'Thanks, ma'am,' says I, 'but my masther isn't a marryin' man—unfortunately, he is married; still,' says I, recoverin' myself—for it struck me that she might be the right woman, afther all—'although he's married, his wife's an invalid; so that it likely you may be the lady still. Were you ever in France, ma'am?'

"'No,' says she, tossing up the stunner I spoke of, 'I never was in Prance; but I was in Tipperary, if that would sarve him.'

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“I shook my head, your honor, as much as to say—’It’s no go this time.’

“‘Ma’am,’ says I, ’that’s unfortunate—my masther, when he gets a loose leg, will never marry any woman that has not been in France, and can dance the fandango like a Frenchman.’

“‘I am sorry for his taste,’ says she, ’and for yours, too; but at all events, you had better go up and tell him that I’ll walk down the opposite side of the street, and then he can see what he has lost, and feel what France has cost him.’

“She then walked, sir, or rather sailed, down the other side of the street, holdin’ up her clothes behind, to show a pair of legs like telescopes, with her head to it’s full height, and one eye squintin’ to the hotel, like a crow lookin’ into a marrow bone.”

“Well,” said his master, “but I don’t see the object of all this.”

“Why, the object, sir, is to show you that it’s not so aisy to know whether a person’s young and handsome or not. You, sir, think yourself both; and so did the old skeleton I’m spakin’ of.”

“I see your moral, Dandy,” replied his master, laughing; “at all events, make every possible inquiry, but, at the same time, in a quiet way. More depends upon it than you can imagine. Not,” he added, in a kind of half soliloquy, “that I am acting in this affair from motives of a mere personal nature; I am now only the representative of another’s wishes, and on that account, more than from any result affecting myself, do I proceed in it.”

“I wish I knew, sir,” said Dandy, “what kind of a woman this Mrs. Norton is; whether she’s old or young, handsome or otherwise. At all events, I think I may confine myself to them that’s young and handsome. It’s always pleasanter, sir, and more agreeable to deal with a hands—”

“Confine yourself to truth, sir,” replied his master, sharply; “make prudent inquiries, and in doing so act like a man of sense and discretion, and don’t attempt to indulge in your buffoonery at my expense. No woman named Norton can be the individual I want to find, who has not lived for some years in France. That is a sufficient test; and if you should come in the way of the woman I am seeking, who alone can answer this description, I shall make it worth your while to have succeeded.”

CHAPTER XXXIII. The Priest asks for a Loan of Fifty Guineas

—and Offers “Freney the Robber” as Security.

Whilst Father M'Mahon was wending his way to Constitution Hill from the Brazen Head, where he had deposited his little bundle, containing three shirts, two or three cravats, and as many pairs of stockings, a dialogue was taking place in old Corbet's with which we must make the reader acquainted. He is already aware that Corbet's present wife was his second, and that she had a daughter by her first marriage, who had gone abroad to the East Indies, many years ago, with her husband. This woman

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was no other than Mrs. M'Bride, wife of the man who had abandoned her for the French girl, as had been mentioned by the stranger to Father M'Mahon, and who had, as was supposed, eloped with her to America. Such certainly was M'Bride's intention, and there is no doubt that the New World would have been edified by the admirable example of these two moralists, were it not for the fact that Mrs. M'Bride, herself as shrewd as the Frenchwoman, and burdened with as little honesty as the husband, had traced them to the place of rendezvous on the very first night of their disappearance; where, whilst they lay overcome with sleep and the influence of the rosy god, she contrived to lessen her husband of the pocketbook which he had helped himself to from his master's escritoire, with the exception, simply, of the papers in question, which, not being money, possessed in her eyes but little value to her. She had read them, however; and as she had through her husband become acquainted with their object, she determined on leaving them in his hands, with a hope that they might become the means of compromising matters with his master, and probably of gaining a reward for their restoration. Unfortunately, however, it so happened, that that gentleman did not miss them until some time after his arrival in Ireland; but, on putting matters together, and comparing the flight of M'Bride with the loss of his property, he concluded, with everything short of certainty, that the latter was the thief.

Old Corbet and this woman were seated in the little back parlor whilst Mrs. Corbet kept the shop, so that their conversation could take a freer range in her absence.

"And so you tell me, Kate," said the former, "that the vagabond has come back to the country?"

"I seen him with my own eyes," she replied; "there can be no mistake about it."

"And he doesn't suspect you of takin' the money from him?"

"No more than he does you; so far from that, I wouldn't be surprised if it's the Frenchwoman he suspects."

"But hadn't you better call on him? that is, if you know where he lives. Maybe he's sorry for leavin' you."

"He, the villain! No; you don't know the life he led me. If he was my husband—as unfortunately he is—a thousand times over, a single day I'll never live with him. This lameness, that I'll carry to my grave, is his work. Oh, no; death any time sooner than that."

“Well,” said the old man, after a lung pause, “it’s a strange story you’ve tould me; and I’m sorry, for Lord Cullamore’s sake, to hear it. He’s one o’ the good ould gentlemen that’s now so scarce in the country. But, tell me, do you know where M’Bride lives?”

“No,” she replied, “I do not, neither do I care much; but I’d be glad that his old master had back his papers. There’s a woman supposed to be livin’ in this country that could prove this stranger’s case, and he came over here to find her out if he could.”

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“Do you know her name?”

“No; I don’t think I ever heard it, or, if I did, I can’t at all remember it. M’Bride mentioned the woman, but I don’t think he named her.”

“At all events,” replied Corbet, “it doesn’t signify. I hope whatever steps they’re takin’ against that good ould nobleman will fail; and if I had the papers you speak of this minute, I’d put them into the fire. In the mane time try and make out where your vagabone of a husband lives, or, rather, set Ginty to work, as she and you are living together, and no doubt she’ll soon ferret him out.”

“I can’t understand Ginty at all,” replied the woman. “I think, although she has given up fortune tellin’, that her head’s not altogether right yet. She talks of workin’ out some prophecy that she tould Sir Thomas Gourlay about himself and his daughter.”

“She may talk as much about that as she likes,” replied the old fellow. “She called him plain Thomas Gourlay, didn’t she, and said he’d be stripped of his title?”

“So she told me; and that his daughter would be married to Lord Dunroe.”

“Ay, and so she tould myself; but there she’s in the dark. The daughter will be Lady Dunroe, no doubt, for they’re goin’ to be married; but she’s takin’ a bad way to work out the prophecy against the father by —hem—”

“By what?”

“I’m not free to mention it, Kate; but this very day it’s to take place, and. I suppose it’ll soon be known to everybody.”

“Well, but sure you might mention it to me.”

“I’ll make a bargain with you, then. Set Ginty to work; let her find out your husband; get me the papers you spake of, and I’ll tell you all about it.”

“With all my heart, father. I’m sure I don’t care if you had them this minute. Let Ginty try her hand, and if she can succeed, well and good.”

“Well, Kate,” said her father, “I’m glad I seen you; but I think it was your duty to call upon me long before this.”

“I would, but that I was afraid you wouldn’t see me; and, besides, Ginty told me it was better not for some time. She kept me back, or I would have come months ago.”

“Ay, ay; she has some devil’s scheme in view that’ll end in either nothing or something. Good-by, now; get me these papers, and I’ll tell you what’ll be worth hearin’.”

Immediately after her departure Father M'Mahon entered, and found Corbet behind his counter as usual. Each on looking at the other was much struck by his evident appearance for the worse; a circumstance, however, which caused no observation until after they had gone into the little back room. Corbet's countenance, in addition to a careworn look, and a consequent increase of emaciation, presented a very difficult study to the physiognomist, a study not unobserved! by the priest himself. It was indicative of the conflicting resolutions which had for some time past been alternating in his mind; but so roguishly was each resolution

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veiled by an assumed expression of an opposite I nature, that although the general inference was true, the hypocrisy of the whole face made it individually false. Let us suppose, by way of illustration, that a man whose heart is full of joy successfully puts on a look of grief, and vice versa. Of course, the physiognomist will be mistaken in the conclusions he draws from each individual expression, although correct in perceiving that there are before him the emotions of joy and grief; the only difference being, that dissimulation has put wrong labels upon each emotion.

"Anthony," said his reverence, after having taken a seat, "I am sorry to see such a change upon you for the worse. You are very much broken down since I saw you last; and although I don't wish to become a messenger of bad news, I feel, that as a clergyman, it is my duty to tell you so."

"Troth, your reverence," replied the other, "I'm sorry that so far as bad looks go I must return the compliment. It grieves me: to see you look so ill, sir."

"I know I look ill," replied the other; "and I know too that these hints are sent to us in mercy, with a fatherly design on the part of our Creator, that we may make the necessary preparations for the change, the awful change that is before us."

"Oh, indeed, sir, it's true enough," replied Corbet, whose visage had become much blanker at this serious intimation, notwithstanding his hypocrisy; "it's true enough, sir; too true, indeed, if we could only remember it as we ought. Have you been unwell, sir?"

"Not in my bodily health, thank God, but I've got into trouble; and what is more, I'm coming to you, Anthony, with a firm I hope that you will bring me out of it."

"The trouble can't be very great then," replied the apprehensive old knave, "or I wouldn't be able to do it."

"Anthony," said the priest, "I have known you a long time, now forty years at least, and you need not be told that I've stood by some of your friends when they wanted it. When your daughter ran away with that M'Bride, I got him to marry her, a thing he was very unwilling to do; and which I believe, only for me, he would not have done. On that occasion you know I advanced twenty guineas to enable them to begin the world, and to keep the fellow with her; and I did this all for the best, and not without the hope either that you would see me reimbursed for what you ought, as her father, to have given them yourself. I spoke to you once or twice about it, but you lent me the deaf ear, as they call it, and from that day to this you never had either the manliness or the honesty to repay me."

“Ay,” replied Corbet, with one of his usual grins, “you volunteered to be generous to a profligate, who drank it, and took to the army.”

“Do you then volunteer to be generous to an honest man; I will neither drink It nor take to the army. If he took to the army, he didn’t do so without taking your daughter along with him. I spoke to Sir Edward Gourlay, who threatened to write to his colonel; and through the interference of the same humane gentleman I got permission for him to bring his wife along with him. These are circumstances that you ought not to forget, Anthony.”

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“I don’t forget them, but sure you’re always in somebody’s affairs; always goin’ security for some of your poor parishioners; and then, when they’re not able to pay, down comes the responsibility upon you.”

“I cannot see a poor honest man, struggling and industrious, at a loss for a friendly act. No; I never could stand it, so long as I had it in my power to assist him.”

“And what’s wrong now, if it’s a fair question?”

“Two or three things; none of them very large, but amounting in all to about fifty guineas.”

“Whew!—fifty guineas!”

“Ay, indeed; fifty guineas, which you will lend me on my own security.”

“Fifty guineas to you? Don’t I know you? Why, if you had a thousand, let alone fifty, it’s among the poor o’ the parish they’d be afore a week. Faith, I know you too well Father Peter.”

“You know me, man alive—yes, you do know me; and it is just because you do that I expect you will lend me the money. You wouldn’t wish to see my little things pulled about and auctioned; my laughy little library gone; nor would you wish to see me and poor Freney the Robber separated. Big Ruly desaved me, the thief; but I found him out at last. Money I know is a great temptation, and so is mate when trusted to a shark like him; but any way, may the Lord pardon the blackguard! and that’s the worst I wish him.”

There are some situations in life where conscience is more awakened by comparison, or perhaps we should say by the force of contrast, than by all the power of reason, religion, or philosophy, put together, and advancing against it in their proudest pomp and formality. The childlike simplicity, for instance, of this good and benevolent man, earnest and eccentric as it was, occasioned reflections more painful and touching to the callous but timid heart of this old manoeuvrer than could whole homilies, or the most serious and lengthened exhortations.

“I am near death,” thought he, as he looked upon the countenance of the priest, from which there now beamed an emanation of regret, not for his difficulties, for he had forgotten them, but for his knavish servant—so simple, so natural, so affecting, so benevolent, that Corbet was deeply struck by them. “I am near death,” he proceeded, “and what would I not give to have within me a heart so pure and free from villany as that man. He has made me feel more by thinkin’ of what goodness and piety can do, than I ever felt in my life; and now if he gets upon Freney the Robber, or lugs in that giant Ruly, he’ll forget debts, difficulties, and all for the time. Heavenly Father, that I had as happy a heart this day, and as free from sin!”

“Anthony,” said the priest, “I must tell you about Freney—”

“No, sir, if you plaise,” replied the other, “not now.”

“Well, about poor Mat Ruly; do you know that I think by taking him back I might be able to reclaim him yet. The Lord has gifted him largely in one way, I admit; but still—”

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“But still your bacon and greens would pay for it. I know it all, and who doesn’t? But about your own affairs?”

“In truth, they are in a bad state—the same bacon and greens—he has not left me much of either; he made clean work of them, at any rate, before he went.”

“But about your affairs, I’m sayin’?”

“Why, they can’t be worse; I’m run to the last pass; and Freney now, the crature, when the saddle’s on him, comes to the mounting-stone of himself, and waits there till I’m ready. Then,” he added, with a deep sigh, “to think of parting with him! And I must do it—I must;” and here the tears rose to his eyes so copiously that he was obliged to take out his cotton handkerchief and wipe them away.

The heart of the old miser was touched. He knew not why, it is true, but he felt that the view he got of one immortal spirit uncorrupted by the crimes and calculating hypocrisy of life, made the contemplation of his own state and condition, as well as of his future hopes, fearful.

“What would I not give,” thought he, “to have a soul as free from sin and guilt, and to be as fit to face my God as that man? And yet they say it can be brought about. Well, wait—wait till I have my revenge on this black villain, and I’ll see what may be done. Ay, let what will happen, the shame and ruin of my child must be revenged. And yet, God help me, what am I sayin’? Would this good man say that? He that forgives every one and everything. Still, I’ll repent in the long run. Come, Father Peter,” said he, “don’t be cast down; I’ll thry what I can for you; but then, again, if I do, what security can you give me?”

“Poor Freney the Robber—”

“Well, now, do you hear this!”

“—Was a name I gave him on account of—”

“Troth, I’ll put on my hat and lave you here, if you don’t spake out about what you came for. How much is it you say you want?”

The good man, who was startled out of his affection for Freney by the tone of Corbet’s voice more than by his words, now raised his head, and looked about him somewhat like a person restored to consciousness.

“Yes, Anthony,” said he; “yes, man alive; there’s kindness in that.”

“In what, sir?”

“In the very tones of your voice, I say. God has touched your heart, I hope. But oh, Anthony, if it were His blessed will to soften it—to teach it to feel true contrition and repentance, and to fill it with love for His divine will in all things, and for your fellow-creatures, too—how little would I think of my own miserable difficulties! Father of all mercy! if I could be sure that I had gained even but one soul to heaven, I would say that I had not been born and lived in vain!”

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“He’ll never let me do it,” thought Corbet, vexed, and still more softened by the piety, the charity, and the complete forgetfulness of self, which the priest’s conduct manifested. Yet was this change not brought about without difficulty, and those pitiful misgivings and calculations which assail and re-assail a heart that has been for a long time under the influence of the world and those base principles by which it is actuated. In fact, this close, nervous, and penurious old man felt, when about to perform this generous action, all that alarm and hesitation which a virtuous man would feel when on the eve of committing a crime. He was about to make an inroad upon his own system—going to change the settled habits of his whole life, and, for a moment, he entertained thoughts of altering his purpose. Then he began to think that this visit of the priest might have been a merciful and providential one; he next took a glimpse at futurity—reflected for a moment on his unprepared state, and then decided to assist the priest now, and consider the necessity for repentance as soon as he felt it convenient to do so afterwards.

How strange and deceptive, and how full of the subtlest delusions, are the workings of the human heart!

“And now, Anthony,” proceeded the priest, “while I think of it, let me speak to you on another affair.”

“I see, sir,” replied Corbet, somewhat querulously, “that you’re determined to prevent me from sarvin’ you. If my mind changes, I won’t do it; so stick to your own business first. I know very well what you’re goin’ to spake about. How much do you want, you say?”

“Fifty guineas. I’m responsible for three bills to that amount. The bills are not for myself, but for three honest families that have been brought low by two of the worst enemies that ever Ireland had—bad landlords and bad times.”

“Well, then, I’ll give you the money.”

“God bless you, Anthony!” exclaimed the good man, “God bless you! and above all things may He enable you and all of us to prepare for the life that is before us.”

Anthony paused a moment, and looked with a face of deep perplexity at the priest.

“Why am I doin’ this,” said he, half repentant of the act, “and me can’t afford it? You must give me your bill, sir, at three months, and I’ll charge you interest besides.”

“I’ll give you my bill, certainly,” replied the priest, “and you may charge interest too; but be moderate.”

Corbet then went upstairs, much at that pace which characterizes the progress of a felon from the press-room to the gallows; here he remained for some time—reckoning the money—paused on the stairhead—and again the slow, heavy, lingering step was

heard descending, and, as nearly as one could judge, with as much reluctance as that with which it went up. He then sat down and looked steadily, but with a good deal of abstraction, at the priest, after having first placed the money on his own side of the table.

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“Have you a blank bill?” asked the priest.

“Eh?”

“Have you got a blank bill? or, sure we can send out for one.”

“For what?”

“For a blank bill.”

“A blank bill—yes—oh, ay—fifty guineas!—why, that’s half a hundre’. God protect me! what am I about? Well, well; there—there—there; now put it in your pocket;” and as he spoke he shoved it over hastily to the priest, as if he feared his good resolution might fail him at last.

“But about the bill, man alive?”

“Hang the bill—deuce take all the bills that ever were drawn! I’m the greatest ould fool that ever wore a head—to go to allow myself to be made a—a—. Take your money away out of this, I bid you—your money—no, but my money. I suppose I may bid farewell to it—for so long as any one tells you a story of distress, and makes a poor mouth to you, so long you’ll get yourself into a scrape on their account.”

The priest had already put the money in his pocket, but he instantly took it out, and placed it once more on Corbet’s side of the table.

“There,” said he, “keep it. I will receive no money that is lent in such a churlish and unchristian spirit. And I tell you now, moreover, that if I do accept it, it must be on the condition of your listening to what I feel it my duty to say to you. You, Anthony Corbet, have committed a black and deadly crime against the bereaved widow, against society, against the will of a merciful and—take care that you don’t find him, too—a just God. It is quite useless for you to deny it; I have spoken the truth, and you know it. Why will you not enable that heart-broken and kind lady—whose whole life is one perpetual good action—to trace and get back her son?”

“I can’t do it.”

“That’s a deliberate falsehood, sir. Your conscience tells you it’s a he. In your last conversation with me, at the Brazen Head, you as good as promised to do something of the kind in a couple of months. That time and more has now passed, and yet you have done nothing.”

“How do you know that?”

“Don’t I know that the widow has got no trace of her child? And right well I know that you could restore him to her if you wished. However, I leave you now to the comfort of your own hardened and wicked heart. The day will come soon when the black catalogue of your own guilt will rise up fearfully before you—when a death-bed, with all its horrors, will startle the very soul within you by its fiery recollections. It is then, my friend, that you will feel—when it is too late—what it is to have tampered with and despised the mercy of God, and have neglected, while you had time, to prepare yourself for His awful judgment. Oh, what would I not do to turn your heart from the dark spirit of revenge that broods in it, and changes you into a demon! Mark these words, Anthony. They are spoken, God knows, with an anxious and earnest wish for your repentance, and, if neglected, they

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will rise and sound the terrible sentence of your condemnation at the last awful hour. Listen to them, then—listen to them in time, I entreat, I beseech you—I would go on my bare knees to you to do so." Here his tears fell fast, as he proceeded, "I would; and, believe me, I have thought of you and prayed for you, and now you see that I cannot but weep for you, when I know that you have the knowledge—perhaps the guilt of this heinous crime locked up in your heart, and will not reveal it. Have compassion, then, on the widow—enable her friends to restore her child to her longing arms; purge yourself of this great guilt, and you may believe me, that even in a temporal point of view it will be the best rewarded action you ever performed; but this is little—the darkness that is over your heart will disappear, your conscience will become light, and all its reflections sweet and full of heavenly comfort; your death-bed will be one of peace, and hope, and joy. Restore, then, the widow's son, and forbear your deadly revenge against that wretched baronet, and God will restore you to a happiness that the world can neither give nor take away."

Corbet's cheek became pale as death itself whilst the good man spoke, but no other symptom of emotion was perceptible; unless, indeed, that his hands, as he unconsciously played with the money, were quite tremulous.

The priest, having concluded, rose to depart, having completely forgotten the principal object of his visit.

"Where are you going?" said Corbet, "won't you take the money with you?"

"That depends upon your reply," returned the priest; "and I entreat you to let me have a favorable one."

"One part of what you wish I will do," he replied; "the other is out of my power at present. I am not able to do it yet."

"I don't properly understand you," said the other; "or rather, I don't understand you at all. Do you mean what you have just said to be favorable or otherwise?"

"I have come to a resolution," replied Corbet, "and time will tell whether it's in your favor or not. You must be content with this, for more I will not say now; I cannot. There's your money, but I'll take no bill from you. Your promise is sufficient—only say you will pay me?"

"I will pay you, if God spares me life."

"That is enough; unless, indeed "—again pausing.

"Satisfy yourself," said the priest; "I will give you either my bill or note of hand."

“No, no; I tell you. I am satisfied. Leave everything to time.”

“That may do very well, but it does not apply to eternity, Anthony. In the meantime I thank you; for I admit you have taken me out of a very distressing difficulty. Good-by—-God bless you; and, above all things, don’t forget the words I have spoken to you.”

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“Now,” said Corbet, after the priest had gone, “something must be done; I can’t stand this state of mind long, and if death should come on me before I’ve made my peace with God—but then, the black villain!—come or go what may, he must be punished, and Ginty’s and Tom’s schemes must be broken. That vagabone, too! I can’t forget the abuse he gave me in the watch-house; however, I’ll set the good act against the bad one, and who knows but the one may wipe out the other? I suppose the promisin’ youth has seen his father, and thinks himself the welcome heir of his title and property by this; and the father too—but wait, if I don’t dash that cup from his lips, and put one to it filled with gall, I’m not here; and then when it’s done, I’ll take to religion for the remainder of my life.”

What old Corbet said was, indeed, true enough; and this brings us to the interview between Mr. Ambrose Gray, his parent, and his sister.

There is nothing which so truly and often so severely tests the state of man’s heart, or so painfully disturbs the whole frame of his moral being as the occurrence of some important event that is fraught with happiness. Such an event resembles the presence of a good man among a set of profligates, causing them to feel the superiority of virtue over vice, and imposing a disagreeable restraint, not only upon their actions, but their very thoughts. When the baronet, for instance, went from his bedroom to the library, he experienced the full force of this observation. A disagreeable tumult prevailed within him. It is true, he felt, as every parent must feel, to a greater or less extent delighted at the contemplation of his son’s restoration to him. But, at the same time, the tenor of his past life rose up in painful array before him, and occasioned reflections that disturbed him deeply. Should this young man prove, on examination, to resemble his sister in her views of moral life in general—should he find him as delicately virtuous, and animated by the same pure sense of honor, he felt that his recovery would disturb the future habits of his life, and take away much of the gratification which he expected from his society. These considerations, we say, rendered him so anxious and uneasy, that he actually wished to find him something not very far removed from a profligate. He hoped that he might be inspired with his own views of society and men, and that he would now have some one to countenance him in all his selfish designs and projects.

CHAPTER XXXIV. Young Gourlay’s Affectionate Interview with His Father

—Risk of Strangulation—Movements of M’Bride.

It is not necessary here to suggest to the reader that Tom Corbet, who knew the baronet’s secrets and habits of life so thoroughly, had prepared Mr. Ambrose Gray, by frequent rehearsals, for the more adroit performance of the task that was before him.

At length a knock, modest but yet indicative of something like authority, was heard at the hall-door, and the baronet immediately descended to the dining-room, where he knew he could see his son with less risk of interruption. He had already intimated to Lucy that she should not make her appearance until summoned for that purpose.

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At length Mr. Gray was shown into the dining-room, and the baronet, who, as usual, was pacing it to and fro, suddenly turned round, and without any motion to approach his son, who stood with a dutiful look, as if to await his will, he fixed his eyes upon him with a long, steady, and scrutinizing gaze. There they stood, contemplating each other with earnestness, and so striking, so extraordinary was the similarity between their respective features, that, in everything but years, they appeared more like two counterparts than father and son. Each, on looking at the other, felt, in fact, the truth of this unusual resemblance, and the baronet at once acknowledged its influence.

“Yes,” he exclaimed, approaching Mr. Gray, “yes, there is no mistake here; he is my son. I acknowledge him.” He extended his hand, and shook that of the other, then seized both with a good deal of warmth, and welcomed him. Ambrose, however, was not satisfied with this, but, extricating his hands, he threw his arms round the baronet’s neck, and exclaimed in the words of an old play, in which he had been studying a similar scene for the present occasion, “My father! my dear father! Oh, and have I a father! Oh, let me press him to my heart!” And as he spoke he contrived to execute half a dozen dry sobs (for he could not accomplish the tears), that would have done credit to the best actor of the day.

The baronet, who never relished any exhibition of emotion or tenderness, began to have misgivings as to his character, and consequently suffered these dutiful embraces instead of returning them.

“There, Tom,” he exclaimed, laughing, “that will do. There, man,” he repeated, for he felt that Tom was about recommencing another rather vigorous attack, whilst the sobs were deafening, “there, I say; don’t throttle me; that will do, sirrah; there now. On this occasion it is natural; but in general I detest snivelling—it’s unmanly.”

Tom at once took the hint, wiped his eyes, a work in this instance of the purest supererogation, and replied, “So do I, father; it’s decidedly the province of an old woman when she is past everything else. But on such an occasion I should be either more or less than man not to feel as I ought.”

“Come, that is very well said. I hope you are not a fool like your—Corbet, go out. I shall send for you when we want you. I hope,” he repeated, after Corbet had disappeared, “I hope you are not a fool, like your sister. Not that I can call her a fool, either; but she is obstinate and self-willed.”

“I am sorry to hear this, sir. My sister ought to have no will but yours.”

“Why, that is better,” replied the baronet, rubbing his hands cheerfully. “Hang it, how like?” he exclaimed, looking at him once more. “You resemble me confoundedly, Tom—at least in person; and if you do in mind and purpose, we’ll harmonize perfectly. Well, then, I have a thousand questions to ask you, but I will have time enough for that again;

in the meantime, Tom, what's your opinion of life—of the world—of man, Tom, and of woman? I wish to know what kind of stuff you're made of."

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“Of life, sir—why, that we are to take the most we can out of it. Of the world—that I despise it. Of man—that every one is a rogue when he’s found out, and that if he suffers himself to be found out he’s a fool; so that the fools and the rogues have it between them.”

“And where do you leave the honest men, Tom?”

“The what, sir?”

“The honest men.”

“I’m not acquainted, sir, nor have I ever met a man who was, with any animal of that class. The world, sir, is a moral fiction; a mere term in language that represents negation.”

“Well, but woman?”

“Born to administer to our pleasure, our interest, or our ambition, with no other purpose in life. Have I answered my catechism like a good boy, sir?”

“Very well, indeed, Tom. Why, in your notions of life and the world, you seem to be quite an adept.”

“I am glad, sir, that you approve of them. So far we are likely to agree. I feel quite proud, sir, that my sentiments are in unison with yours. But where is my sister, sir? I am quite impatient to see her.”

“I will send for her immediately. And now that I have an opportunity, let me guard you against her influence. I am anxious to bring about a marriage between her and a young nobleman—Lord Dunroe—who will soon be the Earl of Cullamore, for his old father is dying, or near it, and then Lucy will be a countess. To effect this has been the great ambition of my life. Now, you must not only prevent Lucy from gaining you over to her interests, for she would nearly as soon die as marry him.”

“Pshaw!”

“What do you pshaw for, Tom?”

“All nonsense, sir. She doesn’t know her own mind; or, rather, she ought to have no mind on the subject.”

“Perfectly right; my identical sentiments. Lucy, however, detests this lord, notwithstanding—ay, worse than she does the deuce himself. You must, therefore, not permit yourself to be changed or swayed by her influence, but support me by every argument and means in your power.”

“Don’t fear me, sir. Your interests, or rather the girl’s own, if she only knows them, shall have my most strenuous support.”

“Thank you, Tom. I see that you and I are likely to agree thoroughly. I shall now send for her. She is a superb creature, and less than a countess I shall not have her.”

Lucy, when the servant announced her father’s wish to see her, was engaged in picturing to herself the subject of her brother’s personal appearance. She had always heard that he resembled her mother, and on this account alone she felt how very dear he should be to her. With a flushing, joyful, but palpitating heart, she descended the stairs, and with a trembling hand knocked at the door. On entering, she was about to rush into her newly-found relative’s arms, but, on casting her eyes around, she perceived her father and him standing side by side, so startlingly alike in feature, expression, and personal figure, that her heart, until then bounding with rapture, sank at once, and almost became still. The quick but delicate instincts of her nature took the alarm, and a sudden weakness seized her whole frame. “In this young man,” she said to herself, “I have found a brother, but not a friend; not a feature of my dear mother in that face.”

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This change, and this rush of reflection, took place almost in a moment, and ere she had time to speak she found herself in Mr. Ambrose Gray's arms. The tears at once rushed to her eyes, but they were not such tears as she expected to have shed. Joy there was, but, alas, how much mitigated was its fervency! And when her brother spoke, the strong, deep, harsh tones of his voice so completely startled her, that she almost believed she was on the breast of her father. Her tears flowed; but they were mingled with a sense of disappointment that amounted almost to bitterness.

Tom on this occasion forebore to enact the rehearsal scene, as he had done in the case of his father. His sister's beauty, at once melancholy but commanding, her wonderful grace, her dignity of manner, added to the influence of her tall, elegant figure, awed him so completely, that he felt himself incapable of aiming at anything like dramatic effect. Nay, as her warm tears fell upon his face, he experienced a softening influence that resembled emotion, but, like his father, he annexed associations to it that were selfish, and full of low, ungenerous caution.

"My father's right," thought he; "I must be both cool and firm here, otherwise it will be difficult not to support her."

"Well, Lucy," said her father, with unusual cheerfulness, after Tom had handed her to a seat, "I hope you like your brother. Is he not a fine, manly young fellow?"

"Is he not my brother, papa?" she replied, "restored to us after so many years; restored when hope had deserted us—when we had given him up for lost."

As she uttered the words her voice quivered; a generous reaction had taken place in her breast; she blamed herself for having withheld from him, on account of a circumstance over which he had no control, that fulness of affection, with which she had prepared herself to welcome him. A sentiment, first of compassion, then of self-reproach, and ultimately of awakened affection, arose in her mind, associated with and made still more tender by the melancholy memory of her departed mother. She again took his hand, on which the tears now fell in showers, and after a slight pause said,

"I hope, my dear Thomas, you have not suffered, nor been subject to the wants and privations which usually attend the path of the young and friendless in this unhappy world? Alas, there is one voice—but is now forever still—that would, oh, how rapturously! have welcomed you to a longing and a loving heart."

The noble sincerity of her present emotion was not without its effect upon her brother. His eyes, in spite of the hardness of his nature, swam in something like moisture, and he gazed upon her with wonder and pride, that he actually was the brother of so divine a creature; and a certain description of affection, such as he had never before felt, for it was pure, warm, and unselfish.

“Oh, how I do long to hear the history of your past life!” she exclaimed. “I dare say you had many an early struggle to encounter; many a privation to suffer; and in sickness, with none but the cold hand of the stranger about you; but still it seems that God has not deserted you. Is it not a consolation, papa, to think that he returns to us in a condition of life so gratifying?”

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“Gratifying it unquestionably is, Lucy. He is well educated; and will soon be fit to take his proper position in society.”

“Soon! I trust immediately, papa; I hope you will not allow him to remain a moment longer in obscurity; compensate him at least for his sufferings. But, my dear Thomas,” she proceeded, turning to him, “let me ask, do you remember mamma? If she were now here, how her affectionate heart would rejoice! Do you remember her my dear Thomas?”

“Not distinctly,” he replied; “something of a pale, handsome woman comes occasionally like a dream of my childhood to my imagination—a graceful woman, with auburn hair, and a melancholy look, I think.”

“You—do,” replied Lucy, as her eyes sparkled, “you do remember her; that is exactly a sketch of her—gentle, benignant, and affectionate, with a fixed sorrow mingled with resignation in her face. Yes, you remember her!”

“Now, Lucy,” said her father, who never could bear any particular allusion to his wife; “now that you have seen your brother, I think you may withdraw, at least for the present. He and I have matters of importance to talk of; and you know you will have enough of him again—plenty of time to hear his past history, which, by the way, I am as anxious to hear as you are. You may now withdraw, my love.”

“Oh, not so soon, father, if you please,” said Thomas; “allow us a little more time together.”

“Well, then, a few minutes only, for I myself must take an airing in the carriage, and I must also call upon old Cullamore.”

“Papa,” said Lucy, “I am about to disclose a little secret to you which I hesitated to do before, but this certainly is a proper occasion for doing it; the secret I speak of will disclose itself. Here is where it lay both day and night since mamma’s death,” she added, putting her hand upon her heart; “it is a miniature portrait of her which I myself got done.”

She immediately drew it up by a black silk ribbon, and after contemplating it with tears, she placed it in the hands of her brother.

This act of Lucy’s placed him in a position of great pain and embarrassment. His pretended recollection of Lady Gourlay was, as the reader already guesses, nothing more than the description of her which he had received from Corbet, that he might be able to play his part with an appearance of more natural effect. With the baronet, the task of deception was by no means difficult; but with Lucy, the case was altogether one of a different complexion. His father’s principles, as expounded by his illegitimate son’s

worthy uncle, were not only almost familiar to him, but also in complete accordance with his own. With him, therefore, the deception consisted in little else than keeping his own secret, and satisfying his father that their moral views of life were the same. He was not prepared, however, for the effect which Lucy's noble qualities produced upon him so soon. To him who had never

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met with or known any other female, combining in her own person such extraordinary beauty and dignity—such obvious candor of heart—such graceful and irresistible simplicity, or who was encompassed by an atmosphere of such truth and purity—the effect was such as absolutely confounded himself, and taught him to feel how far they go in purifying, elevating, and refining those who come within the sphere of their influence. This young man, for instance, was touched, softened, and awed into such an involuntary respect for her character and virtues, that he felt himself almost unable to sustain the part he had undertaken to play, so far at least as she was concerned. In fact, he felt himself changed for the better, and was forced, as it were, to look in upon his own heart, and contemplate its deformity by the light that emanated from her character. Nor was this singular but natural influence unperceived by her father, who began to fear that if they were to be much together, he must ultimately lose the connivance and support of his son.

Thomas took the portrait from her hand, and, after contemplating it for some time, felt himself bound to kiss it, which he did, with a momentary consciousness of his hypocrisy that felt like guilt.

“It is most interesting,” said he; “there is goodness, indeed, and benignity, as you say, in every line of that placid but sorrowful face. Here,” said he, “take it back, my dear sister; I feel that it is painful to me to look upon it.”

“It has been my secret companion,” said Lucy, gazing at it with deep emotion, “and my silent monitress ever since poor mamma’s death. It seemed to say to me with those sweet lips that will never more move: Be patient, my child, and put your firm trust in the hopes of a better life, for this world is one of trial and suffering.”

“That is all very fine, Lucy,” said her father, somewhat fretfully; “but it would have been as well if she had preached a lesson of obedience at the same time. However, you had better withdraw, my dear; as I told you, Thomas and I have many important matters to talk over.”

“I am ready to go, papa,” she replied; “but, by the way, my dear Thomas, I had always heard that you resembled her very much; instead of that, you are papa’s very image.”

“A circumstance which will take from his favor with you, Lucy, I fear,” observed her father; “but, indeed, I myself am surprised at the change that has come over you, Thomas; for, unquestionably, when young you were very like her.”

“These changes are not at all unfrequent, I believe,” replied his son. “I have myself known instances where the individual when young resembled one parent, and yet, in the course of time, became as it were the very image and reflex of the other.”

“You are perfectly right, Tom,” said his father; “every family is aware of the fact, and you yourself are a remarkable illustration of it.”

“I am not sorry for resembling my dear father, Lucy,” observed her brother; “and I know I shall lose nothing in your good will on that account, but rather gain by it.”

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Lucy's eyes were already filled with tears at the ungenerous and unfeeling insinuation of her father.

"You shall not, indeed, Thomas," she replied; "and you, papa, are scarcely just to me in saying so. I judge no person by their external appearance, nor do I suffer myself to be prejudiced by looks, although I grant that the face is very often, but by no means always, an index to the character. I judge my friends by my experience of their conduct—by their heart—their principles—their honor. Good-by, now, my dear brother; I am quite impatient to hear your history, and I am sure you will gratify me as soon as you can."

She took his hand and kissed it, but, in the act of doing so, observed under every nail a semicircular line of black drift that jarred very painfully on her feelings. Tom then imprinted a kiss upon her forehead, and she withdrew.

When she had gone out, the baronet bent his eyes upon her brother with a look that seemed to enter into his very soul—a look which his son, from his frequent teachings, very well understood.

"Now, Tom," said he, "that you have seen your sister, what do you think of her? Is it not a pity that she should ever move under the rank of a countess?"

"Under the rank of a queen, sir. She would grace the throne of an empress."

"And yet she has all the simplicity of a child; but I can't get her to feel ambition. Now, mark me, Tom; I have seen enough in this short interview to convince me that if you are not as firm as a rock, she will gain you over."

"Impossible, sir; I love her too well to lend myself to her prejudices against her interests. Her objections to this marriage must proceed solely from inexperience. It is true, Lord Dunroe bears a very indifferent character, and if you could get any other nobleman with a better one as a husband for her, it would certainly be more agreeable."

"It might, Tom; but I cannot. The truth is, I am an unpopular man among even the fashionable circles, and the consequence is, that I do not mingle much with them. The disappearance of my brother's heir has attached suspicions to me which your discovery will not tend to remove. Then there is Lucy's approaching marriage, which your turning up at this particular juncture may upset. Dunroe, I am aware, is incapable of appreciating such a girl as Lucy."

"Then why, sir, does he marry her?"

"In consequence of her property. You perceive, then, that unless you lie by until after this marriage, my whole schemes for this girl may be destroyed."

“But how, sir, could my appearance or reappearance effect such a catastrophe?”

“Simply because you come at the most unlucky moment.”

“Unlucky, sir!” exclaimed the youth, with much affected astonishment, for he had now relapsed into his original character, and felt himself completely in his element.

“Don’t misunderstand me,” said his father; “I will explain myself. Had you never appeared, Lucy would have inherited the family estates, which, in right of his wife, would have passed into the possession of Dunroe. Your appearance, however, if made known, will prevent that, and probably cause Dunroe to get out of it; and it is for this reason that I wish to keep your very existence a secret until the marriage is over.”

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“I am willing to do anything, sir,” replied worthy Tom, with a very dutiful face, “anything to oblige you, and to fall in with your purposes, provided my own rights are not compromised. I trust you will not blame me, sir, for looking to them, and for a natural anxiety to sustain the honor and prolong the name of my family.”

“Blame you, sirrah!” said his father, laughing. “Confound me, but you’re a trump, and I am proud to hear you express such sentiments. How the deuce did you get such a shrewd notion of the world? But, no matter, attend to me. Your rights shall not be compromised. A clause shall be inserted in the marriage articles to the effect that in case of your recovery and restoration, the estates shall revert to you, as the legitimate heir. Are you satisfied?”

“Perfectly, sir,” replied Thomas, “perfectly; on the understanding that these provisions are duly and properly carried out.”

“Undoubtedly they shall; and besides,” replied his father with a grin of triumph, “it will be only giving Dunroe a *quid pro quo*, for, as I told you, he is marrying your sister merely for the property, out of which you cut him.”

“Of course, my dear father,” replied the other, “I am in your hands; but, in the meantime, how and where am I to dispose of myself?”

“In the first place, keep your own secret—that is the principal point—in which case you may live wherever you wish; I will give you a liberal allowance until you can make your appearance with safety to Lucy’s prosperity. The marriage will take place very soon; after which you can come and claim your own, when it will be too late for Dunroe to retract. Here, for the present, is a check for two hundred and fifty; but, Tom, you must be frugal and cautious in its expenditure. Don’t suffer yourself to break out: always keep a firm hold of the helm. Get a book in which you will mark down your expenses; for, mark me, you must render a strict account of this money. On the day after to-morrow you must dine with Lucy and me; but, if you take my advice, you will see her as seldom as possible until after her marriage. She wishes me to release her from her engagement, and she will attempt to seduce you to her side; but I warn you that this would be a useless step for you to take, as my mind is immovable on the subject.”

They then separated, each, but especially Mr. Ambrose Gray, as we must again call him, feeling very well satisfied with the result of the interview.

“Now,” said the baronet, as he paced the floor, after his son had gone, “am I not right, after all, in the views which I entertain of life? I have sometimes been induced to fear that Providence has placed in human society a moral machinery which acts with retributive effect upon those who, in the practice of their lives, depart from what are considered his laws. And yet here am I, whose whole life has been at variance with and disregarded them—here

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I am, I say, with an easier heart than I've had for many a day: my son restored to me—-my daughter upon the point of being married according to my highest wishes—all my projects prospering; and there is my brother's wife—wretched Lady Gourlay—who, forsooth, is religious, benevolent, humane, and charitable—ay, and if report speak true, who loves her fellow-creatures as much as I scorn and detest them. Yes—and what is the upshot? Why, that all these virtues have not made her one whit happier than another, nor so happy as one in ten thousand. *Cui bono*, then I ask—where is this moral machinery which I sometimes dreaded? I cannot perceive its operations. It has no existence; it is a mere chimera; like many another bugbear, the foul offspring of credulity and fear on the one side—of superstition and hypocrisy on the other. No; life is merely a thing of chances, and its incidents the mere combinations that result from its evolutions, just like the bits of glass in the kaleidoscope, which, when viewed naked, have neither order nor beauty, but when seen through our own mistaken impressions, appear to have properties which they do not possess, and to produce results that are deceptive, and which would mislead us if we drew any absolute inference from them. Here the priest advances, kaleidoscope in hand, and desires you to look at his tinsel and observe its order. Well, you do so, and imagine that the beauty and order you see lie in the things themselves, and not in the prism through which you view them. But you are not satisfied—you must examine. You take the kaleidoscope to pieces, and where then are the order and beauty to be found? Away! I am right still. The doctrine of life is a doctrine of chances; and there is nothing certain but death—death, the gloomy and terrible uncreator—heigho!"

Whilst the unbelieving baronet was congratulating himself upon the truth of his principles and the success of his plans, matters were about to take place that were soon to subject them to a still more efficient test than the accommodating but deceptive spirit of his own scepticism. Lord Cullamore's mind was gradually sinking under some secret sorrow or calamity, which he refused to disclose even to his son or Lady Emily. M'Bride's visit had produced a most melancholy effect upon him; indeed, so deeply was he weighed down by it, that he was almost incapable of seeing any one, with the exception of his daughter, whom he caressed and wept over as one would over some beloved being whom death was about to snatch from the heart and eyes forever.

Sir Thomas Gourlay, since the discovery of his son, called every day for a week, but the reply was, "His lordship is unable to see any one."

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One evening, about that time, Ginty Cooper had been to see her brother, Tom Corbet, at the baronet's, and was on her way home, when she accidentally spied M'Bride in conversation with Norton, at Lord Cullamore's hall-door, which, on her way to Sir Thomas's, she necessarily passed. It was just about dusk, or, as they call it in the country, between the two lights, and as the darkness was every moment deepening, she resolved to watch them, for the purpose of tracing M'Bride home to his lodgings. They, in the meantime, proceeded to a public-house in the vicinity, into which both entered, and having ensconced themselves in a little back closet off the common tap-room, took their seats at a small round table, Norton having previously ordered some punch. Giuty felt rather disappointed at this caution, but in a few minutes a red-faced girl, with a blowzy head of hair strong as wire, and crisped into small obstinate undulations of surface which neither comb nor coaxing could smooth away, soon followed them with the punch and a candle. By the light of the latter, Ginty perceived that there was nothing between them but a thin partition of boards, through the slits of which she could, by applying her eye or ear, as the case might be, both see and hear them. The tap-room at the time was empty, and Ginty, lest her voice might be heard, went to the bar, from whence she herself brought in a glass of porter, and having taken her seat close to the partition, overheard the following conversation:

"In half an hour he's to see you, then?" said Norton, repeating the words with a face of inquiry.

"Yes, sir; in half an hour."

"Well, now," he continued, "I assure you I'm neither curious nor inquisitive; yet, unless it be a very profound secret indeed, I give my honor I should wish to hear it."

"There's others in your family would be glad to hear it as well as you," replied M'Bride.

"The earl has seen you once or twice before on the subject, I think?"

"He has, sir?"

"And this is the third time, I believe?"

"It will be the third time, at all events."

"Come, man," said Norton, "take your punch; put yourself in spirits for the interview. It requires a man to pluck up to be able to speak to a nobleman."

"I have spoken to as good as ever he was; not that I say anything to his lordship's disparagement," replied M'Bride; "but I'll take the punch for a better reason—because I I have a fellow feeling for it. And yet it was my destruction, too; however, it can't be helped. Yes, faith, it made me an ungrateful scoundrel; but, no matter!—sir, here's your

health! I must only, as they say, make the best of a bad bargain—must bring my cattle to the best market."

"Ay," said Norton, dryly and significantly; "and so you think the old earl, the respectable old nobleman, is your best chapman? Am I right?"

"I may go that far, any way," replied the fellow, with a knowing grin; "but I don't lave you much the wiser."

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“No, faith, you don’t,” replied Norton, grinning in his turn. “However, listen to me. Do you not think, now, that if you placed your case in the hands of some one that stands well with his lordship, and who could use his influence in your behalf, you might have better success?”

“I’m the best judge of that myself,” replied M’Bride. “As it is, I have, or can have, two strings to my bow. I have only to go to a certain person, and say I’m sorry for what I’ve done, and I’ve no doubt but I’d come well off.”

“Well, and why don’t you? If I were in your case, I’d consider myself first, though.”

“I don’t know,” replied the other, as if undecided. “I think, afther all, I’m in better hands. Unless Lord Cullamore is doting, I’m sure of that fact. I don’t intend to remain in this counthry. I’ll go back to France or to America; I can’t yet say which.”

“Take your punch in the meantime; take off your liquor, I say, and it’ll clear your head. Come, off with it. I don’t know why, but I have taken a fancy to you. Your face is an honest one, and if I knew what your business with his lordship is, I’d give you a lift.”

“Thank you, sir,” replied the other; “but the truth is, I’m afeard to take much till after I see him. I must have all my wits about me, and keep myself steady.”

“Do put it in my power to serve you. Tell me what your business is, and, by the honor of my name, I’ll assist you.”

“At present,” replied M’Bride, “I can’t; but if I could meet you after I see his lordship, I don’t say but we might talk more about it.”

“Very well,” replied Norton; “you won’t regret it. In the course of a short time I shall have the complete management of the whole Cullamore property; and who can say that, if you put confidence in me now, I may not have it in my power to employ you beneficially for yourself?”

“Come then, sir,” replied M’Bride, “let me have another tumbler, on the head of it. I think one more will do me no harm; as you say, sir, it’ll clear my head.”

This was accordingly produced, and M’Bride began to become, if not more communicative, at least more loquacious, and seemed disposed to place confidence in Norton, to whom, however, he communicated nothing of substantial importance.

“I think,” said the latter, “if I don’t mistake, that I am acquainted with some of your relations.”

“That may easily be,” replied the other; “and it has struck me two or three times that I have seen your face before, but I can’t tell where.”

“Very likely,” replied Norton; “but 111 tell you what, we must get better acquainted. Are you in any employment at present?”

“I’m doing nothing,” said the other; “and the few pounds I had are now gone to a few shillings; so that by to-morrow or next day, I’ll be forced to give my teeth a holiday.”

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“Poor fellow,” replied Norton, “that’s too bad. Here’s a pound note for you, at all events. Not a word now; if we can understand each other you sha’n’t want; and I’ll tell you what you’ll do. After leaving his lordship you must come to my room, where you can have punch to the eyes, and there will be no interruption to our chat. You can then tell me anything you like; but it must come willingly, for I’d scorn to force a secret from any man—that is, if it is a secret. Do you agree to this?”

“I agree to it, and many thanks, worthy sir,” replied M’Bride, putting the pound note in his pocket; after which they chatted upon indifferent matters until the period for his interview with Lord Cullamore had arrived.

Ginty, who had not lost a syllable of this dialogue, to whom, as the reader perhaps may suspect, it was no novelty, followed them at a safe distance, until she saw them enter the house. The interest, however, which she felt in M’Bride’s movements, prevented her from going home, or allowing him to slip through her finger without accomplishing a project that she had for some time before meditated, but had hitherto found no opportunity to execute.

Lord Cullamore, on M’Bride’s entrance, was in much the same state which we have already described, except that in bodily appearance he was somewhat more emaciated and feeble. There was, however, visible in his features a tone of solemn feeling, elevated but sorrowful, that seemed to bespeak a heart at once resigned and suffering, and disposed to receive the dispensations of life as a man would whose philosophy was softened by a Christian spirit. In the general plan of life he clearly recognized the wisdom which, for the example and the benefit of all, runs with singular beauty through the infinite combinations of human action, verifying the very theory which the baronet saw dimly, but doubted; we mean that harmonious adaptation of moral justice to those actions by which the original principles that diffuse happiness through social life are disregarded and violated. The very order that characterizes all creation, taught him that we are not here without a purpose, and when human nature failed to satisfy him upon the mystery of life, he went to revelation, and found the problem solved. The consequence was, that whilst he felt as a man, he endured as a Christian—aware that this life is, for purposes which we cannot question, chequered with evils that teach us the absolute necessity of another, and make us, in the meantime, docile and submissive to the will of him who called us into being.

His lordship had been reading the Bible as M’Bride entered, and, after having closed it, and placed his spectacles between the leaves as a mark, he motioned the man to come forward.

“Well,” said he, “have you brought those documents with you?”

“I have, my lord.”

“Pray,” said he, “allow me to see them.”

M’Bride hesitated; being a knave himself, he naturally suspected every other man of trick and dishonesty; and yet, when he looked upon the mild but dignified countenance of the old man, made reverend by age and suffering, he had not the courage to give any intimation of the base suspicions he entertained.

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“Place the papers before me, sir,” said his lordship, somewhat sharply. “What opinion can I form of their value without having first inspected and examined them?”

As he spoke he took the spectacles from out the Bible, and settled them on his face.

“I know, my lord,” replied M’Bride, taking them out of a pocket-book rather the worse for wear, “that I am placing them in the hands of an honorable man.”

His lordship took them without seeming to have heard this observation; and as he held them up, M’Bride could perceive that a painful change came over him. He became ghastly pale, and his hands trembled so violently, that he was unable to read their contents until he placed them flat upon the table before him. At length, after having read and examined them closely, and evidently so as to satisfy himself of their authenticity, he turned round to M’Bride, and said, “Is any person aware that you are in possession of these documents?”

“Aha,” thought the fellow, “there’s an old knave for you. He would give a round sum that they were in ashes, I’ll engage; but I’ll make him shell out for all that.—I don’t think there is, my lord, unless the gentleman—your lordship knows who I mean—that I took them from.”

“Did you take them deliberately from him?”

The man stood uncertain for a moment, and thought that the best thing he could do was to make a merit of the affair, by affecting a strong disposition to serve his lordship.

“The truth is, my lord, I was in his confidence, and as I heard how matters stood, I thought it a pity that your lordship should be annoyed at your time of life, and I took it into my head to place them in your lordship’s hands.”

“These are genuine documents,” observed his lordship, looking at them again. “I remember the handwriting distinctly, and have in my possession some letters written by the same individual. Was your master a kind one?”

“Both kind and generous, my lord; and I have no doubt at all but he’d forgive me everything, and advance a large sum besides, in order to get these two little papers back. Your lordship knows he can do nothing against you without them; and I hope you’ll consider that, my lord.”

“Did he voluntarily, that is, willingly, and of his own accord, admit you to his confidence? and, if so, upon what grounds?”

“Why, my lord, my wife and I were servants to his father for years, and he, when a slip of a boy, was very fond of me. When he came over here, my lord, it was rather against his will, and not at all for his own sake. So, as he knew that he’d require some one in

this country that could act prudently for him, he made up his mind to take me with him, especially as my wife and myself were both anxious to come back to our own country. 'I must trust some one, M'Bride,' said he, 'and I will trust you'; and then he tould me the raison of his journey here."

"Well," replied his lordship, "proceed; have you anything more to add!"

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“Nothing, my lord, but what I’ve tould you. I thought it a pitiful case to see a nobleman at your time of life afflicted by the steps he was about to take, and I brought these papers accordingly to your lordship. I hope you’ll not forget that, my lord.”

“What value do you place on these two documents?”

“Why, I think a thousand pounds, my lord.”

“Well, sir, your estimate is a very low one—ten thousand would come somewhat nearer the thing.”

“My lord, I can only say,” said M’Bride, “that I’m willin’ to take a thousand; but, if your lordship, knowin’ the value of the papers as you do, chooses to add anything more, I’ll be very happy to accept it.”

“I have another question to ask you, sir,” said his lordship, “which I do with great pain, as I do assure you that this is as painful a dialogue as I ever held in my life. Do you think now, that, provided you had not taken—that is, stolen-these papers from your master, he would, upon the success of the steps he is taking, have given you a thousand pounds?”

The man hesitated, as if he had caught a glimpse of the old man’s object in putting the question. “Why—hem—no; I don’t think I could expect that, my lord; but a handsome present, I dare say, I might come in for.”

Lord Cullamore raised himself in his chair, and after looking at the treacherous villain with a calm feeling of scorn and indignation, to which his illness imparted a solemn and lofty severity, that made M’Bride feel as if he wished to sink through the floor,

“Go,” said he, looking at him with an eye that was kindled into something of its former fire. “Begone, sir: take away your papers; I will not—I cannot enter into any compact with an ungrateful and perfidious villain like you. These papers have come into your hands by robbery or theft—that is sufficient; there they are, sir—take them away. I shall defend myself and my rights upon principles of justice, but never shall stoop to support them by dishonor.”

On concluding, he flung them across the table with a degree of energy that surprised M’Bride, whilst his color,hitherto so pale, was heightened by a flash of that high feeling and untarnished integrity which are seldom so beautifully impressive as when exhibited in the honorable indignation of old age. It might have been compared to that pale but angry red of the winter sky which flashes so transiently over the snow-clad earth, when the sun, after the fatigues of his short but chilly journey, is about to sink from our sight at the close of day.

M’Bride slunk out of the room crestfallen, disappointed, and abashed; but on reaching the outside of the door he found Norton awaiting him. This worthy gentleman, after beckoning to him to follow, having been striving, with his whole soul centred in the key-hole, to hear the purport of their conference, now proceeded to his own room, accompanied by M’Bride, where we shall leave them without interruption to their conversation and enjoyment, and return once more to Ginty Cooper.

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Until the hour of half-past twelve that night Ginty most religiously kept her watch convenient to the door. Just then it opened very quietly, and a man staggered down the hall steps, and bent his course toward the northern part of the city suburbs. A female might be observed to follow him at a distance, and ever as he began to mutter his drunken meditations to himself, she approached him more closely behind, in order, if possible, to lose nothing of what he said.

“An ould fool,” he hiccupped, “to throw them back to me—hie—an’ the other a kna-a-ve to want to—to look at them; but I was up—up; if the young-oung L-lor-ord will buy them, he mu-must-ust pay for them, for I hav-ave them safe. Hang it, my head’s turn-turn-turnin’ about like the—”

At this portion of his reflections he turned into a low, dark line of cabins, some inhabited, and others ruined and waste, followed by the female in question; and if the reader cannot ascertain her object in dogging him, he must expect no assistance in guessing it from us.

CHAPTER XXXV. Lucy’s Vain but Affecting Expostulation with her Father

—Her Terrible Denunciation of Ambrose Gray.

The next morning, after breakfast, Lord Dunroe found Norton and M’Bride in the stable yard, when the following conversation took place.

“Norton,” said his lordship, “I can’t understand what they mean by the postponement of this trial about the mare. I fear they will beat us, and in that case it is better, perhaps, to compromise it. You know that that attorney fellow Birney is engaged against us, and by all accounts he has his wits about him.”

“Yes, my lord; but Birney is leaving home, going to France, and they have succeeded in getting it postponed until the next term. My lord, this is the man, M’Bride, that I told you of this morning. M’Bride, have you brought those documents with you? I wish to show them to his lordship, who, I think, you will find a more liberal purchaser than his father.”

“What’s that you said, sir,” asked M’Bride, with an appearance of deep interest, “about Mr. Birney going to France?”

“This is no place to talk about these matters,” said his lordship; “bring the man up to your own room, Norton, and I will join you there. The thing, however, is a mere farce, and my father a fool, or he would not give himself any concern about it. Bring him to your room, where I will join you presently. But, observe me, Norton, none of these tricks

upon me in future. You said you got only twenty-five for the mare, and now it appears you got exactly double the sum. Now, upon my honor, I won't stand any more of this."

"But, my lord," replied Norton, laughing, "don't you see how badly you reason? I got fifty for the mare; of this I gave your lordship twenty-five—the balance I kept myself. Of course, then, you can fairly say, or swear, if you like, that she brought you in nothing but the fair value. In fact, I kept you completely out of the transaction; but, after all, I only paid myself for the twenty-five I won off you."

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Dunroe was by no means in anything like good-humor this morning. The hints which Norton had communicated to him at breakfast, respecting the subject of M'Bride's private interviews with his father, had filled him with more alarm than he wished to acknowledge. Neither, on the other hand, had he any serious apprehensions, for, unhappily for himself, he was one of those easy and unreflecting men who seldom look beyond the present moment, and can never be brought to a reasonable consideration of their own interests, until, perhaps, it is too late to secure them.

All we can communicate to the reader with respect to the conference between these three redoubtable individuals is simply its results. On that evening Norton and M'Bride started for France, with what object will be seen hereafter, Birney having followed on the same route the morning but one afterwards, for the purpose of securing the documents in question.

Dunroe now more than ever felt the necessity of urging his marriage with Lucy. He knew his father's honorable spirit too well to believe that he would for one moment yield his consent to it under the circumstances which were now pending. With the full knowledge of these circumstances he was not acquainted. M'Bride had somewhat overstated the share of confidence to which in this matter he had been admitted by his master. His information, therefore, on the subject, was not so accurate as he wished, although, from motives of dishonesty and a desire to sell his documents to the best advantage, he made the most of the knowledge he possessed. Be this as it may, Dunroe determined, as we said, to bring about the nuptials without delay, and in this he was seconded by Sir Thomas Gourlay himself, who also had his own motives for hastening them. In fact, here were two men, each deliberately attempting to impose upon the other, and neither possessed of one spark of honor or truth, although the transaction between them was one of the most solemn importance that can occur in the great business of life. The world, however, is filled with similar characters; and not all the misery and calamity that ensue from such fraudulent and dishonest practices will, we fear, ever prevent the selfish and ambitious from pursuing the same courses.

"Sir Thomas," said Dunroe, in a conversation with the baronet held on the very day after Norton and M'Bride had set out on their secret expedition, "this marriage is unnecessarily delayed. I am anxious that it should take place as soon as it possibly can."

"But," replied the baronet, "I have not been able to see your father on the subject, in consequence of his illness."

"It is not necessary," replied his lordship. "You know what kind of a man he is. In fact, I fear he is very nearly *non compos* as it is. He has got so confoundedly crotchety of late, that I should not feel surprised if, under some whim or other, he set his face-against it altogether. In fact, it is useless, and worse than useless, to consult him at all about it. I move, therefore, that we go on without him."

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“I think you are right,” returned the other; “and I have not the slightest objection: name the day. The contract is drawn up, and only requires to be signed.”

“I should say, on Monday next,” replied his lordship; “but I fear we will have objections and protestations from Miss Gourlay; and if so, how are we to manage?”

“Leave the management of Miss Gourlay to me, my lord,” replied her father. “I have managed her before and shall manage her now.”

His lordship had scarcely gone, when Lucy was immediately sent for, and as usual found her father in the library.

“Lucy,” said he, with as much blandness of manner as he could assume, “I have sent for you to say that you are called upon to make your father happy at last.”

“And myself wretched forever, papa.”

“But your word, Lucy—your promise—your honor: remember that promise so solemnly given; remember, too, your duty of obedience as a daughter.”

“Alas! I remember everything, papa; too keenly, too bitterly do I remember all.”

“You will be prepared to marry Dunroe on Monday next. The affair will be comparatively private. That is to say, we will ask nobody—no dejeuner—no nonsense. The fewer the better at these matters. Would you wish to see your brother—hem—I mean Mr. Gray?”

Lucy had been standing while he spoke; but she now staggered over to a seat, on which she fell rather than sat. Her large, lucid eyes lost their lustre; her frame quivered; her face became of an ashy paleness; but still those eyes were bent upon her father.

“Papa,” she said, at length, in a low voice that breathed of horror, “do not kill me.”

“Kill you, foolish girl! Now really, Lucy, this is extremely ridiculous and vexatious too. Is not my daughter a woman of honor?”

“Papa,” she said, solemnly, going down upon her two knees, and joining her lovely and snowy hands together, in an attitude of the most earnest and heart-rending supplication; “papa, hear me. You have said that I saved your life; be now as generous as I was—-save mine.”

“Lucy,” he replied, “this looks like want of principle. You would violate your promise. I should not wish Dunroe to hear this, or to know it. He might begin to reason upon it, and to say that the woman who could deliberately break a solemn promise might not hesitate at the marriage vow. I do not apply this reasoning to you, but he or others might. Of course, I expect that, as a woman of honor, you will keep your word with me,

and marry Dunroe on Monday. You will have no trouble—everything shall be managed by them; a brilliant trousseau can be provided as well afterwards as before."

Lucy rose up; and as she did, the blood, which seemed to have previously gathered, to her heart, now returned to her cheek, and began to mantle upon it, whilst her figure, before submissive and imploring, dilated to its full size.

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“Father,” said she, “since you will not hear the voice of supplication, hear that of reason and truth. Do not entertain a doubt, no, not for a moment, that if I am urged—driven—to this marriage, hateful and utterly detestable to me as it is, I shall hesitate to marry this man. I say this, however, because I tell you that I am about to appeal to your interest in my true happiness for the last time. Is it, then, kind; is it fatherly in you, sir, to exact from me the fulfilment of a promise given under circumstances that ought to touch your heart into a generous perception of the sacrifice which in giving it I made for your sake alone? You were ill, and laboring under the apprehension of sudden death, principally, you said, in consequence of my refusal to become the wife of that man. I saw this; and although the effort was infinitely worse than death to me, I did not hesitate one moment in yielding up what is at any time dearer to me than life—my happiness—that you might be spared. Alas, my dear father, if you knew how painful it is to me to be forced to plead all this in my own defence, you would, you must, pity me. A generous heart, almost under any circumstances, scorns to plead its own acts, especially when they are on the side of virtue. But I, alas, am forced to it; am forced to do that which I would otherwise scorn and blush to do.”

“Lucy,” replied her father, who felt in his ambitious and tyrannical soul the full force, not only of what she said, but of the fraud he had practised on her, but which she never suspected: “Lucy, my child, you will drive me mad. Perhaps I am wrong; but at the same time my heart is so completely fixed upon this marriage, that if it be not brought about I feel I shall go insane. The value of life would be lost to me, and most probably I shall die the dishonorable death of a suicide.”

“And have you no fear for me, my father—no apprehension that I may escape from this my wretched destiny to the peace of the grave? But you need not. Thank God, I trust and feel that my regard for His precepts, and my perceptions of His providence, are too clear and too firm ever to suffer me to fly like a coward from the post in life which He has assigned me. But why, dear father, should you make me the miserable victim of your ambition?—I am not ambitious.”

“I know you are not: I never could get an honorable ambition instilled into you.”

“I am not mean, however—nay, I trust that I possess all that honest and honorable pride which would prevent me from doing an unworthy act, or one unbecoming either my sex or my position.”

“You would not break your word, for instance, nor render your father wretched, insane, mad, or, perhaps, cause his dreadful malady to return. No—no—but yet fine talking is a fine thing. Madam, cease to plead your virtues to me, unless you prove that you possess them by keeping your honorable engagement made to Lord Dunroe, through the sacred medium of your own father. Whatever you may do, don’t attempt to involve me in your disgrace.”

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“I am exhausted,” she said, “and cannot speak any longer; but I will not despair of you, father. No, my dear papa,” she said, throwing her arms about his neck, laying her head upon his bosom, and bursting into tears, “I will not think that you could sacrifice your daughter. You will relent for Lucy as Lucy did for you—but I feel weak. You know, papa, how this fever on my spirits has worn me down; and, after all, the day might come—and come with bitterness and remorse to your heart—when you may be forced to feel that although you made your Lucy a countess she did not remain a countess long.”

“What do you mean now?”

“Don’t you see, papa, that my heart is breaking fast? If you will not hear my words—if they cannot successfully plead for me—let my declining health—let my pale and wasted cheek—let my want of spirits, my want of appetite—and, above all, let that which you cannot see nor feel—the sickness of my unhappy heart—plead for me. Permit me to go, dear papa; and will you allow me to lean upon you to my own room?—for, alas! I am not, after this painful excitement, able to go there myself. Thank you, papa, thank you.”

He was thus compelled to give her his arm, and, in doing so, was surprised to feel the extraordinary tremor by which her frame was shaken. On reaching her room, she turned round, and laying her head, with an affectionate and supplicating confidence, once more upon his breast, she whispered with streaming eyes, “Alas! my dear papa, you forget, in urging me to marry this hateful profligate, that my heart, my affections, my love—in the fullest, and purest, and most disinterested sense—are irrevocably fixed upon another; and Dunroe, all mean and unmanly as he is, knows this.”

“He knows that—there, sit down—why do you tremble so?—Yes, but he knows that what you consider an attachment is a mere girlish fancy, a whimsical predilection that your own good-sense will show you the folly of at a future time.”

“Recollect, papa, that he has been extravagant, and is said to be embarrassed; the truth is, sir, that the man values not your daughter, but the property to which he thinks he will become entitled, and which I have no doubt will be very welcome to his necessities. I feel that I speak truth, and as a test of his selfishness, it will be only necessary to acquaint him with the reappearance of my brother—your son and heir—and you will be no further troubled by his importunities.”

“Troubled by his importunity! Why, girl, it’s I that am troubled with apprehension lest he might discover the existence of your brother, and draw off.”

One broad gaze of wonder and dismay she turned upon him, and her face became crimsoned with shame. She then covered it with her open hands, and, turning round, placed her head upon the end of the sofa, and moaned with a deep and bursting anguish, on hearing this acknowledgment of deliberate baseness from his own lips.

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The baronet understood her feelings, and regretted the words he had uttered, but he resolved to bear the matter out.

“Don’t be surprised, Lucy,” he added, “nor alarmed at these sentiments; for I tell you, that rather than be defeated in the object I propose for your elevation in life, I would trample a thousand times upon all the moral obligations that ever bound man. Put it down to what you like—insanity—monomania, if you will—but so it is with me: I shall work my purpose out, or either of us shall die for it; and from this you may perceive how likely your resistance and obduracy are to become available against the determination of such a man as I am. Compose yourself, girl, and don’t be a fool. The only way to get properly through life is to accommodate ourselves to its necessities, or, in other words, to have shrewdness and common sense, and foil the world, if we can, at its own weapons. Give up your fine sentiment, I desire you, and go down to the drawing-room, to receive your brother; hem will be here very soon. I am going to the assizes, and shall not return till about four o’clock. Come, come, all will end better than you imagine.”

The mention of her brother was anything but a comfort to Lucy. Her father at first entertained apprehensions, as we have already said, that this promising youth might support his sister in her aversion against the marriage. Two or three conversations on the subject soon undeceived him, however, in the view he had taken of his character; and Lucy herself now dreaded him, on this subject, almost as much as she did her father.

With respect to this same brother, it is scarcely necessary now to say, that Lucy’s feelings had undergone a very considerable change. On hearing that he not only was in existence, but that she would soon actually behold him, her impassioned imagination painted him as she wished and hoped he might prove to be—that is, in the first place—-tall, elegant, handsome, and with a strong likeness to the mother whom he had been said so much to resemble; and, in the next—oh, how her trembling heart yearned to find him affectionate, tender, generous, and full of all those noble and manly virtues on which might rest a delightful sympathy, a pure and generous affection, and a tender and trusting confidence between them. On casting her eyes upon him for the first time, however, she felt at the moment like one disenchanted, or awakening from some delightful illusion to a reality so much at variance with the beau ideal of her imagination, as to occasion a feeling of disappointment that amounted almost to pain. There stood before her a young man, with a countenance so like her father’s, that the fact startled her. Still there was a difference, for—whether from the consciousness of birth, or authority, or position in life—there was something in her father’s features that redeemed them from absolute vulgarity. Here, however, although the resemblance was extraordinary,

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and every feature almost identical, there might be read in the countenance of her brother a low, commonplace expression, that looked as if it were composed of effrontery, cunning, and profligacy. Lucy for a moment shrank back from such a countenance, and the shock of disappointment chilled the warmth with which she had been prepared to receive him. But, then, her generous heart told her that she might probably be prejudging the innocent—that neglect, want of education, the influence of the world, and, worst of all, distress and suffering, might have caused the stronger, more vulgar, and exceedingly disagreeable expression which she saw before her; and the reader is already aware of the consequences which these struggles, at their first interview, had upon her. Subsequently to that, however, Mr. Ambrose, in supporting his father's views, advanced principles in such complete accordance with them, as to excite in his sister's breast, first a deep regret that she could not love him as she had hoped to do; then a feeling stronger than indifference itself, and ultimately one little short of aversion. Her father had been now gone about half an hour, and she hoped that her brother might not come, when a servant came to say that Mr. Gray was in the drawing-room, and requested to see her.

She felt that the interview would be a painful one to her; but still he was her brother, and she knew she could not avoid seeing him.

After the first salutations were over,

"What is the matter with you, Lucy?" he asked; "you look ill and distressed. I suppose the old subject of the marriage—eh?"

"I trust it is one which you will not renew, Thomas. I entreat you to spare me on it."

"I am too much your friend to do so, Lucy. It is really inconceivable to me why you should oppose it as you do. But the truth is, you don't know the world, or you would think and act very differently."

"Thomas," she replied, whilst her eyes filled with tears, "I am almost weary of life. There is not one living individual to whom I can turn for sympathy or comfort. Papa has forbidden me to visit Lady Gourlay or Mrs. Mainwaring; and I am now utterly friendless, with the exception of God alone. But I will not despair—so long, at least, as reason is left to me."

"I assure you, Lucy, you astonish me. To you, whose imagination is heated with a foolish passion for an adventurer whom no one knows, all this suffering may seem very distressing and romantic; but to me, to my father, and to the world, it looks like great folly—excuse me, Lucy—or rather like great weakness of character, grounded upon strong obstinacy of disposition. Believe me, if the world were to know this you would be

laughed at; and there is scarcely a mother or daughter, from the cottage to the castle, that would not say, 'Lucy Gourlay is a poor, inexperienced fool, who thinks she can find a world of angels, and paragons, and purity to live in.'"

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“But I care not for the world, Thomas; it is not my idol—I do not worship it, nor shall I ever do so. I wish to guide myself by the voice of my own conscience, by a sense of what is right and proper, and by the principles of Christian truth.”

“These doctrines, Lucy, are very well for the closet; but they will neyer do in life, for which they are little short of a disqualification. Where, for instance, will you find them acted on? Not by people of sense, I assure you. Now listen to me.”

“Spare me, if you please, Thomas, the advocacy of such principles. You occasion me great pain—not so much on my own account as on yours—you alarm me.”

“Don’t be alarmed, I tell you; but listen to me, as I said. Here, now, is this marriage: you don’t love this Dunroe—you dislike, you detest him. Very well. What the deuce has that to do with the prospects of your own elevation in life? Think for yourself—become the centre of your own world; make this Dunroe your footstool—put him under your foot, I say, and mount by him; get a position in the world—play your game in it as you see others do; and—”

“Pray, sir,” said Lucy, scarcely restraining her indignation, “where, or when, or how did you come by these odious and detestable doctrines?”

“Faith, Lucy, from honest nature—from experience and observation. Is there any man with a third idea, or that has the use of his eyes, who does not know and see that this is the game of life? Dunroe, I dare say, deserves your contempt; report goes, certainly, that he is a profligate; but what ought especially to reconcile him to you is this simple fact—that the man’s a fool. Egad, I think that ought to satisfy you.”

Lucy rose up and went to the window, where she stood for some moments, her eyes sparkling and scintillating, and her bosom heaving with a tide of feelings which were repressed by a strong and exceedingly difficult effort. She then returned to the sofa, her cheeks and temples in a blaze, whilst ever and anon she eyed her brother as if from a new point of view, or as if something sudden and exceedingly disagreeable had struck her.

“You look at me very closely, Lucy,” said he, with a confident grin.

“I do,” she replied. “Proceed, sir.”

“I will. Well, as I was saying, you will find it remarkably comfortable and convenient in many ways to be married to a fool: he will give you very little trouble; fools are never suspicious, but, on the contrary, distinguished for an almost sublime credulity. Then, again, you love this other gentleman; and, with a fool for your husband, and the example of the world before you, what the deuce difficulty can you see in the match?”

Lucy rose up, and for a few moments the very force of her indignation kept her silent; at length she spoke.

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“Villain—impostor—cheat! you stand there convicted of an infamous attempt to impose yourself on me as my legitimate brother—on my father as his legitimate son; but know that I disclaim you, sir. What! the fine and gentle blood of my blessed mother to flow in the veins of the profligate monster who could give utterance to principles worthy of hell itself, and attempt to pour them into the ears and heart of his own sister! Sir, I feel, and I thank God for it, that you are not the son of my blessed mother—no; but you stand there a false and spurious knave, the dishonest instrument of some fraudulent conspiracy, concocted for the purpose of putting you into a position of inheriting a name and property to which you have no claim. I ought, on the moment I first saw you, to have been guided by the instincts of my own heart, which prompted me to recoil from and disclaim you. I know not, nor do I wish to know, in what low haunts of vice and infamy you have been bred; but one thing is certain, that, if it be within the limits of my power, you shall be traced and unmasked. I now remember me that—that—there existed an early scandal—yes, sir, I remember it, but I cannot even repeat it; be assured, however, that this inhuman and devilish attempt to poison my principles will prove the source of a retributive judgment on your head. Begone, sir, and leave the house!”

The pallor of detected guilt, the consciousness that in this iniquitous lecture he had overshot the mark, and made a grievous miscalculation in pushing his detestable argument too far—but, above all, the startling suspicions so boldly and energetically expressed by Lucy, the truth of which, as well as the apprehensions that filled him of their discovery, all united, made him feel as if he stood on the brink of a mine to which the train had been already applied. And yet, notwithstanding all this, such was the natural force of his effrontery—such the vulgar insolence and bitter disposition of his nature, that, instead of soothing her insulted feelings, or offering either explanation or apology, he could not restrain an impudent exhibition of ill-temper.

“You forget yourself, Lucy,” he replied; “you have no authority to order me out of this house, in which I stand much firmer than yourself. Neither do I comprehend your allusions, nor regard your threats. The proofs of my identity and legitimacy are abundant and irresistible. As to the advice I gave you, I gave it like one who knows the world—”

“No, sir,” she replied, indignantly; “you gave it like a man who knows only its vices. It is sickening to hear every profligate quote his own experience of life, as if it were composed of nothing but crimes and vices, simply because they constitute the guilty phase of it with which he is acquainted. But the world, sir, is not the scene of general depravity which these persons would present it. No: it is full of great virtues, noble actions, high principles; and, what is better still,

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of true religion and elevated humanity. What right, then, sir, have you to libel a world which you do not understand? You are merely a portion of its dregs, and I would as soon receive lessons in honesty from a thief as principles for my guidance in it from you. As for me, I shall disregard the proofs of your identity and legitimacy, which, however, must be produced and investigated; for, from this moment, establish them as you may, I shall never recognize you as a brother, as an acquaintance, as a man, nor as anything but a selfish and abandoned villain, who would have corrupted the principles of his sister."

Without another word, or the slightest token of respect or courtesy, she deliberately, and with an air of indignant scorn, walked out of the drawing-room, leaving Mr. Ambrose Gray in a position which we dare say nobody will envy him.

CHAPTER XXXVI. Contains a Variety of Matters

—Some to Laugh and some to Weep at.

Our readers may have observed that Sir Thomas Gourlay led a secluded life ever since the commencement of our narrative. The fact was, and he felt it deeply, that he had long been an unpopular man. That he was a bad, overbearing husband, too, had been well known, for such was the violence of his temper, and the unvaried harshness of his disposition toward his wife, that the general tenor of his conduct, so far even as she was concerned, could not be concealed. His observations on life and personal character were also so cynical and severe, not to say unjust, that his society was absolutely avoided, unless by some few of his own disposition. And yet nothing could be more remarkable than the contrast that existed between his principles and conduct in many points, thus affording, as they did, an involuntary acknowledgment of his moral errors.

He would not, for instance, admit his sceptical friends, who laughed at the existence of virtue and religion, to the society of his daughter, with the exception of Lord Dunroe, to whose vices his unaccountable ambition for her elevation completely blinded him. Neither did he wish her to mingle much with the world, from a latent apprehension that she might tind it a different thing from what he himself represented it to be; and perhaps might learn there the low estimate which it had formed of her future husband. Like most misanthropical men, therefore, whose hatred of life is derived principally from that uneasiness of conscience which proceeds from their own vices, he kept aloof from society as far as the necessities of his position allowed him.

Mrs. Mainwaring had called upon him several times with an intention of making some communication which she trusted would have had the effect of opening his eyes to the danger into which he was about to precipitate his daughter by her contemplated!

marriage with Dunroe. He uniformly refused, however, to see her, or to allow her any opportunity of introducing the subject. Finding herself deliberately and studiously repulsed, this good lady, who still occasionally corresponded with Lucy, came to the resolution of writing to him on the subject, and, accordingly, Gibson, one morning, with his usual cool and deferential manner, presented him with the following letter:

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“SUMMERFIELD COTTAGE.

“Sir,—I should feel myself utterly unworthy of the good opinion which I trust I am honored with by your admirable daughter, were I any longer to remain silent upon a subject of the deepest importance to her future happiness. I understand that she is almost immediately about to become the wife of Lord Dunroe. Now, sir, I entreat your most serious attention; and I am certain, if you will only bestow it upon the few words I am about to write, that you, and especially Miss Gourlay, will live to thank God that I interposed to prevent this unhallowed union. I say then, emphatically, as I shall be able to prove most distinctly, that if you permit Miss Gourlay to become the wife of this young nobleman you will seal her ruin—defeat the chief object which you cherish, for her in life, and live to curse the day on which you urged it on. The communications which I have to make are of too much importance to be committed to paper; but if you will only allow me, and I once more implore it for the sake of your child, as well as for your own future ease of mind, the privilege of a short interview, I shall completely satisfy you as to the truth of what I state.

“I have the honor to be, sir,

“Your obliged and obedient servant,

“Martha Mainwaring.”

Having perused the first sentence of this earnest and friendly letter, Sir Thomas indignantly flung it into a drawer where he kept all communications to which it did not please him at the moment to pay particular attention.

Lucy’s health in the meantime was fast breaking: but so delicate and true was her sense of honor and duty that she would have looked upon any clandestine communication with her lover as an infraction of the solemn engagement into which she had entered for her father’s sake,—and by which, even at the expense of her own happiness, she considered herself bound. Still, she felt that a communication on the subject was due to him, and her principal hope now was that her father would allow her to make it. If he, however, refused this sanction to an act of common justice, then she resolved to write to him openly, and make the wretched circumstances in which she was involved, and the eternal barrier that had been placed between them, known to him at once.

Her father, however, now found, to his utter mortification, that he was driving matters somewhat too fast, and that his daughter’s health must unquestionably be restored before he could think of outraging humanity and public decency by forcing her from the sick bed to the altar.

After leaving her brother on the occasion of their last remarkable interview, she retired to her room so full of wretchedness, indignation, and despair of all human aid or sympathy, that she scarcely knew whether their conversation was a dream or a reality. Above all things, the shock she received through her whole moral system, delicately and finely tempered as it was, so completely prostrated her physical strength, and estranged all the virtuous instincts of her noble nature, that it was with difficulty she reached her own room. When there, she immediately rang for her maid, who at once perceived by the indignant sparkle of her eye, the heightened color of her cheek, and the energetic agitation of her voice, that something exceedingly unpleasant had occurred.

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“My gracious, miss,” she exclaimed, “what has happened? You look so disturbed! Something, or somebody, has offended you.”

“I am disturbed, Alice,” she replied, “I am disturbed; come and lend me your arm; my knees are trembling so that I cannot walk without assistance; but must sit down for a moment. Indeed, I feel that my strength is fast departing from me. I scarcely know what I am thinking. I am all confused, agitated, shocked. Gracious heaven! Come, my dear Alice, help your mistress; you, Alice, are the only friend I have left now. Are you not my friend, Alice?”

She was sitting on a lounger as she spoke, and the poor affectionate girl, who loved her as she did her life, threw herself over, and leaning her head upon her mistress’s knees wept bitterly.

“Sit beside me, Alice,” said she; “whatever distance social distinctions may have placed between us, I feel that the truth and sincerity of those tears justify me in placing you near my heart. Sit beside me, but compose yourself; and then you must assist me to bed.”

“They are killing you,” said Alley, still weeping. “What devil can tempt them to act as they do? As for me, miss, it’s breaking my heart, that I see what you are suffering, and can’t assist you.”

“But I have your love and sympathy, your fidelity, too, my dear Alice; and that now is all I believe the world has left me.”

“No, miss,” replied her maid, wiping her eyes, and striving to compose herself, “no, indeed; there is another—another gentleman, I mean—as well as myself, that feels deeply for your situation.”

Had Lucy’s spirit been such as they were wont to be, she could have enjoyed this little blunder of Alice’s; but now her heart, like some precious jewel that lies too deep in the bosom of the ocean for the sun’s strongest beams to reach, had sunk beneath the influence of either cheerfulness or mirth.

“There is indeed, miss,” continued Alice,

“And pray, Alice,” asked her mistress, “how do you know that?”

“Why, miss,” replied the girl, “I am told that of late he is looking very ill, too. They say he has lost his spirits all to pieces, and seldom laughs—the Lord save us!”

“They say!—who say, Alice?”

“Why,” replied Alice, with a perceptible heightening of her color, “ahem! ahem! why, Dandy Dulcimer, miss.”

“And where have you seen him? Dulcimer, I mean. He, I suppose, who used occasionally to play upon the instrument of that name in the Hall?”

“Yes, ma’am, the same. Don’t you remember how beautiful he played it the night we came in the coach to town?”

“I remember there was something very-unpleasant between him and a farmer, I believe; but I did not pay much attention to it at the time.”

“I am sorry for that, miss, for I declare to goodness, Dandy’s dulcimer isn’t such an unpleasant instrument as you think; and, besides, he has got a new one the other day that plays lovely.”

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Lucy felt a good deal anxious to hear some further information from Alley upon the subject she had introduced, but saw that Dandy and his dulcimer were likely to be substituted for it, all unconscious as the poor girl was of the preference of the man to the master.

“He looks ill, you say, Alice?”

“Never seen him look so rosy in my life, miss, nor in such spirits.”

Lucy looked into her face, and for a moment’s space one slight and feeble gleam, which no suffering could prevent, passed over it, at this intimation of the object which Alley’s fancy then dwelt upon.

“He danced a hornpipe, miss, to the tune of the Swaggerin’ Jig, upon the kitchen table,” she proceeded; “and, sorra be off me, but it would do your heart good to see the springs he would give—every one o’ them a yard high—and to hear how he’d crack his fingers as loud as the shot of a pistol.”

A slight gloom overclouded Lucy’s face; but, on looking at the artless transition from the honest sympathy which Alley had just felt for her to a sense of happiness which it was almost a crime to disturb, it almost instantly disappeared.

“I must not be angry with her,” she said to herself; “this feeling, after all, is only natural, and such as God. in his goodness bestows upon every heart as the greatest gift of life, when not abused. I cannot be displeased at the naivete with which she has forgotten my lover for her own; for such I perceive this person she speaks of evidently is.”

She looked once more at her maid, whose eyes, with true Celtic feeling, were now dancing with delight, whilst yet red with tears. “Alice,” said she, in a voice of indulgent reproof, “who are you thinking of?”

“Why, of Dandy, miss,” replied Alley; but in an instant the force of the reproof as well as of the indulgence was felt, and sho acknowledged her error by a blush.

“I beg your pardon, miss,” she said; “I’m a thoughtless creature. What can you care about what I was sayin’? But—hem—well, about him—sure enough, poor Dandy told me that everything is going wrong with him. He doesn’t, as I said, speak or smile as he used to do.”

“Do you know,” asked her mistress, “whether he goes out much?”

“Not much, miss, I think; he goes sometimes to Lady Gourlay’s and to Dean Palmer’s. But do you know what I heard, miss I hope you won’t grow jealous, though?”

Lucy gave a faint smile. “I hope not, Alice. What is it?” But here, on recollecting again the scene she had just closed below stairs, she shuddered, and could not help exclaiming, “Oh, gracious heaven!” Then suddenly throwing off, as it were, all thought and reflection connected with it, she looked again at her maid, and repeated the question, “What is it, Alice?”

“Why, miss, have you ever seen Lord Dunroe’s sister?”

“Yes, in London; but she was only a girl, though a lovely girl.”

“Well, miss, do you know what? She’s in love with some one.”

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“Poor girl!” exclaimed, Lucy, “I trust the course of her love may run smoother than mine; but who is she supposed to be in love with?” she asked, not, however, without a blush, which, with all her virtues, was, as woman, out of her power to suppress.

“Oh,” replied Alley, “not with him—and dear knows it would be no disgrace to her, but the contrary, to fall in love with such a gentleman—no; but with a young officer of the Thirty-third, who they say is lovely.”

“What is his name, do you not know, Alice?”

“Roberts, I think. They met at Dean Palmer’s and Lady Gourlay’s; for it seems that Colonel Dundas was an old brother officer of Sir Edward’s, when he was young and in the army.”

“I have met that young officer, Alice,” replied Lucy, “and I know not how it was, but I felt an—a—a—in fact, I cannot describe it. Those who were present observed that he and I resembled each other very much, and indeed the resemblance struck myself very forcibly.”

“Troth, and if he resembled you, miss, I’m not surprised that Lady Emily fell in love with him.”

“But how did you come to hear all this, Alice?” asked Lucy with a good deal of anxiety.

“Why, miss, there’s a cousin of my own maid to Mrs. Palmer, and you may remember the evenin’ you gave me lave to spend with her. She gave a party on the same evenin’ and Dandy was there. I think I never looked better; I had on my new stays, and my hair was done up Grecian. Any way, I wasn’t the worst of them.”

“I am fatigued, Alice,” said Lucy; “make your narrative as short as you can.”

“I haven’t much to add to it now, miss,” she replied. “It was observed that Lady Emily’s eyes and his were never off one another. She refused, it seems, to dance with some major that’s a great lord in the regiment, and danced with Mr. Roberts afterwards. He brought her down to supper, too, and sat beside her, and you know what that looks like.”

Lucy paused, and seemed as if anxious about something, but at length asked,

“Do you know, Alice, was he there?”

“No, miss,” replied the maid; “Dandy tells me he goes to no great parties at all, he only dines where there’s a few. But, indeed, by all accounts he’s very unhappy.”

“What do you mean by all accounts,” asked Lucy, a little startled.

“Why, Dandy, miss; so he tells me.”

“Poor Alice!” exclaimed Lucy, looking benignantly upon her. “I did not think, Alice, that any conversation could have for a moment won me from the painful state of mind in which I entered the room. Aid me me now to my bedchamber. I must lie down, for I feel that I should endeavor to recruit my strength some way. If I could sleep, I should be probably the better for it; but, alas, Alice, you need not be told that misery and despair are wretched bedfellows.”

“Don’t say despair,” replied Alice; “remember there’s a good God above us, who can do better for us than ever we can for ourselves. Trust in him. Who knows but he’s only trying you; and severely tried you are, my darlin’ mistress.”

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Whilst uttering the last words, the affectionate creature's eyes filled with tears. She rose, however, and having assisted Lucy to her sleeping-room, helped to undress her, then fixed her with tender assiduity in her bed, where, in a few minutes, exhaustion and anxiety of mind were for the time forgotten, and she fell asleep.

The penetration of servants, in tracing, at fashionable parties, the emotions of love through all its various garbs and disguises, constitutes a principal and not the least disagreeable portion of their duty. The history of Lady Emily's attachment to Ensign Roberts, though a profound secret to the world, in the opinion of the parties themselves, and only hoped for and suspected by each, was nevertheless perfectly well known by a good number of the quality below stairs. The circumstance, at all events, as detailed by Alley, was one which in this instance justified their sagacity. Roberts and she had met, precisely as Alley said, three or four times at Lady Gourlay's and the Dean's, where their several attractions were, in fact, the theme of some observation. Those long, conscious glances, however, which, on the subject of love are such traitors to the heart, by disclosing its most secret operations, had sufficiently well told them the state of everything within that mysterious little garrison, and the natural result was that Lady Emily seldom thought of any one or anything but Ensign Roberts and the aforesaid glances, nor Mr. Roberts of anything but hers; for it so happened, that, with the peculiar oversight in so many things by which the passion is characterized, Lady Emily forgot that she had herself been glancing at the ensign, or she could never have observed and interpreted his looks. With a similar neglect of his own offences, in the same way must we charge Mr. Roberts, who in his imagination saw nothing but the blushing glances of this fair patrician.

Time went on, however, and Lucy, so far from recovering, was nearly one-half of the week confined to her bed, or her apartment. Sometimes, by way of varying the scene, and, if possible, enlivening her spirits, she had forced herself to go down to the drawing-room, and occasionally to take an airing in the carriage. A fortnight had elapsed, and yet neither Norton nor his fellow-traveler had returned from France. Neither had Mr. Birney; and our friend the stranger had failed to get any possible intelligence of unfortunate Fenton, whom he now believed to have perished, either by foul practices or the influence of some intoxicating debauch. Thanks to Dandy Dulcimer, however, as well as to Alley Mahon, he was not without information concerning Lucy's state of health; and, unfortunately, all that he could hear about it was only calculated to depress and distract him.

Dandy came to him one morning, about this period, and after rubbing his head slightly with the tips of his fingers, said,

"Bedad, sir, I was very near havin' cotch the right Mrs. Norton yestherday—I mane, I thought I was."

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“How was that?” asked his master. “Why, sir, I heard there was a fine, good-looking widow of that name, livin’ in Meeklenburgh street, where she keeps a dairy; and sure enough there I found her. Do you undherstand, sir?”

“Why should I not, sirra? What mystery is there in it that I should not?”

“Deuce a sich a blazer of a widow I seen this seven years. I went early to her place, and the first thing I saw was a lump of a six-year-ould—a son of hers—playin’ the Pandean pipes upon a whack o’ bread and butther that he had aiten at the top into canes. Somehow, although I can’t tell exactly why, I tuck a fancy to become acquainted with her, and proposed, if she had no objection, to take a cup o’ tay with her yestherday evenin’, statin’ at the time that I had something to say that might turn out to her advantage.”

“But what mystery is there in all this?” said his master.

“Mysthery, sir—why, where was there ever a widow since the creation of Peter White, that hadn’t more or less of mysthery about her?”

“Well, but what was the mystery here?” asked the other. “I do not perceive any, so far.”

“Take your time, sir,” replied Dandy; “it’s comin’. The young performer on the Pandeans that I tould you of wasn’t more than five or six at the most, but a woman over the way, that I made inquiries of, tould me the length o’ time the husband was dead. Do you undherstand the mysthery now, sir?”

“Go on,” replied the other; “I am amused by you; but I don’t see the mystery, notwithstanding. What was the result?”

“I tell you the truth—she was a fine, comely, fiaghoola woman; and as I heard she had the shiners, I began to think I might do worse.”

“I thought the girl called Alley Mahon was your favorite?”

“So she is, sir—that is, she’s one o’ them: but, talkin’ o’ favorites, I am seldom without half-a-dozen.”

“Very liberal, indeed, Dandy; but I wish to hear the upshot.”

“Why, sir, we had a cup o’ tay together yestherday evenin’, and, between you and me, I began, as it might be, to get fond of her. She’s very pretty, sir; but I must say, that the man who marries her will get a mouth, plaise goodness, that he must kiss by instalments. Faith, if it could be called property, he might boast that his is extensive; and divil a mistake in it.”

“She has a large mouth, then?”

“Upon my soul, sir, if you stood at the one side of it you’d require a smart telescope to see to the other. No man at one attempt could ever kiss her. I began, sir, at the left side—that’s always the right side to kiss at and went on successfully enough till I got half way through; but you see, sir, the evenin’s is but short yet, and as I had no time to finish, I’m to go back this evenin’ to get to the other side.

“Still I’m at a loss, Dandy,” replied his master, not knowing whether to smile or get angry; “finish it without going about in this manner.”

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“Faith, sir, and that’s more than I could do in kissing the widow. Divil such a circumbendibus ever a man had as I had in gettin’ as far as the nose, where I had to give up until this evenin’ as I said. Now, sir, whether to consider that an advantage or disadvantage is another mysthery to me. There’s some women, and they have such a small, rosy, little mouth, that a man must gather up his lips into a bird’s bill to kiss them. Now, there’s Miss Gour—”

A look of fury from his master divided the word in his mouth, and he paused from terror. His master became more composed, however, and said, “To what purpose have you told me all this?”

“Gad, sir to tell you the truth, I saw you were low-spirited, and wanted something to rouse you. It’s truth for all that.”

“Is this Mrs. Norton, however, the woman whom we are seeking?”

“Well, well,” exclaimed Dandy, casting down his hand, with vexatious, vehemence, against the open air; “by the piper o’ Moses, I’m the stupidest man that ever peeled a phatie. Troth, I was so engaged, sir, that I forgot it; but I’ll remember it to-night, plaise goodness.”

“Ah, Dandy,” exclaimed his master, smiling, “I fear you are a faithless swain. I thought Alley Mahon was at least the first on the list.”

“Troth, sir,” replied Dandy, “I believe she is, too. Poor Alley! By the way, sir, I beg your pardon, but I have news for you that I fear will give you a heavy heart.”

“How,” exclaimed his master, “how—what is it? Tell me instantly.”

“Miss Gourlay is ill, sir. She was goin’ to be married to this lord; her father, I believe, had the day appointed, and she had given her consent.”

His master seized him by the collar with both hands, and peering into his eyes, whilst his own blazed with actual fire, he held him for a moment as if in a vise, exclaiming, “Her consent, you villain!” But, as if recollecting himself, he suddenly let him go, and said, calmly, “Go on with what you were about to say.”

“I have very little more to say, sir,” replied Dandy; “herself and Lord Dunroe is only waitin’ till she gets well and then they’re to be married?”

“You said she gave her consent, did you not!”

“No doubt of it, sir, and that, I believe, is what’s breakin’ her heart. However, it’s not my affair to direct any one; still, if I was in somebody’s shoes, I know the tune I’d sing.”

“And what tune would you sing?” asked his master.

Dandy sung the following stave, and, as he did it, he threw his comic eye upon his master with such humorous significance that the latter, although wrapped in deep reflection at the moment, on suddenly observing! it, could not avoid smiling:

> “Will you list, and come with me, fair maid?
> Will you list, and come with me, fair maid?
> Will you list, and come with me, fair maid?
> And folly the lad with the white cockade?”

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“If you haven’t a good voice, sir, you could whisper the words into her ear, and as you’re so near the mouth—hem—a word to the wise—then point to the chaise that you’ll have standin’ outside, and my life for you, there’s an end to the fees o’ the docther.”

His master, who had relapsed into thought before he concluded his advice, looked at him without seeming to have heard it. He then traversed the room several times, his chin supported by his finger and thumb, after which he seemed to have formed a resolution.

“Go, sir,” said he, “and put that letter to Father M’Mahon in the post-office. I shall not want you for some time.”

“Will I ordher a chaise, sir?” replied Dandy, with a serio-comic face.

One look from his master, however, sent him about his business; but the latter could hear him lilting the “White Cockade,” as he went down stairs.

“Now,” said he, when Dandy was gone, “can it be possible that she has at length given her consent to this marriage? Never voluntarily. It has been extorted by foul deceit and threatening, by some base fraud practised upon her generous and unsuspecting nature. I am culpable to stand tamely by and allow this great and glorious creature to be sacrificed to a bad ambition, and a worse man, without coming to the rescue. But, in the meantime, is this information true? Alas, I fear it is; for I know the unscrupulous spirit the dear girl has, alone and unassisted, to contend with. Yet if it be true, oh, why should she not have written to me? Why not have enabled me to come to her defence? I know not what to think. At all events, I shall, as a last resource, call upon her father. I shall explain to him the risk he runs in marrying his daughter to this man who is at once a fool and a scoundrel. But how can I do so? Birney has not yet returned from France, and I have no proofs on which to rest such serious allegations; nothing at present but bare assertions, which her father, in the heat and fury of his ambition, might not only disbelieve, but misinterpret. Be it so; I shall at least warn him, take it as he will; and if all else should fail, I will disclose to him my name and family, in order that he may know, at all events, that I am no impostor. My present remonstrance may so far alarm him as to cause the persecution against Lucy to be suspended for a time, and on’ Birney’s return, we shall, I trust, be able to speak more emphatically.”

He accordingly sent for a chaise, into which he stepped and ordered the driver to leave him at Sir Thomas Gourlay’s and to wait there for him.

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Lord Dunroe was at this period perfectly well aware that Birney's visit to France was occasioned by purposes that boded nothing favorable to his interests; and were it not for Lucy's illness, there is little doubt that the marriage would, ere now, have taken place. A fortnight had elapsed, and every day so completely filled him with alarm, that he proposed to Sir Thomas Gourlay the expediency of getting the license at once, and having the ceremony performed privately in her father's house. To this the father would have assented, were it not that he had taken it into his head that Lucy was rallying, and would soon be in a condition to go through it, in the parish church, at least. A few days, he hoped, would enable her to bear it; but if not, he was willing to make every concession to his lordship's wishes. Her delicate health, he said, would be a sufficient justification. At all events, both agreed that there could be no harm in having the license provided: and, accordingly, upon the morning of the stranger's visit, Sir Thomas and Lord Dunroe had just left the house of the former for the Ecclesiastical Court, in Henrietta street, a few minutes before his arrival. Sir Thomas was mistaken, however, in imagining that his daughter's health was improving, The doctor, indeed, had ordered carriage exercise essentially necessary; and Lucy being none of those weak and foolish girls, who sink under illness and calamity by an apathetic neglect of their health, or a criminal indifference to the means of guarding and prolonging the existence into which God has called them, left nothing undone on her part to second the efforts of the physician. Accordingly, whenever she was able to be up, or the weather permitted it, she sat in the carriage for an hour or two as it drove through some of the beautiful suburban scenery by which our city is surrounded.

The stranger, on the door being opened, was told by a servant, through mistake, that Sir Thomas Gourlay was within. The man then showed him to the drawing-room, where he said there was none but Miss Gourlay, he believed, who was waiting for the carriage to take her airing.

On hearing this piece of intelligence the stranger's heart began to palpitate, and his whole system, physical and spiritual, was disturbed by a general commotion that mounted to pain, and almost banished his presence of mind for the moment. He tapped at the drawing-room door, and a low, melancholy voice, that penetrated his heart, said, "Come in." He entered, and there on a sofa sat Lucy before him. He did not bow—his heart was too deeply interested in her fate to remember the formalities of ceremony—-but he stood, and fixed his eyes upon her with a long and anxious gaze. There she sat; but, oh! how much changed in appearance from what he had known her on every previous interview. Not that the change, whilst it spoke of sorrow and suffering, was one which diminished her beauty; on the contrary, it had only

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changed its character to something far more touching and impressive than health itself with all its blooming hues could have bestowed. Her features were certainly thinner, but there was visible in them a serene but mournful spirit—a voluptuous languor, heightened and spiritualized by purity and intellect into an expression that realized our notions rather of angelic beauty than of the loveliness of mere woman. To all this, sorrow had added a dignity so full of melancholy and commanding grace—a seriousness indicative of such truth and honor—as to make the heart of the spectator wonder, and the eye almost to weep on witnessing an association so strange and incomprehensible, as that of such beauty and evident goodness with sufferings that seem rather like crimes against purity and innocence, and almost tempt the weak heart to revolt against the dispensations of Providence.

When their eyes rested on each other, is it necessary to say that the melancholy position of Lucy was soon read in those large orbs that seemed about to dissolve into tears? The shock of the stranger's sudden and unexpected appearance, when taken in connection with the loss of him forever, and the sacrifice of her love and happiness, which, to save her father's life, she had so heroically and nobly made, was so strong, she felt unable to rise. He approached her, struck deeply by the dignified entreaty for sympathy and pardon that was in her looks.

"I am not well able to rise, dear Charles," she said, breaking the short silence which had occurred, and extending her hand; "and I suppose you have come to reproach me. As for me, I have nothing to ask you for now—nothing to hope for but pardon, and that you will forget me henceforth. Will you be noble enough to forgive her who was once your Lucy, but who can never be so more?"

The dreadful solemnity, together with the pathetic spirit of tenderness and despair that breathed in these words, caused a pulsation in his heart and a sense of suffocation about his throat that for the moment prevented him from speaking. He seized her hand, which was placed passively in his, and as he put it to his lips, Lucy felt a warm tear or two fall upon it. At length he spoke:

"Oh, why is this, Lucy?" he said; "your appearance has unmanned me; but I see it and feel it all. I have been sacrificed to ambition, yet I blame you not."

"No, dear Charles," she replied; look upon me and then ask yourself who is the victim."

"But what has happened?" he asked;

"What machinery of hell has been at work to reduce you to this? Fraud, deceit, treachery have done it. But, for the sake of God, let me know, as I said, what has

occurred since our last interview to occasion this deplorable change—this rooted sorrow—this awful spirit of despair that I read in your face?

“Not despair, Charles, for I will never yield to that; but it is enough to say, that a barrier deep as the grave, and which only that can remove, is between us forever in this life.”

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“You mean to say, then, that you never can be mine?”

“That, alas, is what I mean to say—what I must say.”

“But why, Lucy—why, dearest Lucy—for still I must call you so; what has occasioned this? I cannot understand it.”

She then related to him, briefly, but feelingly, the solemn promise, which, as our readers are aware of, she had given her father, and under what circumstances she had given it, together with his determination, unchanged and irrevocable, to force her to its fulfilment. Having heard it he paused for some time, whilst Lucy’s eyes were fixed upon him, as if she expected a verdict of life or death from his lips.

“Alas, my dear Lucy,” he said; “noble girl! how can I quarrel with your virtues? You did it to save a father’s life, and have left me nothing to reproach you with; but in increasing my admiration of you, my heart is doubly struck with anguish at the thought that I must lose you.”

“All, yes,” she replied; “but you must take comfort from the difference in our fates. You merely have to endure the pain of loss; but I—oh, dear Charles—what have I to encounter? You are not forced into a marriage with one who possesses not a single sentiment or principle of virtue or honor in common with yourself. No; you are merely—I deprived of a woman whom you love; but you are not forced into marriage with a woman, abandoned and unprincipled, whom you hate. Yes, Charles, you must take comfort, as I said, from the difference of our fates.”

“What, Lucy! do you mean to say I can take comfort from your misery? Am I so selfish or ungenerous as to thank God that you, whose happiness I prefer a thousand times to my own, are more miserable than I am? I thought you knew me better.”

“Alas, Charles,” she replied, “have compassion on me. The expression of these generous sentiments almost kills me. Assume some moral error—some semblance of the least odious vice—some startling blemish of character—some weakness that may enable me to feel that in losing you I have not so much to lose as I thought; something that may make the contrast between the wretch to whom I am devoted and yourself less repulsive.”

“Oh, I assure you, my dear Lucy,” he replied, with a melancholy smile, “that I have my errors, my weaknesses, my frailties, if that will comfort you; so many, indeed, that my greatest virtue, and that of which I am most proud, is my love for you.”

“Ah, Charles, you reason badly,” she replied, “for you prove yourself to be capable of that noble affection which never yet existed in a vicious heart. As for me, I know not on what hand to turn. It is said that when a person hanging by some weak branch from the

brow of a precipice finds it beginning to give way, and that the plunge below is unavoidable, a certain courage, gained from despair, not only diminishes the terror of the fall, but relieves the heart by a bold and terrible feeling that for the moment banishes fear, and reconciles him to his fate."

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“It is a dreadful analogy, my dear Lucy; but you must take comfort. Who knows what a day may bring forth? You are not yet hanging upon the precipice of life.”

“I feel that I am,—Charles; and what is more, I see the depth to which I must be precipitated; but, alas, I possess none of that fearful courage that is said to reconcile one to the fall.”

“Lucy,” he replied, “into this gulf of destruction you shall never fall. Believe me, there is an invisible hand that will support you when you least expect it; a power that shapes our purposes, roughhew them as we will. I came to request an interview with your father upon this very subject. Have courage, dearest girl; friends are at work who I trust will ere long be enabled to place documents in his hands that will soon change his purposes. I grant that it is possible these documents may fail, or may not be procured; and in that case I know not how we are to act. I mention the probability of failure lest a future disappointment occasion such a shock as in your present state you may be incapable of sustaining; but still have hope, for the probability is in our favor.”

She shook her head incredulously, and replied, “You do not know the inflexible determination of my father on this point; neither can I conceive what documents you could place before him that would change his purpose.”

“I do not conceive that I am at liberty even to you, Lucy, to mention circumstances that may cast a stain upon high integrity and spotless innocence, so long as it is possible the proofs I speak of may fail. In the latter case, so far at least as the world is concerned, justice would degenerate into scandal, whilst great evil and little good must be the consequence. I think I am bound in honor not to place old age, venerable and virtuous, on the one hand, and unsuspecting innocence on the other, in a contingency that may cause them irreparable injury. I will now say, that if your happiness were not involved in the success or failure of our proceedings, I should have ceased to be a party in the steps we are taking until the grave had closed upon one individual at least, while unconscious of the shame that was to fall upon his family.”

Lucy looked upon him with a feeling of admiration which could not be misunderstood. “Dear Charles,” she exclaimed; “ever honorable—ever generous—ever considerate and unselfish; I do not of course understand your allusions; but I am confident that whatever you do will be done in a spirit worthy of yourself.”

The look of admiration, and why should we not add love, which Lucy had bestowed upon him was observed and felt deeply. Their eyes met, and, seizing her hand again, he whispered, in that low and tender voice which breathes the softest and most contagious emotion of the heart, “Alas, Lucy, you could not even dream how inexpressibly dear you are to me. Without you, life to me will possess no blessing. All that I ever conceived of its purest and most exalted enjoyments were centred in you,

and in that sweet communion which I thought we were destined to hold together; but now, now—oh, my God, what a blank will my whole future existence be without you!”

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“Charles—Charles,” she replied, but at the same time her eyes were swimming in tears, “spare me this; do not overload my heart with such an excess of sorrow; have compassion on me, for I am already too sensible of my own misery—too sensible of the happiness I have lost. I am here isolated and alone, with no kind voice to whisper one word of consolation to my unhappy heart, my poor maid only excepted; and I am often forced, in order to escape the pain of present reflections, to make a melancholy struggle once more to entrance myself in the innocent dreams of my early life. Yes, and I will confess it, to call back if I can those visions that gave the delicious hues of hope and happiness to the love which bound your heart and mine together. The illusion, however, is too feeble to struggle successfully with the abiding consciousness of my wretchedness, and I awake to a bitterness of anguish that is drinking up the fountains of my life, out of which life I feel, if this state continues, I shall soon pass away.”

On concluding, she wiped away the tears that were fast falling; and her lover was so deeply moved that he could scarcely restrain his own.

“There is one word, dearest Lucy,” he replied, “but though short it is full of comfort—-hope.”

“Alas! Charles, I feel that it has been blotted out of the destiny of my life. I look for it; I search for it, but in vain. In this life I cannot find it; I say in this, because it is now, when all about me is darkness, and pain, and suffering, that I feel the consolation which arises from our trust in another. This consolation, however, though true, is sad, and the very joy it gives is melancholy, because it arises from that mysterious change which withdraws us from existence; and when it leads us to happiness we cannot forget that it is through the gate of the grave. But still it is a consolation, and a great one—to a sufferer like me, the only one—we must all die.”

Like a strain of soft but solemn music, these mournful words proceeded from her lips, from which they seemed to catch the touching sweetness which characterized them.

“I ought not to shed these tears,” she added; “nor ought you, dear Charles, to feel so deeply what I say as I perceive you do; but I know not how it is, I am impressed with a presentiment that this is probably our last meeting; and I confess that I am filled with a mournful satisfaction in speaking to you—in looking upon you—yes, I confess it; and I feel all the springs of tenderness opened, as it were, in my unhappy heart. In a short time,”—she added, and here she almost sobbed, “it will be a crime to think of you—to allow my very imagination to turn to your image; and I shall be called upon to banish that image forever from my heart, which I must strive to do, for to cherish it there will be wrong; but I shall struggle, for”—she added, proudly —“whatever my duty may be, I shall leave nothing undone to preserve my conscience free from its own reproaches.”

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“Take comfort, Lucy,” he replied; “this will not—shall not be our last meeting. It is utterly impossible that such a creature as you are should be doomed to a fate so wretched. Do not allow them to hurry you into this odious marriage. Gain time, and we shall yet triumph.”

“Yes, Charles,” she replied; “but, then, misery often grows apathetic, and the will, wearied down and weakened, loses the power of resistance. I have more than once felt attacks of this kind, and I know that if they should observe it, I am lost. Oh, how little is the love of woman understood! And how little of life is known except through those false appearances that are certain to deceive all who look upon them as realities! Here am I, surrounded by every luxury that this world, can present, and how many thousands imagine me happy! What is there within the range of fashion and the compass of wealth that I cannot command? and yet amidst all this dazzle of grandeur I am more wretched than the beggar whom a morsel of food will make contented.”

“Resist this marriage, Lucy, for a time, that is all I ask,” replied her lover; “be firm, and, above all things, hope. You may ere long understand the force and meaning of my words. At present you cannot, nor is it in my power, with honor, to speak more plainly.”

“My father,” replied this high-minded and sensitive creature, “said some time ago, ‘Is not my daughter a woman of honor?’ Yes, Charles, I must be a woman of honor. But it is time you should go; only before you do, hear me. Henceforth we have each of us one great mutual task imposed upon us—a task the fulfilment of which is dictated alike by honor, virtue, and religion.”

“Alas, Lucy, what is that?”

“To forget each other. From the moment I become,” she sobbed aloud—“you know,” she added, “what I would say, but what I cannot—from that moment memory becomes a crime.”

“But an involuntary crime, my ever dear Lucy. As for my part,” he replied, vehemently, and with something akin to distraction, “I feel that is impossible, and that even were it possible, I would no more attempt to banish your image from my heart than I would to deliberately still its pulses. Never, never—such an attempt, such an act, if successful, would be a murder of the affections. No. Lucy, whilst one spark of mortal life is alive in my body, whilst memory can remember the dreams of only the preceding moment, whilst a single faculty of heart or intellect remains by which your image can be preserved, I shall cling to that image as the shipwrecked sailor would to the plank that bears him through the midnight storm—as a despairing soul would to the only good act of a wicked life that he could plead for his salvation.”

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Whilst he spoke, Lucy kept her eyes fixed upon his noble features, now wrought up into an earnest but melancholy animation, and when he had concluded, she exclaimed, “And this is the man of whose love they would deprive me, whose very acknowledgment of it comes upon my spirit like an anthem of the heart; and I know not what I have done to be so tried; yet, as it is the will of God, I receive it for the best. Dear Charles, you must go; but you spoke of remonstrating with my father. Do not so; an interview would only aggravate him. And as you admit that certain documents are wanted to produce a change in his opinions, you may see clearly that until you produce them an expostulation would be worse than useless. On the contrary, it might precipitate matters and ruin all. Now go.”

“Perhaps you are right,” he replied, “as you always are; how can I go? How can I tear myself from you? Dearest, dearest Lucy, what a love is mine! But that is not surprising—who could love you with an ordinary passion?”

Apprehensive that her father might return, she rose up, but so completely had she been exhausted by the excitement of this interview that he was obliged to assist her.

“I hear the carriage,” said she; “it is at the door: will you ring for my maid? And now, Charles, as it is possible that we must meet no more, say, before you go, that you forgive me.”

“There is everything in your conduct to be admired and loyed, my dearest Lucy; but nothing to be forgiven.”

“Is it possible,” she said, as if in communion with herself, “that we shall never meet, never speak, never, probably, look upon each other more?”

Her lover observed that her face became suddenly pale, and she staggered a little, after which she sank and would have fallen had he not supported her in his arms. He had already rung for Alley Mahon, and there was nothing for it but to place Lucy once more upon the sofa, whither he was obliged to carry her, for she had fainted. Having placed her there, it became necessary to support her head upon his bosom, and in doing so—-is it in human nature to be severe upon him?—he rapturously kissed her lips, and pressed her to his heart in a long, tender, and melancholy embrace. The appearance of her maid, however, who always accompanied her in the carriage, terminated this pardonable theft, and after a few words of ordinary conversation they separated.

CHAPTER XXXVII. Dandy’s Visit to Summerfield Cottage

—Where he Makes a most Ungallant Mistake—Returns with Tidings of both Mrs. Norton and Fenton—and Generously Patronizes his Master

On the morning after this interview the stranger was waited on by Birney, who had returned from France late on the preceding night.

“Well, my friend,” said he, after they had shaken hands, “I hope you are the bearer of welcome intelligence!”

The gloom and disappointment that were legible in this man’s round, rosy, and generally good-humored countenance were observed, however, by the stranger at a second glance.

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“But how is this?” he added; “you are silent, and I fear, now that I look at you a second time, that matters have not gone well with you. For God’s sake, however, let me know; for I am impatient to hear the result.”

“All is lost,” replied Birney; “and I fear we have been outgeneralled. The clergyman is dead, and the book in which the record of her death was registered has disappeared, no one knows how. I strongly suspect, however, that your opponent is at the bottom of it.”

“You mean Dunroe?”

“I do; that scoundrel Norton, at once his master and his slave, accompanied by a suspicious-looking fellow, whose name I discovered to be Mulholland, were there before us, and I fear, carried their point by securing the register, which I have no doubt has been by this time reduced to ashes.”

“In that case, then,” replied the stranger, despondingly, “it’s all up with us.”

“Unless,” observed Birney, “you have been more successful at home than I have been abroad. Any trace of Mrs. Norton?”

“None whatsoever. But, my dear Birney, what you tell me is surprisingly mysterious. How could Dunroe become aware of the existence of these documents? or, indeed, of our proceedings at all? And who is this Mulholland you speak of that accompanied him?”

“I know nothing whatever about him,” replied Birney, “except that he is a fellow of dissolute appearance, with sandy hair, not ill-looking, setting aside what is called a battered look, and a face of the most consummate effrontery.”

“I see it all,” replied the other. “That drunken scoundrel M’Bride has betrayed us, as far, at least, as he could. The fellow, while his conduct continued good, was in my confidence, as far as a servant ought to be. In this matter, however, he did not know all, unless, indeed, by inference from the nature of the document itself, and from knowing the name of the family whose position it affected. How it might have affected them, however, I don’t think he knew.”

“But how do you know that this Mulholland is that man?”

“From your description of him I am confident there can be no mistake about it—not the slightest; he must have changed his name purposely on this occasion; and, I dare say, Dunroe has liberally paid him for his treachery.”

“But what is to be done now?” asked Birney; “here we are fairly at fault.”

“I have seen Miss Gourlay,” replied the other, “and if it were only from motives of humanity, we must try, by every means consistent with honor, to stop or retard her marriage with Dunroe.”

“But how are we to do so?”

“I know not at present; but I shall think of it. This is most unfortunate. I declare solemnly that it was only in so far as the facts we were so anxious to establish might have enabled us to prevent this accursed union, that I myself felt an interest in our success. Miss Gourlay’s happiness was my sole motive of action.”

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“I believe you, sir,” replied Birney; “but in the meantime we are completely at a stand. Chance, it is true, may throw something in our way; but, in the present position of circumstances, chance, nay, all the chances are against us.”

“It is unfortunately too true,” replied the stranger; “there is not a single opening left for us; we are, on the contrary, shut out completely in every direction. I shall write, however, to a lady who possesses much influence with Miss Gourlay; but, alas, to what purpose? Miss Gourlay herself has no influence whatever; and, as to her father, he does not live who could divert him from his object. His vile ambition only in the matter of his daughter could influence him, and it will do so to her destruction, for she cannot survive this marriage long.”

“You look thin, and a good deal careworn,” observed Birney, “which, indeed, I am sorry to see. Constant anxiety, however, and perpetual agitation of spirits will wear any man down. Well, I must bid you good morning; but I had almost forgotten to inquire about poor Fenton. Any trace of him during my absence?”

“Not the slightest. In fact, every point is against us. Lady Gourlay has relapsed into her original hopelessness, or nearly so, and I myself am now more depressed than I have ever been. Parish register, documents, corrupt knaves, and ungrateful traitors—perish all the machinery of justice on the one hand, and of villainy on the other; only let us succeed in securing Miss Gourlay’s happiness, and I am contented. That, now and henceforth, is the absorbing object of my life. Let her be happy; let her be but happy—-and this can only be done by preventing her union with this heartless young man, whose principal motive to it is her property.”

Birney then took his departure, leaving his friend in such a state of distress, and almost of despair, on Lucy’s account, as we presume our readers can very sufficiently understand, without any further assistance from us. He could not, however, help congratulating himself on his prudence in withholding from Miss Gourlay the sanguine expectations which he himself had entertained upon the result of Birney’s journey to France. Had he not done so, he knew that she would have participated in his hopes, and, as a natural consequence, she must now have had to bear this deadly blow of disappointment, probably the last cherished hope of her heart; and under such circumstances, it is difficult to say what its effect upon her might have been. This was now his only satisfaction, to which we may add the consciousness that he had not, by making premature disclosures, been the means of compromising the innocent.

After much thought and reflection upon the gloomy position in which both he himself and especially Lucy were placed, he resolved to write to Mrs. Mainwaring upon the subject; although at the moment he scarcely knew in what terms to address her, or what steps he could suggest to her, as one feeling a deep interest in Miss Gourlay’s happiness. At length, after much anxious rumination, he wrote the following short letter,

or rather note, more with a view of alarming Mrs. Mainwaring into activity, than of dictating to her any line of action as peculiarly suited to the circumstances.

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“Madam,—The fact of Miss Gourlay having taken refuge with you as her friend, upon a certain occasion that was, I believe, very painful to that young lady, I think sufficiently justifies me in supposing that you feel a warm interest in her fate. For this reason, therefore, I have taken the liberty of addressing you with reference to her present situation. If ever a human being required the aid and consolation of friendship, Miss Gourlay now does; and I will not suppose that a lady whom she honored with her esteem and affection, could be capable of withholding from her such aid and such consolation, in a crisis so deplorable. You are probably aware, madam, that she is on the point of being sacrificed, by a forced and hated union, to the ambitious views of her father; but you could form a very slight conception indeed of the horror with which she approaches the gulf that is before her. Could there be no means devised by which this unhappy young lady might be enabled with honor to extricate herself from the wretchedness with which she is encompassed? I beg of you, madam, to think of this; there is little time to be lost. A few days may seal her misery forever. Her health and spirits are fast sinking, and she is beginning to entertain apprehensions that that apathy which proceeds from the united influence of exhaustion and misery, may, in some unhappy moment, deprive her of the power of resistance, even for a time. Madam, I entreat that you will either write to her or see her; that you will sustain and console her as far as in you lies, and endeavor, if possible, to throw some obstruction in the way of this accursed marriage; whether through your influence with herself, or her father, matters not. I beg, madam, to apologize for the liberty I have taken in addressing you upon this painful but deeply important subject, and I appeal to yourself whether it is possible to know Miss Gourlay, and not to feel the deepest interest in everything that involves her happiness or misery.

“I have the honor to be, madam,

“Your obedient, faithful servant, and Her Sincere Friend.

“P. S.—I send this letter by my servant, as I am anxious that it should reach no hands, and be subjected to no eyes, but your own; and I refer you to Miss Gourlay herself, who will satisfy you as to the honor and purity of my motives in writing it.”

Having sealed this communication, the stranger rang for Dulcimer, who made his appearance accordingly, and received his instructions for its safe delivery.

“You must deliver this note, Dandy,” said he, “to the lady to whom Miss Gourlay and her maid drove, the morning you took the unwarrantable liberty of following them there.”

“And for all that,” replied Dandy, “it happens very luckily that I chance, for that very raison, to know now where to find her.”

“It does so, certainly,” replied his master. “Here is money for you—take a car, or whatever kind of vehicle you prefer. Give this note into her own hand, and make as little delay as you can.”

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“Do you expect an answer, sir?” replied Dandy; “and am I to wait for one, or ask for one?”

“I am not quite certain of that,” said the other; “it is altogether discretionary with her. But there can be no harm in asking the question, at all events. Any other Mrs. Norton in the way, Dandy?”

“Deuce a once, sir. I have sifted the whole city, and, barrin’ the three dozen I made out already, I can’t find hilt or hair of another. Faith, sir, she ought to be worth something when she’s got, for I may fairly say she has cost me trouble enough at any rate, the skulkin’ thief, whoever she is; and me to lose my hundre’ pounds into the bargain—bad scran to her!”

“Only find me the true Mrs. Norton,” said his master, “and the hundred pounds are yours, and for Fenton fifty. Be off, now, lose no time, and bring me her answer if she sends any.”

Dandy’s motions were all remarkably rapid, and we need not say that he allowed no grass to grow under his feet while getting over his journey. On arriving at Summerfield Cottage, he learned that Mrs. Mainwaring was in the garden; and on stating that he had a letter to deliver into her own hands, that lady desired him to be brought in, as she was then in conversation with her daughter, who had been compelled at length to fly from the brutality of her husband, and return once more to the protection of her mother’s roof. On opening the letter and looking at it, she started, and turning to her daughter said,

“You must excuse me, my dear Maria, for a few moments, but don’t forget to finish what you were telling me about this unfortunate young man, Fenton, as he, you say, calls himself, from Ballytrain.”

“Hello!” thought Dandy, “here’s a discovery. By the elevens, I’ll hould goold to silver that this is poor Fenton that disappeared so suddenly.”

“I beg your pardon, miss,” said he, addressing Mrs. Scarman as an unmarried lady, as he perceived that she was the person from whom he could receive the best intelligence on the subject; “I hope it’s no offence, miss, to ax a question?”

“None, certainly, my good man,” replied her mother, “provided it be a proper one.”

“I think, miss,” he continued, “that you were mentioning something to this lady about a young man named Fenton, from Ballytrain?”

“I was,” replied Mrs. Scarman, “certainly; but what interest can you have in him?”

“If he’s the young man I mane,” continued Dandy, “he’s not quite steady in the head sometimes.”

“If he were, he would not be in his present abode,” replied the lady.

“And pray, miss—beg pardon again,” said Dandy, with the best bow and scrape he could manage; “pray, miss, might I be so bould as to ask where that is?”

Mrs. Scarman looked at her mother. “Mamma,” said she, “but, bless me! what is the matter? you are in tears.”

“I will tell you by and by, my dear Maria,” replied her mother; “but you were going to ask me something—what was it?”

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“This man,” replied her daughter, “wishes to know the abode of the person I was speaking about.”

“Pray, what is his motive? What is your motive, my good man, for asking such a question?”

“Bekaise, ma’am,” replied Dandy, “I happen to know a gentleman who has been for some time on the lookout for him, and wishes very much to find where he is. If it be the young man I spake of, he disappeared some three or four months ago from the town of Ballytrain.”

“Well,” replied Mrs. Mainwaring, with her usual good-sense and sagacity, “as I know not what your motive for asking such a question is, I do not think this lady ought to answer it; but if the gentleman himself is anxious to know, let him see her; and upon giving satisfactory reasons for the interest he takes in him, he shall be informed of his present abode. You must rest satisfied with this. Go to the kitchen and say to the servant that I desired her to give you refreshment.”

“Thank you, ma’am,” replied Dandy; “faith, that’s a lively message, anyhow, and one that I feel great pleasure in deliverin’. This Wicklow air’s a regular cutler; it has sharpened my teeth all to pieces; and if the cook ‘ithin shows me good feedin’ I’ll show her something in the shape of good atin’. I’m a regular man of talent at my victuals, ma’am, an’ was often tould I might live to die an alderman yet, plaise God; many thanks agin, ma’am.” So saying, Dandy proceeded at a brisk pace to the kitchen.

“That communication, mamma,” said Mrs. Scarman, after Dandy had left them, “has distressed you.”

“It has, my child. Poor Miss Gourlay is in a most wretched state. This I know is, from her lover. In fact, they will be the death—absolutely and beyond a doubt—the death of this admirable and most lovely creature. But what can I do? Her father will not permit me to visit her, neither will he permit her to correspond with me, I have already written to him on the risk to which he submits his daughter in this ominous marriage, but I received neither notice of, nor reply to my letter. Oh, no; the dear girl is unquestionably doomed. I thinks however, I shall write a few lines in reply to this,” she added, “but, alas the day! they cannot speak of comfort.”

Whilst she is thus engaged, we will take, a peep at the on-goings of Dandy and Nancy Gallaher, in the kitchen, where, in pursuance of his message our bashful valet was corroborating, by very able practice, the account which he had given of the talents he had eulogized so justly.

“Well, in troth,” said he, “but, first and foremost, I haven’t the pleasure of knowin’ yer name.”

“Nancy Gallaher’s my name, then,” she replied.

“Ah,” said Dandy, suspending the fork and an immense piece of ham on the top of it at the Charybdis which he had opened to an unusual extent to receive it; “ah, ma’am, it wasn’t always that, I’ll go bail. My counthrymen knows the value of such a purty woman not to stamp some of their names upon her. Not that you have a married look, either, any more than myself; you’re too fresh for that, now that I look at you again.”

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A certain cloud, which, as Dandy could perceive, was beginning to darken her countenance, suggested the quick turn of his last observation. The countenance, however, cleared again, and she replied, “It is my name, and what is more, I never changed it. I was hard to plaise—and I am hard to plaise, and ever an’ always had a dread of gettin’ into bad company, especially when I knew that the same bad company was to last for life.”

“An ould maid, by the Rock of Cashel,” said Dandy, to himself.

“Blood alive, I wondher has she money; but here goes to thry. Ah, Nancy,” he proceeded, “you wor too hard to plaise; and now, that you have got money like myself, nothing but a steady man, and a full purse, will shoot your convanience—isn’t that pure gospel, now, you good lookin’ thief?”

Nancy’s face was now like a cloudless sky. “Well,” she replied, “maybe there’s truth in that, and maybe there’s not; but I hope you are takin’ care of yourself? That’s what I always did and ever will, plaise God. How do you like the ham?”

“Divil a so well dressed a bit o’ ham ever I ett—it melts into one’s mouth like a kiss from a purty woman. Troth, Nancy, I think I’m kissing you ever since I began to ait it.”

“Get out,” said Nancy, laughing; “troth, you’re a quare one; but you know our Wickla’ hams is famous.”

“And so is your Wicklow girls,” replied Dandy; “but for my part, I’d sooner taste their lips than the best hams that ever were ett any day.”

“Well, but,” said Nancy, “did you ever taste our bacon? bekaise, if you didn’t, lave off what you’re at, and in three skips I’ll get you a rasher and eggs that’ll make you look nine ways at once. Here, throw that by, it’s could, and I’ll get you something hot and comfortable.”

“Go on,” replied Dandy; “I hate idleness. Get the eggs and rasher you spake of, and while you’re doin’ it I’ll thry and amuse myself wid what’s before me. Industhry’s the first of virtues, Nancy, and next to that comes perseverance; I defy you in the mane time to do a rasher as well as you did this ham—hoeh—och—och. God bless me, a bit was near stickin’ in my throat. Is your wather good here? and the raison why I ax you is, that I’m the devil to plaise in wather; and on that account I seldom take it without a sup o’ spirits to dilute it, as the docthors say, for, indeed, that’s the way it agrees with me best. It’s a kind of family failin’ with us—devil a one o’ my blood ever could look a glass of mere wather in the face without blushin’.”

Dandy was now upon what they call the simplicity dodge; that is to say, he affected that character of wisdom for which certain individuals, whose knowledge of life no earthly

experience ever can improve, are so extremely anxious to get credit. Every word he uttered was accompanied by an oafish grin, so ludicrously balanced between simplicity and cunning, that Nancy, who had been half her life on the lookout for such a man, and who knew that this indecision of expression was the characteristic of the tribe with which she classed him, now saw before her the great dream of her heart realized.

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“Well, in troth,” she replied, “you are a quare man; but still it would be too bad to make you blush for no stronger raison than mere wather. So, in the name o’ goodness, here’s a tumbler of grog,” she added, filling him out one on the instant, “and as you’re so modest, you must only drink it and keep your countenance; it’ll prepare you, besides, for the rasher and eggs; and, by the same token, here’s an ould candle-box that’s here the Lord knows how long; but, faix, now it must help to do the rasher. Come then; if you are stronger than I am, show your strength, and pull it to pieces, for you see I can’t.”

It was one of those flat little candle-boxes made of deal, with which every one in the habit of burning moulds is acquainted. Dandy took it up, and whilst about to pull it to pieces, observed written on a paper label, in a large hand, something between writing and print, “Mrs. Norton, Summerfield Cottage, Wicklow.”

“What is this?” said he; “what name is this upon it? Let us see, ’Mrs. Norton, Summerfield Cottage, Wicklow!’ Who the dickens is Mrs. Norton?”

“Why, my present mistress,” replied Nancy; “Mr. Mainwaring is her second husband, and her name was Mrs. Norton before she married him.”

“Norton,” said Dandy, whose heart was going at full speed, with a hope that he had at length got into the right track, “it’s a purty name in troth. Arra, Nancy, do you know was your misthress ever in France?”

“Ay, was she,” replied Nancy. “Many a year maid to—let me see—what’s this the name is? Ay! Cullamore. Maid to the wife of Lord Cullamore. So I was tould by Alley Mahon, a young woman that was here on a visit to me.”

Dandy put the glass of grog to his mouth, and having emptied it, sprung to his feet, commenced an Irish jig through the kitchen, in a spirit so outrageously whimsical—-buoyant, mad, hugging the box all the time in his arms, that poor Nancy looked at him with a degree of alarm and then of jealousy which she could not conceal.

“In the name of all that’s wonderful,” she exclaimed, “what’s wrong—what’s the matter? What’s the value of that blackguard box that you make the mistake about in huggin’ it that way? Upon my conscience, one would think you’re in a desolate island. Remember, man alive, that you’re among flesh and blood like your own, and that you have friends, although the acquaintance isn’t very long, I grant, that wishes you betther than to see you makin’ a sweetheart of a tallow-box. What the sorra is that worth?”

“A hundred pounds, my darlin’—a hundred pounds—bravo, Dandy—well done, brave Dulcimer—wealthy Nancy. Faith, you may swear upon the frying-pan there that I’ve the cash, and sure ’tis yourself I was lookin’ out for.”

“I don’t think, then, that ever I resembled a candle-box in my life,” she replied, rather annoyed that the article in question came in for such a prodigality of his hugs, kisses, and embraces, of all shapes and characters.

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“Well, Nancy,” said he, “charming Nancy, you’re my fancy, but in the meantime I have the honor and pleasure to bid you a good day.”

“Why, where are you goin’?” asked the woman. “Won’t you wait for the rasher?”

“Keep it hot, charming Nancy, till I come back; I’m just goin’ to take a constitutional walk.” So saying, Dandy, with the candle-box under his arm, darted out of the kitchen, and without waiting to know whether there was an answer to be brought back or not, mounted his jarvey, and desiring the man to drive as if the devil and all his imps were at their heels, set off at full speed for the city.

“Bad luck to you for a scamp,” exclaimed the indignant cook, shouting after him; “is that the way you trate a decent woman after gettin’ your skinful of the best? Wait till you put your nose in this kitchen again, an’ it’a different fare you’ll get.”

On reaching his master’s hotel, Dandy went upstairs, where he found him preparing to go out. He had just sealed a note, and leaning himself back on the chair, looked at his servant with a good deal of surprise, in consequence of the singularity of Ms manner. Dandy, on the other hand, took the candle-box from under his arm, and putting it flat on the table, with the label downwards, placed his two hands upon it, and looked the other right in the face; after which he closed one eye, and gave him a very knowing wink.

“What do you mean, you scoundrel, by this impudence?” exclaimed his master, although at the same time he could not avoid laughing; for, in truth, he felt a kind of presentiment, grounded upon Dandy’s very assurance, that he was the bearer of some agreeable intelligence. “What do you mean, sirra? You’re drunk, I think.”

“Hi tell you what, sir,” replied Dandy, “from this day out, upon my soul, I’ll patronize you like a man as I am; that is to say, provided you continue to deserve it.”

“Come, sirra, you’re at your buffoonery again, or else you’re drunk, as I said. Did the lady send any reply?”

“Have you any cash to spare?” replied Dandy. “I want to invest a thrifle in the funds.”

“What can this impudence mean, sirra?” asked the other, sadly puzzled to understand his conduct. “Why do you not reply to me? Did the lady send an answer?”

“Most fortunate of all masthers,” replied Dandy, “in havin’ such a servant; the lady did send an answer.”

“And where is it, sirra?”

“There it is!” replied the other, shoving the candle-box triumphantly over to him, The stranger looked steadily at him, and was beginning to lose his temper, for he took it now for granted that his servant was drunk.

“I shall dismiss you instantly, sirra,” he said, “if you don’t come to your senses.”

“I suppose so,” replied the other, still maintaining his cool, unabashed effrontery. “I dare say you will, just after I’ve made a man of you—changed you from nothing to something, or, rather, from nobody—for devil a much more you were up to the present time yet—to somebody. In the meantime, read the lady’s answer, if you plaise.”

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“Where is it, you impudent knave? I see no note—no answer.”

“Troth, sir, I am afeared many a time you were ornamented with the dunce’s cap in your school-days, and well, I’ll be bound, you became it. Don’t I say the answer’s before you, there?”

“There is nothing here, you scoundrel, but a deal box.”

“Eight, sir; and a deal of intelligence can it give you, if you have the sense to find it out. Now, listen, sir. So long as you live, ever and always examine both sides of every subject that comes before you, even if it was an ould deal box.”

His master took the hint, and instantly turning the box, read to his astonishment, Mrs. Norton, Summerfield pottage, Wicklow, and then looked at Dandy for an explanation. The latter nodded with his usual easy confidence, and proceeded, “It’s all right, sir—she was in France—own maid to Lady Cullamore—came home and got married—first to a Mr. Norton, and next to a person named Mainwarin’: and there she is, the true Mrs. Norton, safe and sound for you, in Summerfield Cottage, under the name of Mrs. Mainwarin’.”

“Dandy,” said his master, starting to his feet, “I forgive you a thousand times. Throw that letter in the post-office. You shall have the money, Dandy, more, perhaps, than I promised, provided this is the lady; but I cannot doubt it. I am now going to Mr. Birney; but, stay, let us be certain. How did you become acquainted with these circumstances?”

Dandy gave him his authority; after which his master put on his hat, and was about proceeding out, when the former exclaimed, “Hello-sir, where are you goin’?”

“To see Birney, I have already told you.”

“Come, come,” replied his man, “take your time—be steady, now—be cool—and listen to what your friend has to say to you.”

“Don’t trifle with me now, Dandy; I really can’t bear it.”

“Faith, but you must, though. There’s one act I patronized you in; now, how do you know, as I’m actin’ the great man, but I can pathronize you in another?”

“How is that? For heaven’s sake, don’t trifle with me; every day, every hour, every moment, is precious, and may involve the happiness of—”

“I see, sir,” replied this extraordinary valet, with an intelligent nod, “but, still, fair and aisy goes far in a day. There’s no danger of her, you know—don’t be unaisy. Fenton, sir—-ehem—Fenton, I say—Fenton and fifty I say.”

“Fenton and a hundred, Dandy, if there’s an available trace of him.”

“I don’t know what you call an available trace,” replied Dandy, “but I can send you to a lady who knows where he is, and where you can find him.”

The stranger returned from the door, and sitting down again covered his face with his hands, as if to collect himself; at length he said, “This is most extraordinary; tell me all about it.”

Dandy related that with which the reader is already acquainted, and did so with such an air of comic gravity and pompous superiority, that his master, now in the best possible spirits, was exceedingly amused.

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“Well, Dandy,” said he, “if your information respecting Fenton prove correct, reckon upon another hundred, instead of the fifty I mentioned. I suppose I may go now?” he added, smiling.

Dandy, still maintaining his gravity, waved his hand with an air of suitable authority, intimating that the other had permission to depart. On going out, however, he said, “I beg your pardon, sir, but while you’re abroad, I’d take it as a favor if you’d find out the state o’ the funds. Of course, I’ll be investin’; and a man may as well do things with his eyes open—may as well examine both sides o’ the candle-box, you know. You may go, sir.”

“Well,” thought the stranger to himself, as he literally went on his way rejoicing toward Birney’s office, “no man in this life should ever yield to despair. Here was I this morning encompassed by doubt and darkness, and I may almost say by despair itself. Yet see how easily and naturally the hand of Providence, for it is nothing less, has changed the whole tenor of my existence. Everything is beginning not only to brighten, but to present an appearance of order, by which we shall, I trust, be enabled to guide ourselves through the maze of difficulty that lies, or that did lie, at all events, before us. Alas, if the wretched suicide, who can see nothing but cause of despondency about him and before him, were to reflect upon the possibility of what only one day might evolve from the ongoing circumstances of life, how many would that wholesome reflection prevent from the awful crime of impatience at the wisdom of God, and a want of confidence in his government! I remember the case of an unhappy young man who plunged into a future life, as it were, to-day, who, had he maintained his part until the next, would have found himself master of thousands. No; I shall never despair. I will in this, as in every other virtue, imitate my beloved Lucy, who said, that to whatever depths of wretchedness life might bring her, she would never yield to that.”

“Good news, Birney!” he exclaimed, on entering that gentleman’s office; “charming intelligence! Both are found at last.”

“Explain yourself, my dear sir,” replied the other; “how is it? What has happened? Both of whom?”

“Mrs. Norton and Fenton.”

He then explained the circumstances as they had been explained to himself by Dandy; and Birney seemed gratified certainly, but not so much as the stranger thought he ought to have been.

“How is this?” he asked; “this discovery, this double discovery, does not seem to give you the satisfaction which I had expected, it would?”

“Perhaps not,” replied the steady man of law, “but I am highly gratified, notwithstanding, provided everything you tell me turns out to be correct. But even then, I apprehend that the testimony of this Mrs. Norton, unsupported as it is by documentary evidence, will not be: sufficient for our purpose. It will require corroboration, and how are we to corroborate it?”

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“If it will enable us to prevent the marriage,” replied the other, “I am satisfied.”

“That is very generous and disinterested, I grant,” said Birney, “and what few are capable of; but still there are forms of law and principles of common justice to be observed and complied with; and these, at present, stand in our way for want of the documentary evidence I speak of.”

“What then ought our next step to be?—but I suppose I can anticipate you—to see Mrs. Norton.”

“Of course, to see Mrs. Norton; and I propose that we start immediately. There is no time to be lost about it. I shall get on my boots, and change my dress a little, and, with this man of yours to guide us, we shall be on the way to Summerfield Cottage in half-an-hour.”

“Should I not communicate this intelligence to Lady Gourlay?” said the stranger. “It will restore her to life; and surely the removal of only one day’s sorrow such as lies at her heart becomes a duty.”

“But suppose our information should prove incorrect, into what a dreadful relapse would you plunge her then!”

“On, very true—very true, indeed: that is well thought of; let us first see that there is no mistake, and afterwards we can proceed with confidence.”

Poor Lucy, unconscious that the events we have related had taken place, was passing an existence of which every day brought round to her nothing but anguish and misery. She now not only refused to see her brother on any occasion, or under any circumstances, but requested an interview with her father, in order to make him acquainted with the abominable principles, by the inculcation of which, as a rule of life and conduct, he had attempted to corrupt her. Her father having heard this portion of her complaint, diminished in its heinousness as it necessarily was by her natural modesty, appeared very angry, and swore roundly at the young scapegrace, as he called him.

“But the truth is, Lucy,” he added, “that however wrong and wicked he may have been, and was, yet we cannot be over severe on him. He has had no opportunities of knowing better, and of course he will mend. I intend to lecture him severely for uttering such principles to you; but, on the other hand, I know him to be a shrewd, keen young fellow, who promises well, notwithstanding. In truth, I like him, scamp as he is; and I believe that whatever is bad in him—”

“Whatever is bad in him! Why, papa, there is nothing good in him.”

“Tut, Lucy; I believe, I say, that whatever is bad in him he has picked up from the kind of society he mixed with.”

“Papa,” she replied, “it grieves me to hear you, sir, palliate the conduct of such a person—to become almost the apologist of principles so utterly fiendish. You know that I am not and never have been in the habit of using ungenerous language against the absent. So far as I am concerned, he has violated all the claims of a brother—has foregone all title to

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a sister's love; but that is not all—I believe him to be so essentially corrupt and vicious in heart and soul, so thoroughly and blackly diabolical in his principles—moral I cannot call them—that I would stake my existence he is some base and plotting impostor, in whose veins there flows not one single drop of my pure-hearted mother's blood. I therefore warn you, sir, that he is an impostor, with, perhaps, a dishonorable title to your name, but none at all to your property."

"Nonsense, you foolish girl. Is he not my image?"

"I admit he resembles you, sir, very much, and I do not deny that he may be"—she paused, and alternately became pale and red by turns—"what I mean to say, sir, is what I have already said, that he is not my mother's son, and that although he may be privileged to bear your name, he has no claim on either your property or title. Does it not strike you, sir, that it might be to make way for this person that my legitimate brother was removed long ago? And I have also heard yourself say frequently, while talking of my brother, how extremely like mamma and me he was."

"There is no doubt he was," replied her father, somewhat struck by the force of her observations; "and I was myself a good deal surprised at the change which must have taken place in him since his childhood. However, you know he accounted for this himself very fairly and very naturally."

"Very ingeniously, at least," she replied; "with more of ingenuity, I fear, than truth. Now, sir, hear me further. You are aware that I never liked those Corbets, who have been always so deeply, and, excuse me, sir, so mysteriously in your confidence."

"Yes, Lucy, I know you never did; but that is a prejudice you inherited from your mother."

"I appeal to your own conscience, sir, whether mamma's prejudice against them was not just and well founded. Yet it was not so much prejudice as the antipathy which good bears to evil, honesty to fraud, and truth to darkness, dissimulation, and falsehood. I entreat you, then, to investigate this matter, papa; for as sure as I have life, so certainly was my dear brother removed, in order, at the proper time, to make way for this impostor. You know not, sir, but there may be a base and inhuman murder involved in this matter—nay, a double murder—that of my cousin, too; yes, and the worst of all murders, the murder of the innocent and defenceless. As a man, as a magistrate, but, above all, a thousand times, as a father—as the father and uncle of the very two children that have disappeared, it becomes your duty to examine into this dark business thoroughly."

"I have no reason to suspect the Corbets, Lucy. I have ever found them faithful to me and to my interests."

“I know, sir, you have ever found them obsequious and slavish and ready to abet you in many acts which I regret that you ever committed. There is the case of that unfortunate man, Trailcudgel, and many similar ones; were they not as active and cheerful! in bearing out your very harsh orders against him and others of your tenantry, as if they I had been advancing the cause of humanity?”

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“Say the cause of justice, if you please, Lucy—the rights of a landlord.”

“But, papa, if the unfortunate tenantry by whose toil and labor we live in affluence and; luxury do not find a friend in their landlord, who is, by his relation to them, their natural protector, to whom else in the wide world can they turn? This, however, is not the subject on which I wish to speak. I do believe that Thomas Corbet is deep, designing, and vindictive. He was always a close, dark man, without either cheerfulness or candor. Beware, therefore, of him and of his family. Nay, he has a capacity for being dangerous; for it strikes me, sir, that his intellect is as far above his position in life as his principles are beneath it.”

There was much in what Lucy said that forced itself upon her father’s reflection, much that startled him, and a good deal that gave him pain. He paused for a considerable time after she had ceased to speak, and said,

“I will think of these matters, Lucy. I will probably do more; and if I find that they have played me foul by imposing upon me—” He paused abruptly, and seemed embarrassed, the truth being that he knew and felt how completely he was in their power.

“Now, papa,” said Lucy, “after having heard my opinion of this young man—after the wanton outrage upon all female delicacy and virtue of which he has been guilty, I trust you will not in future attempt to obtrude him upon me. I will not see him, speak to him, nor acknowledge him; and such, let what may happen, is my final determination.”

“So far, Lucy, I will accede to your wishes. I shall take care that he troubles you with no more wicked exhortations.”

“Thank you, dear papa; this is kind, and I feel it so.”

“Now,” said her father, after she had withdrawn, “how am I to act? It is not impossible but there may be much truth in what she says. I remember, however, the death of the only son that could possibly be imposed on me in the sense alluded to her. He surely does not live; or if he does, the far-sighted sagacity which made the account of his death a fraud upon my credulity, for such selfish and treacherous purposes, is worthy of being concocted in the deepest pit of hell. Yet that some one of them has betrayed me, is evident from the charges brought against me by this stranger to whom Lucy is so devotedly attached, and which charges Thomas Corbet could not clear up. If one of these base but dexterous villains, or if the whole gang were to outwit me, positively I could almost blow my very brains out, for allowing myself, after all, to become their dupe and plaything. I will think of it, however. And again, there is the likeness; there does seem to be a difficulty in that; for, beyond all doubt, my legitimate child, up until his disappearance, did not bear in his countenance a single feature of mine but bore a strong resemblance to his mother; whereas this Tom is my born image! Yet I like him.

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He has all my points; knows the world, and despises it as much as I do. He did not know Lucy, however, or he would have kept his worldly opinions to himself. It is true he said very little but what we see about us as the regulating principles of life every day; but Lucy, on the other hand, is no every-day girl, and will not receive such doctrines, and I am glad of it They may do very well in a son; but somehow one shudders at the contemplation of their existence in the heart and principles of a daughter. Unfortunately, however I am in the power of these Corbets, and I feel that exposure at this period, the crisis of my daughter's marriage, would not only frustrate my ambition for her, but occasion my very death, I fear. I know not how it is, but I think if I were to live my life over again, I would try a different course."

CHAPTER XXXVIII. An Unpleasant Disclosure to Dunroe

—Anthony Corbet gives Important Documents to the Stranger—Norton catches a Tartar.

The next morning the stranger was agreeably surprised by seeing the round, rosy, and benevolent features of Father M'Mahon, as he presented himself at his breakfast table. Their meeting was cordial and friendly, with the exception of a slight appearance of embarrassment that was evident in the manner of the priest.

"The last time you were in town," said the former, "I was sorry to observe thai you seemed rather careworn and depressed; but I think you look better now, and a good deal more cheerful."

"And I think I have a good right," replied the priest; "and I think no man ought to know the, cause of it better than yourself. I charge it, sir, with an act of benevolence to the poor of my parish, through their humble pastor; for which you stand.—I beg your pardon —sit there, a guilty man."

"How is that?" asked the other, smiling.

"By means of an anonymous letter that contained a hundred pound note, sir."

"Well," said the stranger, "there is no use in telling a falsehood about it. The truth is, I was aware of the extent to which you involved yourself, in order to relieve many of the small farmers and other struggling persons of good repute in your parish, and I thought it too bad that you should suffer distress yourself, who had so frequently relieved it in others."

“God bless you, my friend,” replied the priest; “for I will call you so. I wish every man possessed of wealth was guided by your principles. Freney the Robber has a new saddle and bridle, anyhow; and I came up to town to pay old Anthony Corbet a sum I borrowed from him the last time I was here?”

“Oh, have you seen that cautious and disagreeable old man? We could make nothing of him, although I feel quite certain that he knows everything connected with the disappearance of Lady Gourlay’s son.”

“I have no doubt of it myself,” replied the priest; “and I now find, that what neither religion, nor justice, nor humanity could influence him to do, superstition is likely to effect. He has had a drame, he says, in which his son James that was in Lady Gourlay’s service has appeared to him, and threatens that unless he renders her justice, he has but a poor chance in the other world.”

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“That is not at all unnatural,” said the stranger; “the man, though utterly without religion, was nevertheless both hesitating and timid; precisely the character to do a just act from a wrong motive.”

“Be that as it may,” continued the priest, “I have a message from him to you.”

“To me!” replied the other. “I am much obliged to him, but it is now too late. We have ascertained where Lady Gourlay’s son is, without any assistance from him; and in the course of this very day we shall furnish ourselves with proper authority for claiming and producing him.”

“I am delighted to hear it,” said the priest. “God be praised that the heart of that charitable and Christian woman will be relieved at last, and made happy; but still I say, see old Anthony. He is as deep as a draw-well, and as close as an oyster. See him, sir. Take my advice, now that the drame has frightened him, and call upon the old sinner. He may serve you in more ways than you know.”

“Well, as you advise me to do so, I shall; but I do not relish the old fellow at all.”

“Nobody does, nor ever did. He and all his family lived as if every one of them carried a little world of their own within them. Maybe they do; and God forgive me for saying it, but I don’t think if its secrets were known, that it would be found a very pleasant world. May the Lord change them, and turn their hearts!”

After some further chat, the priest took his departure, but promised to see his friend from time to time, before he should leave town.

The stranger felt that the priest’s advice to see old Corbet again was a good one. The interview could do no harm, and might be productive of some good, provided he could be prevailed on to speak out. He accordingly directed his steps once more to Constitution Hill, where he found the old man at his usual post behind the counter.

“Well, Corbet,” said he, “alive still?”

“Alive still, sir,” he replied; “but can’t be so always; the best of us must go.”

“Very true, Corbet, if we could think of it as we ought; but, somehow, it happens that most people live in this world as if they were never to die.”

“That’s too true, sir—unfortunately too true, God help us!”

“Corbet,” proceeded the stranger, “nothing can convince me that you don’t know something about—”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the old man; “we had betther go into the next room. Here, Polly,” he shouted to his wife, who was inside, “will you come and stand the shop awhile?”

“To be sure I will,” replied the old woman, making her appearance. “How do you do, sir,” she added, addressing the stranger; “I am glad to see you looking so well.”

“Thank you, madam,” replied the stranger: “I can return the compliment, as they say.”

“Keep the shop, Polly,” said the old man sharply, “and don’t make the same mistake you made awhile ago—give away a stone o’ meal for half a stone. No wondher for us to be poor at sich a rate of doin’ things as that. Walk in, if you plaise, sir.”

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They accordingly entered the room, and the stranger, after they had taken seats, resumed,

“I was going to say, Corbet, that nothing can convince me that you don’t know more about the disappearance of Lady Gourlay’s heir than you are disposed to acknowledge.”

The hard, severe, disagreeable expression returned once more to his features, as he replied,

“Troth, sir, it appears you will believe so, whether or not. But now, sir, in case I did, what would you say? I’m talkin’ for supposition’s sake, mind. Wouldn’t a man desarve something that could give you information on the subject?”

“This avaricious old man,” thought the stranger, pausing as if to consider the proposition, “was holding us out all along, in order to make the most of his information. The information, however, is already in our possession, and he comes too late. So far I am gratified that we are in a position to punish him by disappointing his avarice.”

“We would, Corbet, if the information were necessary, but at present it is not; we don’t require it.”

Corbet started, and his keen old eyes gleamed with an expression between terror and incredulity.

“Why,” said he, “you don’t require it! Are you sure of that?”

“Perfectly so. Some time ago we would have rewarded you liberally, had you made any available disclosure to us; but now it is too late. The information we had been seeking for so anxiously, accidentally came to us from another quarter. You see now, Corbet, how you have overshot the mark, and punished yourself. Had you been influenced by a principle of common justice, you would have been entitled to expect and receive a most ample compensation; a compensation beyond your hopes, probably beyond your very wishes, and certainly beyond your wants. As matters stand, however, I tell you now that I would not give you sixpence for any information you could communicate.”

Anthony gave him a derisive look, and pursed up his thin miser-like lips into a grin of most sinister triumph.

“Wouldn’t you, indeed?” said he. “Are you quite sure of what you say?”

“Quite certain of it.”

“Well, now, how positive some people is. You have found him out, then?” he asked, with a shrewd look. “You have found him, and you don’t require any information from me.”

“Whether we have found him or not,” replied the other, “is a question which I will not answer; but that we require no information from you, is fact. While it was a marketable commodity, you refused to dispose of it; but, now, we have got the supply elsewhere.”

“Well, sir,” said Anthony, “all I can say is, that I’m very glad to hear it; and it’s no harm, surely, to wish you joy of it.”

The same mocking sneer which accompanied this observation was perfectly vexatious; it seemed to say, “So you think, but you may be mistaken, Take care that I haven’t you in my power still.”

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“Why do you look in that disagreeable way, Corbet? I never saw a man whose face can express one thing, and his words another, so effectually as yours, when you wish.”

“You mane to say, sir,” he returned, with a true sardonic smile, “that my face isn’t an obedient face; but sure I can’t help that. This is the face that God has given me, and I must be content with it, such as it is.”

“I was told this morning by Father M’Mahon,” replied the other, anxious to get rid of him as soon as he could, “that you had expressed a wish to see me.”

“I believe I did say something to that effect; but then it appears you know everything yourself, and don’t want my assistance.”

“Any assistance we may at a future time require at your hands we shall be able to extort from you through the laws of the land and of justice; and if it appears that you have been an accomplice or agent in such a deep and diabolical crime, neither power, nor wealth, nor cunning, shall be able to protect you from the utmost rigor of the law. You had neither mercy nor compassion on the widow or her child; and the probability is, that, old as you are, you will be made to taste the deepest disgrace, and the heaviest punishment that can be annexed to the crime you have committed.”

A singular change came over the features of the old man. Paleness in age, especially when conscience bears its secret but powerful testimony against the individual thus charged home as Corbet was, sometimes gives an awful, almost an appalling expression to the countenance. The stranger, who knew that the man he addressed, though cunning, evasive, and unscrupulous, was, nevertheless, hesitating and timid, saw by his looks that he had produced an unusual impression; and he resolved to follow it up, rather to gratify the momentary amusement which he felt at his alarm, than from any other motive. In fact, the appearance of Corbet was extraordinary. A death-like color, which his advanced state of life renders it impossible to describe, took possession of him; his eyes lost the bitter expression so peculiar to them—his firm thin lips relaxed and spread, and the corners of his mouth dropped so lugubriously, that the stranger, although he felt that the example of cowering guilt then before him was a solemn one, could scarcely refrain from smiling at what he witnessed.

“How far now do you think, sir,” asked Corbet, “could punishment in such a case go? Mind, I’m putting myself out of the question; I’m safe, any how, and that’s one comfort.”

“For a reply to that question,” returned the other, “you will have to go to the judge and the hangman. There was a time when you might have asked it, and answered it too, with safety to yourself; but now that time has gone by, and I fear very much that your day of grace is past.”

“That’s very like what James tould me in my dhrame,” said the old man, in a soliloquy, dictated by his alarm. “Well, sir,” he replied, “maybe, afther all—but didn’t you say awhile ago that you wouldn’t give sixpence for any information I could furnish you with?”

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“I did, and I do.”

A gleam of his former character returned to his eye, as, gathering up his lips again, ’he said, “I could soon show you to the contrary.”

“Yes; but you will not do so. I see clearly that you are infatuated. It appears to me that there is an evil fate hanging over you, like some hungry raven, following and watching the motions of a sick old horse that is reduced to skin and bone. You’re doomed, I think.”

“Well, now,” replied Anthony, the corners of whose mouth dropped again at this startling and not inappropriate comparison, “to show how much you are mistaken, let me ask how your business with Lord Cullamore gets on? I believe there’s a screw loose there? —eh? I mean on your side—eh?”

It wasn’t in his nature to restrain the sinister expression which a consciousness of his advantage over the stranger caused him to feel in his turn. The grin, besides, which he gave him, after he had thrown out these hints, had something of reprisal in it; and, to tell the truth, the stranger’s face now became as blank and lugubrious as Anthony’s had been before.

“If I don’t mistake,” he continued—for the other was too much astonished to reply, “if I don’t mistake, there’s a couple o’ bits of paper that would stand your friend, if you could lay your claws upon them.”

“Whether they could, or could not, is no affair of yours, my good sir,” replied the stranger, rising and getting his hat; “and whether I have changed my mind on the subject you hint at is a matter known only to myself. I wish you good-day.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Anthony, probably satisfied with the fact of his having turned the tables and had his revenge on the stranger; “I beg your pardon, sir. Let us part friends, at all events. Set in case now—”

“I will listen to none of those half sentences. You cannot possibly speak out, I see; in fact, you are tongue-tied by the cord of your evil fate. Upon no subject can you speak until it is too late.”

“God direct me now!” exclaimed Corbet to himself. “I think the time is come; for, unless I relieve my conscience before I’m called—James he tould me the other night—Well, sir,” he proceeded, “listen. If I befriend you, will you promise to stand my friend, if I should get into any difficulty?”

“I will enter into no compromise of the kind with you,” said the other. “If you are about to do an act of justice, you ought to do it without conditions; and if you possess any document that is of value to another, and of none to yourself, and yet will not restore it

to the proper owner, you are grossly dishonest, and capable of all that will soon, I trust, be established against you and your employers. Good-by, Mr. Corbet."

"Aisy, sir, aisy," said the tenacious and vacillating old knave. "Aisy, I say. You will be generous, at any rate; for you know their value. How much will you give me for the papers I spake of—that is, in case I could get them for you?"

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“Not sixpence. A friend has just returned from France, who—no,” thought he, “I will not state a falsehood—Good-day, Mr. Corbet; I am wasting my time.”

“One minute, sir—one minute. It may be worth your while.”

“Yes; but you trifle with me by these reluctant and penurious communications.”

Anthony had laid down his head upon his hands, whose backs were supported by the table; and in this position, as’ if he were working himself into an act of virtue sufficient for a last effort, he remained until the stranger began to wonder what he meant. At length he arose, went up stairs as on a former occasion, but with less—and not much less—-hesitation and delay; he returned and handed him the identical documents of which M’Bride had deprived him. “Now,” said he, “listen to me. You know the value of these; but that isn’t what I want to spake to you about.—Whatever you do about the widow’s son, don’t do it without lettin’ me know, and consultin’ me—ay, and bein’ guided by me; for although you all think yourselves right, you may find, yourselves in the wrong box still. Think of this now, and it will be better for you. I’m not sure, but I’ll open all your eyes yet, and that before long; for I believe the time has come at last. Now that I’ve given you these papers,” (extracted, by the way, from M’Bride’s pockets during his drunkenness, by Ginty Cooper, on the night she dogged him,) “you must promise me one thing.”

“What is that?”

“I suppose you know where this boy is? Now, when you’re goin’ to find him, will you bring me with you?”

“Why so?”

“It’ll plaise an ould man, at any rate; but there may be other raisons. Will, you do this?”

The stranger, concluding that the wisest tiring was to give him his way, promised accordingly, and. the old man seemed somewhat satisfied.

“One man, at all events, I’ll punish, if I should sacrifice every child I have in doin’ so; and it is in order that he may be punished to the heart—to the marrow—to the soul within him—that I got these papers, and gave them to you.”

“Corbet,” said the stranger, “be the cause of your revenge what it may, its principle in your heart is awful. You are, in fact, a dreadful old man. May I ask how you came by these papers?”

“You may,” he replied; “but I won’t answer you. At a future time it is likely I will—but not now. It’s enough for you to have them.”

On his way home the stranger called at Birney's office, where he produced the documents; and it was arranged that the latter gentleman should wait upon Lord Cullamore the next day, in order to lay before him the proofs on which they were about to proceed; for, as they were now complete, they thought it more respectful to that venerable old nobleman to appeal privately to his own good sense, whether it would not be more for the honor of his family to give him an opportunity of yielding quietly, and without public scandal, than to drag the matter before the world in a court of justice. It was so arranged; and a suitable warrant having been procured to enable them to produce the body of the unfortunate Fenton, the proceedings of that day closed very much to their satisfaction.

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The next day, between two and three o'clock, a visitor, on particular business, was announced to Lord Cullamore; and on being desired to walk up, our friend Birney made his bow to his lordship. Having been desired to take a seat, he sat down, and his lordship, who appeared to be very feeble, looked inquiringly at him, intimating thereby that he waited to know the object of his visit.

"My lord," said the attorney, "in the whole course of my professional life, a duty so painful as this has never devolved upon me. I come supported with proofs sufficient to satisfy you that your title and property cannot descend to your son, Lord Dunroe."

"I have no other son, sir," said his lordship, reprovingly.

"I do not mean to insinuate that you have, my lord. I only assert that he who is supposed to be the present heir, is not really so at all."

"Upon what proofs, sir, do you ground that assertion?"

"Upon proofs, my lord, the most valid and irrefragable; proofs that cannot be questioned, even for a moment; and, least of all, by your lordship, who are best acquainted with their force and authenticity."

"Have you got them about you?"

"I have got copies of the documentary proofs, my lord, and I shall now place them before you."

"Yes; have the goodness to let me see them."

Birney immediately handed him the documents, and mentioned the facts of which they were the proofs. In fact, only one of them was absolutely necessary, and that was simply the record of a death duly and regularly attested.

The old man seemed struck with dismay; for, until this moment he had not been clearly in possession of the facts which were now brought against him, as they were stated, and made plain as to their results, by Mr. Birney.

"I do not know much of law," he said, "but enough, I think, to satisfy me, that unless you have other and stronger proofs than this, you cannot succeed in disinheriting my son. I have seen the originals of those before, but I had forgotten some facts and dates connected with them at the time."

"We have the collateral proof you speak of, my lord, and can produce personal evidence to corroborate those which I have shown you."

"May I ask who that evidence is?"

“A Mrs. Mainwaring, my lord—formerly Norton—who had been maid to your first wife while she resided privately in Prance—was a witness to her death, and had it duly registered.”

“But even granting this, I think you will be called on to prove the intention on my part: that which a man does in ignorance cannot, and ought not to be called a violation of the law.”

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“But the law in this case will deal only with facts, my lord; and your lordship must now see and feel that we are in a capacity to prove them. And before I proceed further, my lord, I beg to say, that I am instructed to appeal to your lordship’s good sense, and to that consideration for the feelings of your family, by which, I trust, you will be influenced, whether, satisfied as you must be of your position, it would not be more judicious on your own part to concede our just rights, seeing, as you clearly may, that they are incontrovertible, than to force us to bring the matter before the public; a circumstance which, so far as you are yourself concerned, must be inexpressibly painful, and as regards other members of your family, perfectly deplorable and distressing. We wish, my lord, to spare the innocent as much as we can.”

“I am innocent, sir; your proofs only establish an act done by me in ignorance.”

“We grant that, my lord, at once, and without for a moment charging you with any dishonorable motive; but what we insist on—can prove—and your lordship cannot deny—is, that the act you speak of was done, and done at a certain period. I do beseech you, my lord, to think well and seriously of my proposal, for it is made in a kind and respectful spirit.”

“I thank you, sir,” replied his lordship, “and those who instructed you to regard my feelings; but this you must admit is a case of too much importance, in which interests of too much consequence are involved, for me to act in it without the advice and opinion of my lawyers.”

“You are perfectly right, my lord; I expected no less; and if your lordship will refer me to them, I shall have no hesitation in laying the grounds of our proceedings before them, and the proofs by which they will be sustained.”

This was assented to on the part of Lord Cullamore, and it is only necessary to say, that, in a few days subsequently, his lawyers, upon sifting and thoroughly examining everything that came before them, gave it as their opinion—and both were men of the very highest standing—that his lordship had no defence whatsoever, and that his wisest plan was to yield without allowing the matter to go to a public trial, the details of which must so deeply affect the honor of his children.

This communication, signed in the form of a regular opinion by both these eminent gentlemen, was received by his lordship on the fourth day after Birney’s visit to him on the subject.

About a quarter of an hour after he had perused it, his lordship’s bell rang, and Morty O’Flaherty, his man, entered.

“Morty,” said his lordship, “desire Lord Dunroe to come to me; I wish to speak with him. Is he within?”

“He has just come in, my lord. Yes, my lord, I’ll send him up.”

His lordship tapped the arms of his easy chair with the lingers of both hands, and looked unconsciously upon his servant, with a face full of the deepest sorrow and anguish.

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The look was not lost upon Morty, who said, as he went down stairs, “There’s something beyond the common on my lord’s mind this day. He was bad enough before; but now he looks like a man that has got the very heart within him broken.”

He met Dunroe in the hall, and delivered his message, but added,

“I think his lordship has had disagreeable tidin’s of some kind to-day, my lord. I never saw him look so ill. To tell you the truth, my lord, I think he has death in his face.”

“Well, Morty,” replied his lordship, adjusting his collar, “you know we must all die. I cannot guess what unpleasant tidings he may have heard to-day; but I know that I have heard little else from him this many a day. Tell Mr. Norton to see about the bills I gave him, and have them cashed as soon as possible. If not, curse me, I’ll shy a decanter at his head after dinner.”

He then went rather reluctantly up stairs, and presented himself, in no very amiable temper, to his father.

Having taken a seat, he looked at the old man, and found his eyes fixed upon him with an expression of reproof, and at the same time the most profound affliction.

“Dunroe,” said the earl, “you did not call to inquire after me for the last two or three days.”

“I did not call, my lord, certainly; but, nevertheless, I inquired. The fact is, I feel disinclined to be lectured at such a rate every time I come to see you. As for Norton, I have already told you, with every respect for your opinion and authority, that you have taken an unfounded prejudice against him, and that I neither can nor will get rid of him, as you call it. You surely would not expect me to act dishonorably, my lord.”

“I did not send for you now to speak about him, John. I have a much more serious, and a much more distressing communication to make to you.”

The son opened his eyes, and stared at him.

“It may easily be so, my lord; but what is it?”

“Unfortunate young man, it is this—You are cut off from the inheritance of my property and title.”

“Sickness, my lord, and peevishness, have impaired your intellects, I think. What kind of language is this to hold to me, your son and heir?”

“My son, John, but not my heir.”

“Don’t you know, my lord, that what you say is impossible. If I am your son, I am, of course, your heir.”

“No, John, for the simplest reason in the world. At present you must rest contented with the fact which I announce to you—for fact it is. I have not now strength enough to detail it; but I shall when I feel that I am equal to it. Indeed, I knew it not myself, with perfect certainty, until to-day. Some vague suspicion I had of late, but the proofs that were laid before me, and laid before me in a generous and forbearing spirit, have now satisfied me that you have no claim, as I said, to either title or property.”

“Why, as I’ve life, my lord, this is mere dotage. A foul conspiracy has been got up, and you yield to it without a struggle. Do you think, whatever you may do, that I will bear this tamely? I am aware that a conspiracy has been getting up, and I also have had my suspicions.”

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“It is out of my power, John, to secure you the inheritance.”

“This is stark folly, my lord—confounded nonsense—if you will pardon me. Out of your power! Made silly and weak in mind by illness, your opinion is not now worth much upon any subject. It is not your fault, I admit; but, upon my soul, I really have serious doubts whether you are in a sufficiently sane state of mind to manage your own affairs.”

“Undutiful young man,” replied his father, with bitterness, “if that were a test of insanity, you yourself ought to have been this many a day in a strait waistcoat. I know it is natural that you should feel this blow deeply; but it is neither natural nor dutiful that you should address your parent in such unpardonable language.”

“If what that parent says be true, my lord, he has himself, by his past vices, disinherited his son.”

“No, sir,” replied the old man, whilst a languid flush of indignation was visible on his face, “he has not done so by his vices; but you, sir, have morally disinherited yourself by your vices, by your general profligacy, by your indefensible extravagance, and by your egregious folly, A man placed in the position which you would have occupied, ought to be a light and an example to society, and. not what you have been, a reproach to your family, and a disgrace to your class. The virtues of a man of rank should be in proportion to his station; but you have distinguished yourself only by holding up to the world the debasing example of a dishonorable and licentious life. What virtue can you plead to establish a just claim to a position which demands a mind capable of understanding the weighty responsibilities that are annexed to it, and a heart possessed of such enlightened principles as may enable him to discharge them in a spirit that will constitute him, what he ought to be, a high example and a generous benefactor to his kind? Not one: but if selfishness, contempt for all the moral obligations of life, a licentious spirit that mocks at religion and looks upon human virtue as an unreality and a jest—if these were to give you a claim to the possession of rank and property, I know of no one more admirably qualified to enjoy them. Dunroe, I am not now far from the grave; but listen, and pay attention to my voice, for it is a warning voice.”

“It was always so,” replied his son, with sulky indignation; “it was never anything else; a mere passing bell that uttered nothing but advices, lectures, coffins, and cross-bones.”

“It uttered only truth then, Dunroe, as you feel now to your cost. Change your immoral habits. I will not bid you repent; because you would only sneer at the word; but do endeavor to feel regret for the kind of life you have led, and give up your evil propensities; cease to be a heartless spendthrift; remember that you are a man: remember that you have important duties to perform; believe that there are such things as religion, and virtue, and honor in the world; believe that there is a God a wise Providence, who governs that world upon principles of eternal truth and justice, and to whom you must account, in another life, for your conduct in this.”

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“Well, really, my lord,” replied Dunroe, “as it appears that the lecture is all you have to bestow upon me, I am quite willing that you should disinherit me of that also. I waive every claim to it. But so do I not to my just rights. We shall see what a court of law can do.”

“You may try it, and entail disgrace upon yourself and your sister. As for my child, it will break her heart. My God! my child! my child!”

“Not, certainly, my lord, if we should succeed.”

“All hopes of success are out of the question,” replied his father.

“No such thing, my lord. Your mind, as I said, is enfeebled by illness, and you yield too easily. Such conduct on your part is really ridiculous. We shall have a tug for it, I am determined.”

“Here,” said his father, “cast your eye over these papers, and they will enable you to understand, not merely the grounds upon which our opponents proceed, but the utter hopelessness of contesting the matter with them.”

Dunroe took the papers, but before looking at them replied, with a great deal of confidence, “you are quite mistaken there, my lord, with every respect. They are not in a position to prove their allegations.”

“How so?” said his father.

“For the best reason in the world, my lord. We have had their proofs in our possession and destroyed them.”

“I don’t understand you.”

“The fellow, M’Bride, of whom I think your lordship knows something, had their documents in his possession.”

“I am aware of that.”

“Well, my lord, while in a drunken fit, he either lost them, or some one took them out of his pocket. I certainly would have purchased them from him.”

“Did you know how he came by them?” asked his father, with a look of reproof and anger.

“That, my lord, was no consideration of mine. As it was, however, he certainty lost them; but we learned from him that Birney, the attorney, was about to proceed to France, in order to get fresh attested copies; upon which, as he knew the party there in

whose hands the registry was kept, Norton and he started a day or two in advance of him, and on arriving there, they found, much to our advantage, that the register was dead. M'Bride, however, who is an adroit fellow, and was well acquainted with his house and premises, contrived to secure the book in which the original record was made—which book he has burned—so that, in point of fact, they have no legal proofs on which to proceed."

"Dishonorable man!" said his father, rising up in a state of the deepest emotion. "You have made me weary of life; you have broken my heart: and so you would stoop to defend yourself, or your lights, by a crime—by a crime so low, fraudulent, and base—-that here, in the privacy of my own chamber, and standing face to face with you, I am absolutely ashamed to call you my son. Know, sir, that if it were a dukedom, I should scorn to contest it, or to retain it, at the expense of my honor."

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“That’s all very fine talk, my lord; but, upon my soul, wherever I can get an advantage, I’ll take it. I see little of the honor or virtue you speak of going, and, I do assure you, I won’t be considered at all remarkable for acting up to my own principles. On the contrary, it is by following yours that I should be so.”

“I think,” said the old man, “that I see the hand of God in this. Unfortunate, obstinate, and irreclaimable young man, it remains for me to tell you that the very documents, which you say have been lost by the villain M’Bride, with whom, in his villainy, you, the son of an earl, did not hesitate to associate yourself, are now in the possession of our opponents. Take those papers to your room,” he added, bursting into tears: “take them away, I am unable to prolong this interview, for it has been to me a source of deeper affliction than the loss of the highest title or honor that the hand of royalty could bestow.”

When Dunroe was about to leave the room, the old man, who had again sat down, said:

“Stop a moment. Of course it is unnecessary to say, I should hope, that this union between you and Miss Gourlay cannot proceed.”

Dunroe, who felt at once that if he allowed his father to suppose that he persisted in it, the latter would immediately disclose his position to the baronet, now replied:

“No, my lord, I have no great ambition for any kind of alliance with Sir Thomas Gourlay. I never liked him personally, and I am sufficiently a man of spirit, I trust, not to urge a marriage with a girl who—who—cannot appreciate—” He paused, not knowing exactly how to fill up the sentence.

“Who has no relish for it,” added his father, “and can’t appreciate your virtues, you mean to say.”

“What I mean to say, my lord, is, that where there is no great share of affection on either side, there can be but little prospect of happiness.”

“Then you give up the match?”

“I give up the match, my lord, without a moment’s hesitation. You may rest assured of that.”

“Because,” added his father, “if I found that you persisted in it, and attempted to enter the family, and impose yourself on this admirable girl, as that which you are not, I would consider it my duty to acquaint Sir Thomas Gourlay with the unfortunate discovery which has been made. Before you go I will thank you to read that letter for me. It comes, I think, from the Lord Chancellor. My sight is very feeble to-day, and perhaps it may require a speedy answer.”

Dunroe opened the letter, which informed Lord Cullamore, that it had afforded him, the Lord Chancellor, much satisfaction to promote Periwinkle Crackenfudge, Esq., to the magistracy of the county of ------, understanding, as he did, from the communication “of Sir Thomas Gourlay, enclosed in his lordship’s letter, that he (Crackenfudge) was, by his many virtues, good sense, discretion, humanity, and general esteem among all classes, as well as by his popularity in the country, a person in every way fitted to discharge the important duties of such an appointment.

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“I feel my mind at ease,” said the amiable old nobleman, “in aiding such an admirable country gentleman as this Crackenfudge must be, to a seat on the bench; for, after all, Dunroe, it is only by the contemplation of a good action that we can be happy. You may go.”

Some few days passed, when Dunroe, having read the papers, the contents of which he did not wish Norton to see, returned them to his father in sullen silence, and then rang his bell, and sent for his worthy associate, that he might avail himself of his better judgment.

“Norton,” said he, “it is all up with us.”

“How is that, my lord?”

“Those papers, that M’Bride says he lost, are in the hands of our enemies.”

“Don’t believe it, my lord.’ I saw the fellow yesterday, and he told me that he destroyed them in a drunken fit, for which he says he is ready to cut his throat.”

“But I have read the opinion of my father’s counsel,” replied his lordship, “and they say we have no defence. Now you know what a lawyer is: if there were but a hair-breadth chance, they would never make an admission that might keep a good fat case from getting into their hands. No; it is all up with us. The confounded old fool above had everything laid before them, and such is the upshot. What is to be done?”

“Marriage, without loss of time—marriage, before your disaster reaches the ears of the Black Baronet.”

“Yes, but there is a difficulty. If the venerable old nobleman should hear of it, he’d let the cat out of the bag, and leave me in the lurch, in addition to the penalty of a three hours’ lecture upon honor. Everything, however, is admirably arranged *quoad* the marriage. We have got a special license for the purpose of meeting our peculiar case, so that the marriage can be private; that is to say, can take place in the lady’s own house. Do you think though, that M’Bride has actually destroyed the papers?”

“The drunken ruffian! certainly. He gave me great insolence a couple of days ago.”

“Why so?”

“Because I didn’t hand him over a hundred pounds for his journey and the theft of the registry.”

“And how much did you give him, pray?”

“A fifty pound note, after having paid his expenses, which was quite enough for him. However, as I did not wish to make the scoundrel our enemy, I have promised him something more, so that I’ve come on good terms with him again. He is a slippery customer.”

“Did you get the bills cashed yet?”

“No, my lord; I am going about it now; but I tell you beforehand, that I will have some difficulty in doing it. I hope to manage it, however; and for that reason I must bid you good-by.”

“The first thing to do, then, is to settle that ugly business about the mare. By no means must we let it come to trial.”

“Very well, my lord, be it so.”

Norton, after leaving his dupe to meditate upon the circumstances in which he found himself, began to reflect as he went along, that he himself was necessarily involved in the ruin of his friend and patron.

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“I have the cards, however, in my own hands,” thought he, “and M’Bride’s advice was a good one. He having destroyed the other documents, it follows that this registry, which I have safe and snug, will be just what his lordship’s enemies will leap at. Of course they are humbugging the old peer about the other papers, and, as I know, it is devilish easy to humbug the young one. My agency is gone to the winds; but I think the registry will stand me instead. It ought, in a case like this, to be well worth five thousand; at least, I shall ask this sum—not saying but I will take less. Here goes then for an interview with Birney, who has the character of being a shrewd fellow—honorable, they say—but then, is he not an attorney? Yes, Birney, have at you, my boy;” and having come to this virtuous conclusion, he directed his steps to that gentleman’s office, whom he found engaged at his desk.

“Mr. Birney, I presume,” with a very fashionable bow.

“Yes, sir,” said Birney, “that is my name.”

“Haw! If I don’t mistake, Mr. Birney,” with a very English accent, which no one could adopt, when he pleased, with more success than our Kerry boy—“if I don’t mistake, we both made a journey to France very recently?”

“That may be, sir,” replied Birney, “but I am not aware of it.”

“But I am, though,” tipping Birney the London cockney.

“Well, sir,” said Birney, very coolly, “and what follows from that?”

“Why haw—haw—I don’t exactly know at present; but I think a good dee-al may follow from it.”

“As how, sir?”

“I believe you were over there on matters connected with Lord Cullamore’s family—-haw?”

“Sir,” replied Birney, “you are a perfect stranger to me—I haven’t the honor of knowing you. If you are coming to me on anything connected with my professional services, I will thank you to state it.”

“Haw!—My name is Norton, a friend of Lord Dunroe’s.”

“Well, Mr. Norton, if you will have the goodness to mention the business which causes me the honor of your visit, I will thank you; but I beg to assure you, that I am not a man to be pumped either by Lord Dunroe or any of his friends. You compel me to speak very plainly, sir.”

“Haw! Very good—very good indeed! but the truth his, I’ve given Dunroe hup.”

“Well, sir, and how is that my affair? What interest can I feel in your quarrels? Personally I know very little of Lord Dunroe, and of you, sir, nothing.”

“Haw! but everything ’as a beginning, Mr. Birney.”

“At this rate of going, I fear we shall be a long time ending, Mr. Norton.”

“Well,” replied Norton, “I believe you are right; the sooner we understand each other, the better.”

“Certainly, sir,” replied Birney; “I think so, if you have any business of importance with me.”

“Well, I rayther think you will find it important—that is, to your own interests. You are an attorney, Mr. Birney, and I think you will admit that every man in this world, as it goes, ought to look to ’is own interests.”

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Birney looked at him, and said, very gravely, “Pray, sir, what is your business with me? My time, sir, is valuable. My time is money—a portion of my landed property, sir.”

“Haw! Very good; but you Hirish are so fiery and impatient! However, I will come to the point. You are about to joust that young scamp, by the way, out of the title and property. I say so, because I am up to the thing. Yet you want dockiments to establish your case—haw?”

“Well, sir, and suppose we do; you, I presume, as the friend of Lord Dunroe, are not coming to furnish us with them?”

“That is, Mr. Birney, as we shall understand one another. You failed in your mission to France?”

“I shall hear any proposal, sir, you have to make, but will answer no questions on the subject until I understand your motive for putting them.”

“Good—very cool and cautious—but suppose, now, that I, who know you ’ave failed in procuring the dockiments in question, could supply you with them—haw!—do you understand me now?”

“Less than ever, sir, I assure you. Observe that you introduced yourself to me as the friend of Lord Dunroe.”

“Merely to connect myself with the proceedings between you. I ’ave or am about to discard him, but I shaunt go about the bush no longer. I’m a native of Lon’on, w’at is tarmed a cockney—haw, haw!—and he ’as treated me ill—very ill—and I am detarmined to retaliate.”

“How, sir, are you determined to retaliate?”

“The truth is, sir, I’ve got the dockiments you stand in need of in my possession, and can furnish you with them for a consideration.”

“Why, now you are intelligible. What do you want, Murray? I’m engaged.”

“To speak one word with you in the next room, sir. The gentleman wants you to say yes or no, in a single line, upon Mr. Fairfield’s business, sir—besides, I’ve a private message.”

“Excuse me for a moment, sir,” said Birney; “there’s this morning’s paper, if you haven’t seen it.”

“Well, Bob,” said he, “what is it?”

“Beware of that fellow,” said he: “I know him well; his name is Bryan; he was a horse jockey on the Curragh, and was obliged to fly the country for dishonesty. Be on your guard, that is all I had to say to you.”

“Why, he says he is a Londoner, and he certainly has the accent,” replied the other.

“Kerry, sir, to the backbone, and a disgrace to the country, for divil a many rogues it produces, whatever else it may do.”

“Thank you, Murray,” said Birney; “I will be doubly guarded now.”

This occurred between Birney and one of his clerks, as a small interlude in their conversation.

“Yes, sir,” resumed Birney, once more taking his place at the desk, “you can now be understood.”

“Haw!—yes, I rayther fancy I can make myself so!” replied Norton. “What, now, do you suppose the papers in question may be worth to your friends?”

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“You cannot expect me to reply to that question,” said Birney; “I am acting professionally under the advice and instructions of others; but I will tell you what I think you had better do—I can enter into no negotiation on the subject without consulting those who have employed me, and getting their consent—write down, then, on a sheet of paper, what you propose to do for us, and the compensation which you expect to receive for any documents you may supply us with that we may consider of value, and I shall submit it for consideration.”

“May I not compromise myself by putting it on paper, though?”

“If you think so, then, don’t do it; but, for my part, I shall have no further concern in the matter. Verbal communications are of little consequence in an affair of this kind. Reduce it to writing, and it can be understood; it will, besides, prevent misconceptions in future.”

“I trust you are a man of honor?” said Norton.

“I make no pretensions to anything so high,” replied Birney; “but I trust I am an honest man, and know how to act when I have an honest man to deal with. If you wish to serve our cause, or, to be plain with you, wish to turn the documents you speak of to the best advantage, make your proposal in writing, as you ought to do, otherwise I must decline any further negotiation on the subject.”

Norton saw and felt that there was nothing else for it. He accordingly took pen and ink and wrote down his proposal—offering to place the documents alluded to, which were mentioned by name, in the hands of Mr. Birney, for the sum of five thousand pounds.”

“Now, sir,” said Birney, after looking over this treacherous proposition, “you see yourself the advantage of putting matters down in black and white. The production of this will save me both time and trouble, and, besides, it can be understood at a glance. Thank you, sir. Have the goodness to favor me with a call in a day or two, and we shall see what can be done.”

“This,” said Norton, as he was about to go, “is a point of honor between us.”

“Why, I think, at all events, it ought,” replied Bimey; “at least, so far as I am concerned, it is not my intention to act dishonorably by any honest man.”

“Haw—haw! Very well said, indeed; I ’ave a good opinion of your discretion.

“Well, sir, I wish you good morneen; I shall call in a day or two, and expect to ’ave a satisfactory answer.”

“What a scoundrel!” exclaimed Birney.

“Here’s a fellow, now, who has been fleecing that unfortunate sheep of a nobleman for the last four years, and now that he finds him at the length of his tether, he is ready to betray and sacrifice him, like a double-distilled rascal as he is. The villain thought I did not know him, but he was mistaken—quite out in his calculations. He will find, too, that he has brought his treachery to the wrong market.”

CHAPTER XXXIX. Fenton Recovered—The Mad-House

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Sir Thomas Gourlay, on his return with the special license, was informed by the same servant who had admitted the stranger, that a gentleman awaited him in the drawing-room.

“Who is he, M’Gregor?”

“I don’t know, sir; he paid you a visit once at Red Hall, I think.”

“How could I know him by that, you blockhead?”

“He’s the gentleman, sir, you had hot words with.”

“That I kicked out one day? Crackenfudge, eh?”

“No, faith, sir; not Crackenfudge. I know him well enough; and devil a kick your honor gave him but I wished was nine. This is a very different man, sir; and I believe you had warm words with him too, sir.”

“Oh!” exclaimed his master; “I remember. Is he above?”

“I believe so, sir.”

A strange and disagreeable feeling came over the baronet on hearing these words—a kind of presentiment, as it were, of something unpleasant and adverse to his plans. On entering the drawing-room, however, he was a good deal surprised to find that there was nobody there; and after a moment’s reflection, a fearful suspicion took possession of him; he rang the bell furiously.

Gibson, who had been out, now entered.

“Where is Miss Gourlay, sir?” asked his master, with eyes kindled by rage and alarm.

“I was out, sir,” replied Gibson, “and cannot tell.”

“You can never tell anything, you scoundrel. For a thousand, she’s off with him again, and all’s ruined. Here, Matthews—M’Gregor—call the servants, sir. Where’s her maid?—call her maid. What a confounded fool—ass—I was, not to have made that impudent baggage tramp about her business. It’s true, Lucy’s off—I feel it—I felt it. Hang her hypocrisy! It’s the case, however, with all women. They have neither truth, nor honesty of purpose. A compound of treachery, deceit, and dissimulation; and yet I thought, if there was a single individual of her sex exempted from their vices, that she was that individual. Come here, M’Gregor—come here you scoundrel—do you know where Miss Gourlay is? or her maid?”

“Here’s Matthews, sir; he says she’s gone out.”

“Gone out!—Yes, she’s gone out with a vengeance. Do you know where she’s gone, sirra? And did any one go with her?” he added, addressing himself to Matthews.

“I think, sir, she’s gone to take her usual airing in the carriage.”

“Who was with her?”

“No one but her maid, sir.”

“Oh, no; they would not go off together—that would be too open and barefaced. Do you know what direction she took?”

“No, sir; I didn’t observe.”

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“You stupid old lout,” replied the baronet, flying at him, and mauling the unfortunate man without mercy; “take that—and that—and that—for your stupidity. Why did you not observe the way she went, you! villain? You have suffered her to elope, you hound! You have all suffered her to elope with a smooth-faced impostor—a fellow whom no one knows—a blackleg—a swindler—a thief—a—a—go and saddle half a dozen horses, and seek her in all directions. Go instantly, and—hold—easy—stop—hang you all, stop! —here she is—and her maid with her—” he exclaimed, looking out of the window. “Ha! I am relieved. God bless me! God bless me!” He then looked at the servants with something of deprecation in his face, and waving his hand, said, “Go—go quietly; and, observe me—not a word of this—not a syllable—for your lives!”

His anger, however, was only checked in mid-volley. The idea of her having received a clandestine visit from her lover during his absence rankled at his heart; and although satisfied that she was still safe, and in his power, he could barely restrain his temper within moderate limits. Nay, he felt angry at her for the alarm she had occasioned him, and the passion he had felt at her absence.

“Well, Lucy,” said he, addressing her, as she entered, in a voice chafed with passion, “have you taken your drive?”

“Yes, papa,” she replied; “but it threatened rain, and we returned earlier that usual.”

“You look pale.”

“I dare say I do, sir. I want rest—repose;” and she reclined on a lounger as she spoke. “It is surprising, papa, how weak I am!”

“Not too weak, Lucy, to receive a stolen visit, eh?”

Lucy immediately sat up, and replied with surprise, “A stolen visit, sir? I don’t understand you, papa.”

“Had you not a visitor here, in my absence?”

“I had, sir, but the visit was intended for you. Our interview was perfectly accidental.”

“Ah! faith, Lucy, it was too well timed to be accidental. I’m not such a fool as that comes to. Accidental, indeed! Lucy, you should not say so.”

“I am not in the habit of stating an untruth, papa. The visit, sir—I should rather say, the interview—was purely accidental; but I am glad it took place.”

“The deuce you are! That is a singular acknowledgment, Lucy, I think.”

“It is truth, sir, notwithstanding. I was anxious to see him, that I might acquaint him with the change that has taken place in my unhappy destiny. If I had not seen him, I should have asked your permission to write to him.”

“Which I would not have given.”

“I would have submitted my letter to you, sir.”

“Even so; I would not have consented.”

“Well, then, sir, as truth and honor demanded that act from me, I would haye sent it without your consent. Excuse me for saying this, papa; but you need not be told that there are some peculiar cases where duty to a parent must yield to truth and honor.”

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“Some peculiar cases! On the contrary, the cases you speak of are the general rule, my girl—the general rule—and rational obedience to a parent the exception. Where is there a case—and there are millions—where a parent’s wish and will are set at naught and scorned, in which the same argument is not used? I do not relish these discussions, however. What I wish to impress upon you is this—you must see this fellow no more.”

Lucy’s temples were immediately in a blaze. “Are you aware, papa, that you insult and degrade your daughter, by applying such a term to him? If you will not spare him, sir, spare me; for I assure you that I feel anything said against him with ten times more emotion than if it were uttered against myself.”

“Well, well; he’s a fine fellow, a gentleman, a lord; but, be he what he may, you must see him no more.”

“It is not my intention, papa, to see him again.”

“You must not write to him.”

“It will not be necessary.”

“But you must not.”

“Well, then, I shall not.”

“Nor receive kis letters.”

“Nor receive his letters, knowing them to be his.”

“You promise all this?”

“I do, sir, faithfully. I hope you are now satisfied, papa?”

“I am, Lucy—I am. You are not so bad a girl as I sus—no, you are a very good girl; and when I see you the Countess of Cullamore, I shall not have a single wish un-gratified.”

Lucy, indeed, poor girl, was well and vigilantly guarded. No communication, whether written or otherwise, was permitted to reach her; nor, if she had been lodged in the deepest dungeon in Europe, and secured by the strongest bolts that ever enclosed a prisoner, could she have been more rigidly excluded from all intercourse, her father’s and her maid’s only excepted.

Her lover, on receiving the documents so often alluded to from old Corbet, immediately transmitted to her a letter of hope and encouragement, in which he stated that the object he had alluded to was achieved, and that he would take care to place such

documents before her father, as must cause even him to forbid the bans. This letter, however, never reached her. Neither did a similar communication from Mrs. Mainwaring, who after three successive attempts to see either her or her father, was forced at last to give up all hope of preventing the marriage. She seemed, indeed, to have been fated.

In the meantime, the stranger, having, as he imagined, relieved Lucy's mind from her dreaded union with Dunroe, and left the further and more complete disclosure of that young nobleman's position to Mrs. Mainwaring, provided himself with competent legal authority to claim the person of unfortunate Fenton. It is unnecessary to describe his journey to the asylum in which the wretched young man was placed; it is enough to say that he arrived there at nine o'clock in the morning, accompanied by old Corbet and three officers of justice, who remained in the carriage; and on asking to see the proprietor, was shown into a parlor, where he found that worthy gentleman reading a newspaper.

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This fellow was one of those men who are remarkable for thick, massive, and saturnine features. At a first glance he was not at all ill-looking; but, on examining his beetle brows, which met in a mass of black thick hair across his face, and on watching the dull, selfish, cruel eyes that they hung over—dead as they were to every generous emotion, and incapable of kindling even at cruelty itself—it was impossible for any man in the habit of observing nature closely not to feel that a brutal ruffian, obstinate, indurated, and unscrupulous, was before him. His forehead was low but broad, and the whole shape of his head such as would induce an intelligent phrenologist to pronounce him at once a thief and a murderer.

The stranger, after a survey or two, felt his blood boil at the contemplation of his very visage, which was at once plausible and diabolical in expression. After some preliminary chat the latter said:

“Your establishment, sir, is admirably situated here. It is remote and isolated; and these, I suppose, are advantages?”

“Why, yes, sir,” replied the doctor, “the further we remove our patients from human society, the better. The exhibition of reason has, in general, a bad effect upon the insane.”

“Upon what principle do you account for that?” asked the stranger. “To me it would appear that the reverse of the proposition ought to hold true.”

“That may be,” replied the other; “but no man can form a correct opinion of insane persons who has not mingled with them, or had them under his care. The contiguity of reason—I mean in the persons of those who approach them—always exercises a dangerous influence upon lunatics; and on this account, I sometimes place those who are less insane as keepers upon such as are decidedly so.”

“Does not that, sir, seem very like setting the blind to lead the blind?”

“No,” replied the other, with a heavy, I heartless laugh, “your analogy fails; it is rather like setting a man with one eye to guide another who has none.”

“But why should not a man who has two guide him better?”

“Because the consciousness that there is but the one eye between both of them, will make him proceed more cautiously.”

“But that in the blind is an act of reason,” replied the stranger, “which cannot be applied to the insane, in whom reason is deficient.”

“But where reason does not exist,” said the doctor, “we must regulate them by the passions.”

“By the exercise of which passion do you gain the greatest ascendency over them?” asked the stranger.

“By fear, of course. We can do nothing, at least very little, without inspiring terror.”

“Ah,” thought the stranger, “I have now got the key to his conduct!—But, sir,” he added, “we never fear and love the same object at the same time.”

“True enough, sir,” replied the ruffian; “but who could or ought to calculate upon the attachment of a madman? Boys are corrected more frequently than men, because their reason is not developed: and those in whom it does not exist, or in whom it has been impaired, must be subjected to the same discipline. Terror, besides, is the principle upon which reason itself, and all society, are governed.”

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“But suppose I had a brother, now, or a relative, might I not hesitate to place him in an establishment conducted on principles which I condemn?”

“As to that, sir,” replied the fellow, who, expecting a patient, feared that he had gone too far, “our system is an adaptable one; at least, our application of it varies according to circumstances. As our first object is cure, we must necessarily allow ourselves considerable latitude of experiment until we hit upon the right key. This being found, the process of recovery, when it is possible, may be conducted with as much mildness as the absence of reason will admit. We are mild, when we can, and severe only where we must.”

“Shuffling scoundrel!” thought the stranger. “I perceive in this language the double dealing of an unprincipled villain.—Would you have any objection, sir,” he said, “that I should look through your establishment?”

“I can conduct you through the convalescent wards,” replied the doctor; “but, as I said, we find that the appearance of strangers—which is what I meant by the contiguity of reason—is attended with very bad, and sometimes deplorable consequences. Under all circumstances it retards a cure, under others occasions a relapse, and in some accelerates the malady so rapidly that it becomes hopeless. You may see the convalescent ward, however—that is, if you wish.”

“You will oblige me,” said the stranger.

“Well, then,” said he, “if you will remain here a moment, I will send a gentleman who will accompany you, and explain the characters of some of the patients, should you desire it, and also the cause of their respective maladies.”

He then disappeared, and in a few minutes a mild, intelligent, gentlemanly man, of modest and unassuming manners, presented himself, and said he would feel much pleasure in showing him the convalescent side of the house. The stranger, however, went out and brought old Corbet in from the carriage, where he and the officers had been sitting; and this he did at Corbet’s own request.

It is not our intention to place before our readers any lengthened description of this gloomy temple of departed reason. Every one who enters a lunatic asylum for the first time, must feel a wild and indescribable emotion, such as he has never before experienced, and which amounts to an extraordinary sense of solemnity and fear. Nor do the sensations of the stranger rest here. He feels as if he were surrounded by something sacred as well as melancholy, something that creates at once pity, reverence, and awe. Indeed, so strongly antithetical to each other are his first impressions, that a kind of confusion arises in his mind, and he begins to fear that his senses have been affected by the atmosphere of the place. That a shock takes place which slightly disarranges the faculty of thought, and generates strong but erroneous

impressions, is still more clearly established by the fact that the visitor, for a considerable time after leaving an asylum, can scarcely rid himself of the belief that every person he meets is insane.

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The stranger, on entering the long room in which the convalescents were assembled, felt, in the silence of the patients, and in their vague and fantastic movements, that he was in a position where novelty, in general the source of pleasure, was here associated only with pain. Their startling looks, the absence of interest in some instances, and its intensity in others, at the appearance of strangers, without any intelligent motive in either case, produced a feeling that seemed to bear the character of a disagreeable dream.

“All the patients here,” said his conductor, “are not absolutely in a state of convalescence. A great number of them are; but we also allow such confirmed lunatics as are harmless to mingle with them. There is scarcely a profession, or a passion, or a vanity in life, which has not here its representative. Law, religion, physic, the arts, the sciences, all contribute their share to this melancholy picture gallery. Avarice, love, ambition, pride, jealousy, having overgrown the force of reason, are here, as its ideal skeletons, wild and gigantic—fretting, gambolling, moping, grinning, raving, and vaporing—each wrapped in its own Vision, and indifferent to all the influence of the collateral faculties. There, now, is a man, moping about, the very picture of stolidity; observe how his heavy head hangs down until his chin rests upon his breastbone, his mouth open and almost dribbling. That man, sir, so unpoetical and idiotic in appearance, imagines himself the author of Beattie’s ‘Minstrel’ He is a Scotchman, and I shall call him over.”

“Come here, Sandy, speak to this gentleman.”

Sandy, without raising his lack-lustre eye, came over and replied, “Aw—ay—’Am the author o’ Betty’s Menstrel;” and having uttered this piece of intelligence, he shuffled across the room, dragging one foot after the other, at about a quarter of a minute per step. Never was poor Beattie so libellously represented.

“Do you see that round-faced, good-humored looking man, with a decent frieze coat on?” said their conductor. “He’s a wealthy and respectable farmer from the county of Kilkenny, who imagines that he is Christ. His name is Rody Rafferty.”

“Come here, Rody.”

Rody came over, and looking at the stranger, said, “Arra, now, do you know who I am? Troth, I go bail you don’t.”

“No,” replied the stranger, “I do not; but I hope you will tell me.”

“I’m Christ,” replied Rody; “and, upon my word, if you don’t get out o’ this, I’ll work a miracle on you.”

“Why,” asked the stranger, “what will you do?”

“Troth, I’ll turn you into a blackin’ brush, and polish my shoes wid you. You were at Barney’s death, too.”

The poor man had gone deranged, it seemed, by the violent death of his only child—a son.

“There’s another man,” said the conductor; “that little fellow with the angry face. He is a shoemaker, who went mad on the score of humanity. He took a strong feeling of resentment against all who had flat feet, and refused to make shoes for them.”

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“How was that?” inquired the stranger.

“Why, sir,” said the other, smiling, “he said that they murdered the clocks (beetles), and he looked upon every man with flat feet as an inhuman villain, who deserves, he says, to have his feet chopped off, and to be compelled to dance a hornpipe three times a day on his stumps.”

“Who is that broad-shouldered man,” asked the stranger, “dressed in rusty black, with the red head?”

“He went mad,” replied the conductor, “on a principle of religious charity. He is a priest from the county of Wexford, who had been called in to baptize the child of a Protestant mother, which, having done, he seized a tub, and placing it on the child’s neck, killed it; exclaiming, ‘I am now sure of having sent one soul to heaven.’”

“You are not without poets here, of course?” said the stranger.

“We have, unfortunately,” replied the other, “more individuals of that class than we can well manage. They ought to have an asylum for themselves. There’s a fellow, now, he in the tattered jacket and nightcap, who has written a heroic poem, of eighty-six thousand verses, which he entitles ‘Balaam’s Ass, or the Great Unsaddled.’ Shall I call him over?”

“Oh, for heaven’s sake, no,” replied the stranger; “keep me from the poets.”

“There is one of the other species,” replied the gentleman, “the thin, red-eyed fellow, who grinds his teeth. He fancies himself a wit and a satirist, and is the author of an unpublished poem, called ’The Smoking Dunghill, or Parnassus in a Fume.’ He published several things, which were justly attacked on account of their dulness, and he is now in an awful fury against all the poets of the day, to every one of whom he has given an appropriate position on the sublime pedestal, which he has, as it were, with his own hands, erected for them. He certainly ought to be the best constructor of a dunghill in the world, for he deals in nothing but dirt. He refuses to wash his hands, because, he says, it would disqualify him from giving the last touch to his poem and his characters.”

“Have you philosophers as well as poets here?” asked the stranger.

“Oh dear, yes, sir. We have poetical philosophers, and philosophical poets; but, I protest to heaven, the wisdom of Solomon, or of an archangel, could not decide the difference between their folly. There’s a man now, with the old stocking in his hand—it is one of his own, for you may observe that he has one leg bare—who is pacing up and down in a deep thinking mood. That man, sir, was set mad by a definition of his own making.”

“Well, let us hear it,” said the stranger.

“Why, sir, he imagines that he has discovered a definition for ‘nothing.’ The definition, however, will make you smile.”

“And what, pray, is it?”

“Nothing,” he says, “is—a footless stocking without a leg; and maintains that he ought to hold the first rank as a philosopher for having invented the definition, and deserves a pension from the crown.”

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“Who are these two men dressed in black, walking arm in arm?” asked the stranger. “They appear to be clergymen.”

“Yes, sir,” replied his conductor, “so they are; two celebrated polemical controversialists, who, when they were at large, created by their attacks, each upon the religion of the other, more ill-will, rancor and religious animosity, than either of their religions, with all their virtues, could remove. It is impossible to describe the evil they did. Ever since they came here, however, they are like brothers. They were placed in the same room, each in a strong strait-waistcoat, for the space of three months; but on being allowed to walk about, they became sworn friends, and now amuse themselves more than any other two in the establishment. They indulge in immoderate fits of laughter, look each other knowingly in the face, wink, and run the forefinger up the nose, after which their mirth bursts out afresh, and they laugh until the tears come down their cheeks.”

The stranger, who during all this time was on the lookout for poor Fenton, as was old Corbet, could observe nobody who resembled him in the least.

“Have you females in your establishment?” he asked.

“No, sir,” replied the gentleman; “but we are about to open an asylum for them in a detached building, which is in the course of being erected. Would you wish to hear any further details of these unhappy beings,” he asked.

“No, sir,” replied the stranger. “You are very kind and obliging, but I have heard enough for the present. Have you a person named Fenton in your establishment?”

“Not, sir, that I know of; he may be here, though; but you had better inquire from the proprietor himself, who—mark me, sir—I say—harkee—you have humanity in your face—will probably refuse to tell you whether he is here or not, or deny him altogether. Harkee, again, sir—the fellow is a villain—that is, *entre nous*, but mum’s the word between us.”

“I am sorry,” replied the stranger, “to hear such a character of him from you, who should know him.”

“Well, sir,” replied the other, “let that pass—*verbum sap*. And now tell me, when have you been at the theater?”

“Not for some months,” returned the other.

“Have you ever heard Catalani shake?”

“Yes,” replied the stranger. “I have had that pleasure.”

“Well, sir, I’m delighted that you have heard her, for there is but one man living who can rival her in the shake; and, sir, you have the honor of addressing that man.”

This was said so mildly, calmly, rationally, and with that gentlemanlike air of undoubted respectability, which gives to an assertion such an impress of truth, that the stranger, confused as he was by what he had seen, felt it rather difficult to draw the line at the moment, especially in such society, between a sane man and an insane one.

“Would you wish, sir,” said the guide, “to hear a specimen of my powers?”

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“If you please,” replied the stranger, “provided you will confine yourself to the shake.”

The other then commenced a squall, so tuneless, wild, jarring, and unmusical, that the stranger could not avoid smiling at the monomaniac, for such he at once perceived him to be.

“You seem to like that,” observed the other, apparently much gratified; “but I thought as much, sir—you are a man of taste.”

“I am decidedly of opinion,” said the stranger, “that Catalani, in her best days, could not give such a specimen of the shake as that.”

“Thank you sir,” replied the singer, taking off his hat and bowing. “We shall have another shake in honor of your excellent judgment, but it will be a shake of the hand. Sir, you are a polished and most accomplished gentleman.”

As they sauntered up and down the room, other symptoms reached them besides those that were then subjected to their sight. As a door opened, a peal of wild laughter might be heard—sometimes groaning—and occasionally the most awful blasphemies. Ambition contributed a large number to its dreary cells. In fact, one would imagine that the house had been converted into a temple of justice, and contained within its walls most of the crowned heads and generals of Europe, both living and dead, together with a fair sample of the saints. The Emperor of Russia was strapped down to a chair that had been screwed into the floor, with the additional security of a strait-waistcoat to keep his majesty quiet. The Pope challenged Henry the Eighth to box, and St. Peter, as the cell door opened, asked Anthony Corbet for a glass of whiskey. Napoleon Bonaparte, in the person of a heroic tailor, was singing “Bob and Joan;” and the Archbishop of Dublin said he would pledge his mitre for a good cigar and a pot of porter. Sometimes a frightful yell would-reach their ears; then a furious set of howlings, followed again by peals of maniac laughter, as before. Altogether, the stranger was glad to withdraw, which he did, in order to prosecute his searches for Fenton.

“Well, sir,” said the doctor, whom he found again in the parlor, “you have seen that melancholy sight?”

“I have, sir, and a melancholy one indeed it is; but as I came on a matter of business, doctor, I think we had better come to the point at once. You have a young man named Fenton in your establishment?”

“No, sir, we have no person of that name here.”

“A wrong name may have been purposely given you, sir; but the person I speak of is here. And you had better understand me at once,” he continued. “I am furnished with such authority as will force you to produce him.”

“If he is not here, sir, no authority on earth can force me to produce him.”

“We shall see that presently. Corbet, bring in the officers. Here, sir, is a warrant, by which I am empowered to search for his body; and, when found, to secure him, in order that he may be restored to his just rights, from which he has been debarred by a course of villany worthy of being concocted in hell itself.”

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“Family reasons, sir, frequently render it necessary that patients should enter this establishment under fictitious names. But these are matters with which I have nothing to do. My object is to comply with the wishes of their relatives.”

“Your object, sir, should be to cure, rather than to keep them; to conduct your establishment as a house of recovery, not as a prison—of course, I mean where the patient is curable. I demand, sir, that you will find this young man, and produce him to me.”

“But provided I cannot do so,” replied the doctor, doggedly, “what then?”

“Why, in that case, we are in possession of a warrant for your own arrest, under the proclamation which was originally published in the ‘Hue and Cry,’ for his detention. Sir, you are now aware of the alternative. You produce the person we require, or you accompany us yourself. It has been sworn that he is in your keeping.”

“I cannot do what is impossible. I will, however, conduct you through all the private rooms of the establishment, and if you can find or identify the person you want, I am satisfied. It is quite possible he may be with me; but I don’t know, nor have I ever known him by the name of Fenton. It’s a name I’ve never heard in my establishment. Come, sir, I am ready to show you every room in my house.”

By this time the officers, accompanied by Corbet, entered, and all followed the doctor in a body to aid in the search. The search, however, was fruitless. Every room, cell, and cranny that was visible in the establishment underwent a strict examination, as did their unhappy occupants. All, however, in vain; and the doctor now was about to assume a tone of insolence and triumph, when Corbet said:

“Doctor, all seems plain here. You have done your duty.”

“Yes,” he replied, “I always do so. No man in the kingdom has given greater satisfaction, nor stands higher in that painful department of our profession to which I have devoted myself.”

“Yes, doctor,” repeated Corbet, with one of his bitterest grins; “you have done your duty; and for that reason I ask you to folly me.”

“Where to, my good fellow?” asked the other, somewhat crestfallen. “What do you mean?”

“I think I spake plainly enough. I say, folly me. I think, too, I know something about the outs and ins, the ups and downs of this house still. Come, sir, we’ll show you how you’ve done your duty; but listen to me, before we go one foot further—if he’s dead before my time has come, I’ll have your life, if I was to swing on a thousand gallowses.”

One of the officers here tapped the doctor authoritatively on the shoulder, and said, “Proceed, sir, we are losing time.”

The doctor saw at once that further resistance was useless.

“By the by,” said he, “there is one patient in the house that I completely forgot. He is so desperate and outrageous, however, that we were compelled, within the last week or so, to try the severest discipline with him. He, however, cannot be the person you want, for his name is Moore; at least, that is the name under which he was sent here.”

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Down in a narrow, dark dungeon, where the damp and stench were intolerable, and nothing could be seen until a light was procured, they found something lying on filthy straw that had human shape. The hair and beard were long and overgrown; the features, begrimed with filth, were such as the sharpest eye could not recognize; and the whole body was so worn and emaciated, so ragged and tattered in appearance, that it was evident at a glance that foul practices must have been resorted to in order to tamper with life."

"Now, sir," said the doctor, addressing the stranger, "I will leave you and your friends to examine the patient, as perhaps you might feel my presence a restraint upon you."

The stranger, after a glance or two at Fenton, turned around, and said, sternly, "Peace-officer, arrest that man, and remove him to the parlor as your prisoner. But hold," he added, "let us first ascertain whether this is Mr. Fenton or not."

"I will soon tell you, sir," said Corbet, approaching the object before them, and feeling the left side of his neck.

"It is him, sir," he said; "here he is, sure enough, at last."

"Well, then," repeated the stranger, "arrest that man, as I said, and let two of you accompany him to the parlor, and detain him there until we join you."

On raising the wretched young man, they found that life was barely in him; he had been asleep, and being roused up, he screamed aloud.

"Oh," said he, "I am not able to bear it—don't scourge me, I am dying; I am doing all I can to die. Why did you disturb me? I dreamt that I was on my mother's knee, and that she was kissing me. What is this? What brings so many of you now? I wish I had told the strange gentleman in the inn everything; but I feared he was my enemy, and perhaps he was. I am very hungry."

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the stranger; "are such things done in a free and Christian country? Bring him up to the parlor," he added, "and let him be shaved and cleansed; but be careful of him, for his lamp of life is nearly exhausted. I thank you, Corbet, for the suggestion of the linen and clothes. What could we have done without them? It would have been impossible to fetch him in this trim."

We must pass over these disagreeable details. It is enough to say that poor Fenton was put into clean linen and decent clothes, and that in a couple of hours they were once more on their way with him, to the metropolis, the doctor accompanying them, as their prisoner.

The conduct of Corbet was on this occasion very singular. He complained that the stench of the dungeon in which they found Fenton had sickened him; but,

notwithstanding this, something like ease of mind might be read in his countenance whenever he looked upon Fenton; something that, to the stranger at least, who observed him closely, seemed to say, “I am at last satisfied: the widow’s heart will be set at rest, and the plans of this black villain broken to pieces.” His eye occasionally gleamed wildly, and again his countenance grew pale and haggard, and he complained of headache and pains about his loins, and in the small of his back.

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On arriving in Dublin, the stranger brought Fenton to his hotel, where he was desirous to keep him for a day or two, until he should regain a little strength, that he might, without risk, be able to sustain the interview that was before him. Aware of the capricious nature of the young man's feelings, and his feeble state of health, he himself kept aloof from him, lest his presence might occasion such a shock as would induce anything like a fit of insanity—a circumstance which must mar the pleasure and gratification of his unexpected reappearance. That medical advice ought instantly to be procured was evident from his extreme weakness, and the state of apathy into which he had sunk immediately after, his removal from the cell. This was at once provided; but unfortunately it seemed that all human skill was likely to prove unavailable, as the physician, on seeing and examining him, expressed himself with strong doubts as to the possibility of his recovery. In fact, he feared that his unhappy patient had not many days to live. He ordered him wine, tonics, and light but nutritious food to be taken sparingly, and desired that he should be brought into the open air as often as the debility of his constitution could bear it. His complaint, he said, was altogether a nervous one, and resulted from the effects of cruelty, terror, want of sufficient nourishment, bad air, and close confinement.

In the meantime, the doctor was committed to prison, and had the pleasure of being sent, under a safe escort, to the jail of the county that had been so largely benefited by his humane establishment.

As we are upon this painful subject, we may as well state here that he was prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, with hard labor.

CHAPTER XL. Lady Gourlay sees her Son.

Having done all that was possible for poor Fenton, the stranger lost no time in waiting upon Lady Gourlay, that he might, with as much prudence as the uncertain state of the young man's health would permit, make known the long wished for communication, that they had at length got him in their possession. His task was one of great difficulty, for he apprehended that an excess of joy on the part of that affectionate woman might be dangerous, when suddenly checked by the melancholy probability that he had been restored to her only to be almost immediately removed by death. He resolved, then, to temper his intelligence in such a way as to cause her own admirable sense and high Christian feeling to exercise their usual influence over her heart. As he had promised Corbet, however, to take no future step in connection with these matters without consulting him, he resolved, before seeing Lady Gourlay, to pay him a visit. He was induced the more to do this in consequence of the old man's singular conduct on the discovery of Fenton. From the very first interview that he ever had with Corbet

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until that event, he could not avoid observing that there was a mystery in everything he did and said—something enigmatical—unfathomable, and that his looks, and the disagreeable expression which they occasionally assumed, were frequently so much at variance with his words, that it was an utter impossibility to draw anything like a certain inference from them. On the discovery of Fenton, the old man's face went through a variety of contradictory expressions. Sometimes he seemed elated—triumphant, sometimes depressed and anxious, and occasionally angry, or excited by a feeling that was altogether unintelligible. He often turned his eye upon Fenton, as if he had discovered some precious treasure, then his countenance became overcast, and he writhed in an agony which no mortal penetration could determine as anything but the result of remorse. Taking all this into consideration, the stranger made up his mind to see him before he should wait upon Lady Gourlay.

Although a day had elapsed, he found the old man still complaining of illness, which, he said, would have been more serious had he not taken medicine.

"My mind, however," said he, "is what's troublin' me. There's a battle goin' on within me. At one time I'm delighted, but the delight doesn't give me pleasure long, for then, again, I feel a weight over me that's worse than death. However, I can't nor won't give it up. I hope I'll have time to repent yet; who knows but it is God that has put it into my heart and kept it there for so many years?"

"Kept what there?" asked the stranger.

The old man's face literally blackened as he replied, almost with a scream, "Vengeance!"

"This language," replied the other, "is absolutely shocking. Consider your advanced state of life—consider your present illness, which may probably be your last, and reflect that if you yourself expect pardon from God, you must forgive your enemies."

"So I will," he replied; "but not till I've punished them; then I'll tell them how I made my puppets of them, and when I give their heart one last crush—one grind—and the old wretch ground his teeth in the contemplation of this diabolical vision—ay," he repeated—"one last grind, then I'll tell them I've done with them, and forgive them; then—then—-ay, but not till then!"

"God forgive you, Corbet, and change your heart!" replied the stranger. "I called to say that I am about to inform Lady Gourlay that we have her son safe at last, and I wish to know if you are in possession of any facts that she ought to be acquainted with in connection with his removal—in fact, to hear anything you may wish to disclose to me on the subject."

“I could, then, disclose to you something on the subject that would make you wondher; but although the time’s at hand, it’s not come yet. Here I am, an ould man—helpless—-or, at all events, helpless-lookin’—and you would hardly believe that I’m makin’ this black villain do everything accordin’ as I wish it.”

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“That dark spirit of vengeance,” replied the stranger, “is turning your brain, I think, or you would not say so. Whatever Sir Thomas Gourlay may be, he is not the man to act as the puppet of any person.”

“So you think; but I tell you he’s acting as mine, for all that.”

“Well, well, Corbet, that is your own affair. Have you anything of importance to communicate to me, before I see Lady Gourlay? I ask you for the last time.”

“I have. The black villain and she have spoken at last. He yielded to his daughter so far as to call upon her, and asked her to be present at the weddin’.”

“The wedding!” exclaimed the stranger, looking aghast. “God of heaven, old man, do you mean to say that they are about to be married so soon?—about to be married at all? But I will leave you,” he added; “there is no possibility of wringing anything out of you.”

“Wait a little,” continued Corbet. “What I’m goin’ to tell you won’t do you any harm, at any rate.”

“Be quick, then. Gracious heaven!—married!—Curses seize you, old man, be quick.”

“On the mornin’ afther to-morrow the marriage is to take place in Sir Thomas’s own house. Lord Dunroe’s sisther is to be bridesmaid, and a young fellow named Roberts—”

“I know—I have met him.”

“Well, and did you ever see any one that he resembled, or that resembled him? I hope in the Almighty,” he added, uttering the ejaculation evidently in connection with some private thought or purpose of his own, “I hope in the Almighty that this sickness will keep off o’ me for a couple o’ days at any rate. Did you ever see any one that resembled him?”

“Yes,” replied the stranger, starting, for the thought had flashed upon him; “he is the living image of Miss Gourlay! Why do you ask?”

“Bekaise, merely for a raison I have; but if you have patience, you’ll find that the longer you live, the more you’ll know; only at this time you’ll know no more from me, barrin’ that this same young officer is to be his lordship’s groom’s-man. Dr. Sombre, the clergyman of the parish, is to marry them in the baronet’s house. A Mrs. Mainwaring, too, is to be there; Miss Gourlay begged that she would be allowed to come, and he says she may. You see now how well I know everything that happens there, don’t you?” he asked, with a grin of triumph. “But I tell you there will be more at the same weddin’ than he thinks.

So now—ah, this pain!—there's another string of it—I feel it go through me like an arrow—so now you may go and see Lady Gourlay, and break the glad tidin's to her."

With feelings akin to awe and of repugnance, but not at all of contempt—for old Corbet was a man whom no one could despise—the stranger took his departure, and proceeded to Lady Gourlay's, with a vague impression that the remarkable likeness between Lucy and young Roberts was not merely accidental.

He found her at home, placid as usual, but with evidences of a resignation that was at once melancholy and distressing to witness. The struggle of this admirable woman's heart, though sustained by high Christian feeling, was, nevertheless, wearing her away by slow and painful degrees. The stranger saw this, and scarcely knew in what terms to shape the communication he had to make, full as it was of ecstasy to the mother's loving spirit, yet dashed with such doubt and sorrow.

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“Can you bear good tidings, Lady Gourlay,” said he, “though mingled with some cause of apprehension?”

“I am in the hands of God,” she replied, “and feel that I ought to receive every communication with obedience. Speak on.”

“Your son is found!”

“What, my child restored to me?”

She had been sitting in an arm-chair, but on hearing these words she started up, and said again, as she placed her hands upon the table at which he sat, that she might sustain herself, “What, Charles, my darling restored to me! Is he safe? Can I see him? Restored! restored at last!”

“Moderate your joy, my dear madam; he is safe—he is in my hotel.”

“But why not here? Safe! oh, at last—at last! But God is a God of mercy, especially to the patient and long-suffering. But come—oh, come! Think of me,—pity me, and do not defraud me one moment of his sight. Bring me to him!”

“Hear me a moment, Lady Gourlay.”

“No, no,” she replied, in a passion of joyful tears, “I can hear you again. I must see my son—my son—my darling child—where is my son? Here—but no, I will ring myself. Why not have brought him here at once, sir? Am not I his mother?”

“My dear madam,” said the stranger, calmly, but with a seriousness of manner that checked the exuberance of her delight, and placing his hand upon her shoulder, “hear me a moment. Your son is found; but he is ill, and I fear in some danger.”

“But to see him, then,” she replied, looking with entreaty in his face, “only to see him. After this long and dreary absence, to let my eyes rest on my son. He is ill, you say; and what hand should be near him and about him but his mother’s? Who can with such love and tenderness cherish, and soothe, and comfort him, as the mother who would die for him? Oh, I have a thousand thoughts rushing to my heart—a thousand affectionate anxieties to gratify; but first to look upon him—to press him to that heart—to pour a mother’s raptures over her long-lost child! Come with me—oh, come. If he is ill, ought I not, as I said, to see him the sooner on that account? Come, dear Charles, let the carriage be ordered; but that will take some time. A hackney-coach will do—a car—anything that will bring us there with least delay.”

“But, an interview, my lady, may be at this moment as much as his life is worth; he is not out of danger.”

“Well, then, I will not ask an interview. Only let me see him—let his mother’s eyes rest upon him. Let me steal a look—a look; let me steal but one look, and I am sure, dear Charles, you will not gainsay this little theft of the mother’s heart. But, ah,” she suddenly exclaimed, “what am I doing? Ungrateful and selfish that I am, to forget my first duty! Pardon me a few moments; I will return soon.”

She passed into the back drawing-room, where, although the doors were folded, he could hear this truly pious woman pouring forth with tears her gratitude to God. In a few minutes she reappeared; and such were the arguments she used, that he felt it impossible to prevent her from gratifying this natural and absorbing impulse of the heart.

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On reaching the hotel, they found, after inquiring, that he was asleep, a circumstance which greatly pleased the stranger, as he doubted very much whether Fenton would have been strong enough, either in mind or body, to bear such an interview as must have taken place between them.

The unhappy young man was, as we have said, sound asleep. His face was pale and wan, but a febrile hue had tinged his countenance with a color which, although it concealed his danger, was not sufficient to remove from it the mournful expression of all he had suffered. Yet the stranger thought that he never had seen him look so well. His face was indeed a fair but melancholy page of human life. The brows were slightly knit, as if indicative of suffering; and there passed over his features, as he lay, such varying expressions as we may presume corresponded with some painful dream, by which, as far as one could judge, he seemed to be influenced. Sometimes he looked like one that endured pain, sometimes as if he felt terror; and occasionally a gleam of pleasure or joy would faintly light up his handsome but wasted countenance.

Lady Gourlay, whilst she looked upon him, was obliged to be supported by the stranger, who had much difficulty in restraining her grief within due bounds. As for the tears, they fell from her eyes in showers.

“I must really remove you, my lady,” he said, in a whisper; “his recovery, his very life, may depend upon the soundness of this sleep. You see yourself, now, the state he is in; and who living has such an interest in his restoration to health as you have?”

“I know it,” she whispered in reply. “I will be quiet.”

As they spoke, a faint smile seemed to light up his face, which, however, was soon changed to an expression of terror.

“Don’t scourge me,” said he, “don’t and I will tell you. It was my mother. I thought she kissed me, as she used to do long ago, when I was a boy, and never thought I’d be here.” He then uttered a few faint sobs, but relapsed into a calm expression almost immediately.

The violent beatings of Lady Gourlay’s heart were distinctly felt by the stranger, as he supported her; and in order to prevent the sobs which he knew, by the heavings of her breast, were about to burst forth, from awakening the sleeper, he felt it best to lead her out of the room; which he had no sooner done, than she gave way to a long fit of uncontrollable weeping.

“Oh, my child!—my child!” she exclaimed, “I fear they have murdered him! Alas! is he only to be restored to me for a moment, and am I then to be childless indeed? But I will strive to become calm. Why should I not? For even this is a blessing—to have seen

him, and to have the melancholy consolation of knowing that if he is to die, he will die in my own arms."

"Well, but I trust, madam, he won't die. The workings of Providence are never ineffectual, or without a purpose. Have courage, have patience, and all will, I trust, end happily."

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“Well, but I have a request to make. Allow me to kiss him; I shall not disturb him; and if he should recover, as I trust in the Almighty’s mercy he will—oh, how I should like to tell him that the dream about his mother was not altogether a dream—that I did kiss him. Trust me, I will not awaken him—the fall of the thistledown will will not be lighter than the kiss I shall give my child.”

“Well, be it so, my lady; and get yourself calm, for you know not his danger, if he should awaken and become agitated.”

They then reentered the apartment, and Lady Gourlay, after contemplating him for a moment or two, stooped down and gently kissed his lips—once—twice—and a third time—and a single tear fell upon his cheek. At this moment, and the coincidence was beautiful and affecting, his face became once more irradiated by a smile that was singularly serene and sweet, as if his very spirit within him had recognized and felt the affection and tenderness of this timid but loving embrace.

The stranger then led her out again, and a burden seemed to have been taken off her heart. She dried her tears, and in grateful and fervid terms expressed the deep obligations she owed him for his generous and! persevering exertions in seeking out and restoring her son.

This sleep was a long one; and proved very beneficial, by somewhat recruiting the little strength that had been left him. The stranger had every measure taken that could contribute to his comfort and recovery. Two nurse tenders were procured, to whose care he was committed, under the general superintendence of Dandy Dulcimer, whom he at once recognized, and by whose performance upon that instrument the poor young man seemed not only much-pleased, but improved in confidence and the general powers of his intellect. The physician saw him twice a day, so that at the period of Lady Gourlay’s visit, she found that every care and attention, which consideration and kindness, and anxiety for his recovery could bestow upon him, had been paid; a fact that eased and satisfied her mind very much.

One rather gratifying symptom appeared in him after he awoke on that occasion. He looked about the room, and inquired for Dulcimer, who soon made his appearance.

“Dandy,” said he, for he had known him very well in Ballytrain, “will you be angry with me if I ask you a question? Dandy, I am a gentleman, and you will not treat me ill.”

“I would be glad to see the villain that ’ud dare to do it, Mr. Fenton,” replied Dandy, a good deal moved, “much less to do it myself.”

“Ah,” he replied in a tone of voice that was enough to draw tears from any eye, “but, then, I can depend on no one; and if they should bring me back there—” His eyes

became wild and full of horror, as he spoke, and he was about to betray symptoms of strong agitation, when Dandy judiciously brought him back to the point.

“They won’t, Mr. Fenton; don’t be afeared of that; you are among friends now; but what was the question you were goin’ to ask me?”

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“A question!—was I?” said he, pausing, as if striving to recover the train of thought he had lost. “Oh, yes,” he proceeded, “yes; there was a pound note taken from me. I got it from the strange gentleman in the inn, and I wish I had it.”

“Well, sir,” replied Dandy, “if it can be got at all, you must have it. I’ll inquire for it.”

“Do,” he said; “I wish to have it.” Dandy, in reply to the stranger’s frequent and anxious inquiries about him, mentioned this little dialogue, and the latter at once recollected that he had the note in his possession.

“It may be good to gratify him,” he replied; “and as the note can be of little use now, we had better let him have it.”

He accordingly sent it to him by Dandy, who could observe that the possession of it seemed to give him peculiar satisfaction.

Had not the stranger been a man capable of maintaining great restraint over the exercise of very strong feelings, he could never have conducted himself with so much calmness and self-control in his interview with Lady Gourlay and poor Fenton. His own heart during all the time was in a tumult of perfect distraction, but this was occasioned by causes that bore no analogy to those that passed before him. From the moment he heard that Lucy’s marriage had been fixed for the next day but one, he felt as if his hold upon hope and life, and all that they promised him, was lost, and his happiness annihilated forever; he felt as if reason were about to abandon him, as if all existence had become dark, and the sun himself had been struck out of the system of the universe. He could not rest, and only with difficulty think at all as a sane man ought. At length he resolved to see the baronet, at the risk of life or death—in spite of every obstacle—in despite of all opposition;—perish social forms and usages—perish the insolence of wealth, and the jealous restrictions of parental tyranny. Yes, perish one and all, sooner than he, a man, with an unshrinking heart, and a strong arm, should tamely suitor that noble girl to be sacrificed, ay, murdered, at the shrine of a black and guilty ambition. Agitated, urged, maddened, by these considerations, he went to the baronet’s house with a hope of seeing him, but that hope was frustrated. Sir Thomas was out.

“Was Miss Gourlay at home?”

“No; she too had gone out with her father,” replied Gibson, who happened to open the door.

“Would you be kind enough, sir, to deliver a note to Miss Gourlay?”

“I could not, sir; I dare not.”

“I will give you five pounds, if you do.”

“It is impossible, sir; I should lose my situation instantly if I attempted to deliver it. Miss Gourlay, sir, will receive no letters unless through her father’s hands, and besides, sir, we have repeatedly had the most positive orders not to receive any from you, above all men living.”

“I will give you ten pounds.”

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Gibson shook his head, but at the same time the expression of his countenance began manifestly to relax, and he licked his lips as he replied, “I—really—could—not—sir.”

“Twenty.”

The fellow paused and looked stealthily in every direction, when, just at the moment he was about to entertain the subject, Thomas Corbet, the house-steward, came forward from the front parlor where he evidently had been listening, and asked Gibson what was the matter.

“This gentleman,” said Gibson, “ahem—is anxious to have a—ahem—he was inquiring for Sir Thomas.”

“Gibson, go down stairs,” said Corbet. “You had better do so. I have ears, Gibson. Go down at once, and leave the gentleman to me.”

Gibson again licked his lips, shrugged his shoulders, and with a visage rather blank and disappointed, slunk away as he had been desired. When he had gone,

“You wish, sir,” said Corbet, “to have a note delivered to Miss Gourlay?”

“I do, and will give you twenty pounds if you deliver it.”

“Hand me the money quietly,” replied Corbet, “and the note also. I shall then give you a friend’s advice.”

The stranger immediately placed both the money and the note in his hands; when Corbet, having put them in his pocket, said, “I will deliver the note, sir; but go to my father, and ask him to prevent this marriage; and, above all things, to direct you how to act. If any man can serve you in the business, he can.”

“Could you not let me see Miss Gourlay herself?” said the stranger.

“No, sir; she has promised her father neither to see you, nor to write to you, nor to receive any letters from you.”

“But I must see Sir Thomas himself,” said the stranger determinedly.

“You seem a good deal excited, sir,” replied Corbet; “pray, be calm, and listen to me. I shall be obliged to put this letter under a blank cover, which I will address in a feigned hand, in order that she may even receive it. As for her father, he would not see you, nor enter into any explanation whatsoever with you. In fact, he is almost out of his mind with delight and terror; with delight, that the marriage is at length about to take place, and with terror, lest something might occur to prevent it. One word, sir. I see Gibson peeping up. Go and see my father; you have seen him more than once before.”

On the part of Corbet, the stranger remarked that there was something sneaking, slightly derisive, and intimating, moreover, a want of sincerity in this short dialogue, an impression that was strengthened on hearing the relation which he bore to the obstinate old sphinx on Constitution Hill.

“But pardon me, my friend,” said he, as Corbet was about to go away; “if Miss Gourlay will not receive or open my letter, why did you accept such a sum of money for it?” He paused, not knowing exactly how to proceed, yet with a tolerably strong suspicion that Corbet was cheating him.

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“Observe, sir,” replied the other, “that I said I would deliver the letter only—I didn’t undertake to make her read it. But I dare say you are right—I don’t think she will even open it at all, much less read it. Here, sir, I return both money and letter; and I wish you to know, besides, that I am not a man in the habit of being suspected of improper motives. My advice that you should see my father is a proof that I am your friend.”

The other, who was completely outmanoeuvred by Corbet, at once declined to receive back either the letter or notes, and after again pressing the worthy steward to befriend him in the matter of the note as far as he could, he once more paid a visit to old Anthony. This occurred on the day before that appointed for the marriage.

“Corbet,” said he, addressing him as he lay upon an old crazy sofa, the tarnished cover of which shone with dirt, “I am distracted, and have come to ask your advice and assistance.”

“Is it a helpless ould creature like me you’d come to?” replied Corbet, hitching himself upon the sofa, as if to get ease. “But what is wrong now?”

“If this marriage between Miss Gourlay and Lord Dunroe takes place, I shall lose my senses.”

“Well, in troth,” replied Anthony, in his own peculiar manner, “if you don’t get more than you appear to be gifted with at present, you won’t have much to lose, and that will be one comfort. But how can you expect me to assist you?”

“Did you not tell me that the baronet is your puppet?”

“I did; but that was for my ends, not for yours.”

“Well, but could you not prevent this accursed, sacrilegious, blasphemous union?”

“For God’s sake, spake aisy, and keep yourself quiet,” said Anthony; “I am ill, and not able to bear noise and capering like this. I’m a weak, feeble ould man.”

“Listen to me, Corbet,” continued the other, with vehemence, “command my purse, my means to any extent, if you do what I wish.”

“I did like money,” implied Corbet, “but of late my whole heart is filled with but one thought; and rather than not carry that out, I would sacrifice every child I have. I love Miss Gourlay, for I know she is a livin’ angel, but—”

“What? You do not mean to say that you would sacrifice her?”

“If I would sacrifice my own, do you think I’d be apt to spare her?” he asked with a groan, for in fact his illness had rather increased.

“Are you not better?” inquired the stranger, moved by a feeling of humanity which nothing could eradicate out of his noble and generous nature. “Allow me to send a doctor to you? I shall do so at my own expense.”

Anthony looked upon him with more complacency, but replied,

“The blackguard knaves, no; they only rob you first and kill you afterwards. A highway-robber’s before them; for he kills you first, and afther that you can’t feel the pain of being robbed. Well, I can’t talk much to you now. My head’s beginnin’ to get troublesome; but I’ll tell you what you’ll do. I’ll call for that young man, Fenton, and you must let him come with me to the wedding to-morrow mornin’. Indeed, I intended to take a car, and drive over to ask it as a favor from you.”

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“To what purpose should he go, even if he were able? but he is too ill.”

“Hasn’t he been out in a chaise?”

“He has; but as he is incapable of bearing any agitation or excitement, his presence there might cause his death.”

“No, sir, it will not; I knew him to be worse, and he recovered; he will be better, I tell you: besides, if you wish me to sarve you in one way, you must sarve me in this.”

“But can you prevent the marriage?”

“What I can do, or what I cannot do, a team of horses won’t drag out o’ me, until the time—the hour—comes—then! Will you allow the young man to come, sir?”

“But his mother, you say, will be there, and a scene between them would be not only distressing to all parties, and out of place, but might be dangerous to him.”

“It’s because his mother’s to be there, maybe, that I want him to be there. Don’t I tell you that I want to—but no, I’ll keep my own mind to myself—only sink or swim without me, unless you allow him to come.”

“Well, then, if he be sufficiently strong to go, I shall not prevent him, upon the condition that you will exercise the mysterious influence which you seem in possession of for the purpose of breaking up the marriage.”

“I won’t promise to do any such thing,” replied Anthony. “You must only make the best of a bad bargain, by lavin’ everything to myself. Go away now, sir, if you plaise; my head’s not right, and I want to keep it clear for to-morrow.”

The stranger saw that he was as inscrutable as ever, and consequently left him, half in indignation, and half impressed by a lurking hope that, notwithstanding the curtness of his manner, he was determined to befriend him.

This, however, was far from the heart of old Corbet, whose pertinacity of purpose nothing short of death itself could either moderate or change.

“Prevent the marriage, indeed! Oh, ay! Catch me at it. No, no; that must take place, or I’m balked of half my revenge. It’s when he finds that he has, by his own bad and blind passions, married her to the profligate without the title that he’ll shiver. And that scamp, too, the bastard—but, no matther—I must try and keep my head clear, as I said, for to-morrow will be a great day, either for good or evil, to some of them. Yes, and when all is over, then my mind will be at aise; this black thing that’s inside o’ me for years—drivin’ me on, on, on—will go about his business; and then, plaise goodness, I can repent comfortably and like a Christian. Oh, dear me!—my head!”

CHAPTER XLI. Denouement.

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At length the important morning, fraught with a series of such varied and many-colored events, arrived. Sir Thomas Gourlay, always an early riser, was up betimes, and paced his room to and fro in a train of profound reflection. It was evident, however, from his elated yet turbid eye, that although delight and exultation were prevalent in his breast, he was by no means free from visitations of a dark and painful character. These he endeavored to fling off, and in order to do so more effectually, he gave a loose rein to the contemplation of his own successful ambition. Yet he occasionally appeared anxious and uneasy, and felt disturbed and gloomy fits that irritated him even for entertaining them. He was more than usually nervous; his hand shook, and his stern, strong voice had in its tones, when he spoke, the audible evidences of agitation. These, we say, threw their deep shadows over his mind occasionally, whereas a sense of triumph and gratified pride constituted its general tone and temper.

“Well,” said he, “so far so well: Lucy will soon become reconciled to this step, and all my projects for her advancement will be—nay, already are, realized. After all, my theory of life is the correct one, no matter what canting priests and ignorant philosophers may say to the contrary. Every man is his own providence, and ought to be his own priest, as I have been. As for a moral plan in the incidents and vicissitudes of life, I could never see nor recognize such a thing. Or if there be a Providence that foresees and directs, then we only fulfil his purposes by whatever we do, whether the act be a crime or a virtue. So that on either side I am safe. There, to be sure, is my brother’s son, against whom I have committed a crime; ay, but what, after all, is a crime?—An injury to a fellow-creature. What is a virtue?—A benefit to the same. Well, he has sustained an injury at my hands—be it so—that is a crime; but I and my son have derived a benefit from the act, and this turns it into a virtue; for as to who gains or who loses, that is not a matter for the world, who have no distinct rule whereby to determine its complexion or its character, unless by the usages and necessities of life, which are varied by climate and education to such an extent, that what is looked upon as a crime in one country or one creed is frequently considered a virtue in another. As for futurity, that is a sealed book which no man hitherto has been able to open. We all know—and a dark and gloomy fact it is—that we must die. Beyond that, the searches of human intellect cannot go, although the imagination may project itself into a futurity of its own creation. Such airy visions are not subjects sufficiently solid for belief. As for me, if I believe nothing, the fault is not mine, for I can find nothing to believe—nothing that can satisfy my reason. The contingencies of life, as they cross and jostle each other, constitute by their accidental results the only providential

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wisdom which I can discern, the proper name of which is Chance. Who have I, for instance, to thank but myself—my own energy of character, my own perseverance of purpose, my own determined will—for accomplishing my own projects? I can perceive no other agent, either visible or invisible. It is, however, a hard creed—a painful creed, and one which requires great strength of mind to entertain. Yet, on the other hand, when I reflect that it may be only the result of a reaction in principle, proceeding from a latent conviction that all is not right within, and that we reject the tribunal because we are conscious that it must condemn us—abjure the authority of the court because we have violated its jurisdiction; yes, when I reflect upon this, it is then that these visitations of gloom and wretchedness sometimes agonize my mind until it becomes dark and heated, like hell, and I curse both myself and my creed. Now, however, when this marriage shall have taken place, the great object of my life will be gained—the great struggle will be over, and I can relax and fall back into a life of comfort, enjoyment, and freedom from anxiety and care. But, then, is there no risk of sacrificing my daughter's happiness forever? I certainly would not do that. I know, however, what influence the possession of rank, position, title, will have on her, when she comes to know their value by seeing—ay, and by feeling, how they are appreciated. There is not a husband-hunting dowager in the world of fashion, nor a female projector or manoeuvrer in aristocratic life, who will not enable her to understand and enjoy her good fortune. Every sagacious cast for a title will be to her a homily on content. But, above all, she will be able to see and despise their jealousy, to laugh at their envy, and to exercise at their expense that superiority of intellect and elevation of rank which she will possess; for this I will teach her to do. Yes, I am satisfied. All will then go on smoothly, and I shall trouble myself no more about creeds or covenants, whether secular or spiritual."

He then went to dress and shave after this complacent resolution, but was still a good deal surprised to find that his hand shook so disagreeably, and that his powerful system was in a state of such general and unaccountable agitation.

After he had dressed, and was about to go down stairs, Thomas Corbet came to ask a favor, as he said.

"Well, Corbet," replied his master, "what is it?"

"My father, sir," proceeded the other, "wishes to know if you would have any objection to his being present at Miss Gourlay's marriage, and if you would also allow him to bring a few friends, who, he says, are anxious to see the bride."

"No objection, Corbet—none in the world; and least of all to your father. I have found your family faithful and attached to my interests for many a long year, and it would be too bad to refuse him such a paltry request as that. Tell him to bring his friends too, and they may be present at the ceremony, if they wish. It was never my intention that my

daughter's marriage should be a private one, nor would it now, were it not for her state of health. Let your father's friends and yours come, then, Corbet, and see that you entertain them properly."

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Corbet then thanked him, and was about to go, when the other said, “Corbet!” after which he paused for some time.

“Sir!” said Corbet.

“I wish to ask your opinion,” he proceeded, “as to allowing my son to be present. He himself wishes it, and asked my consent; but as his sister entertains such an unaccountable prejudice against him, I had doubts as to whether he ought to appear at all. There are, also, as you know, other reasons.”

“I don’t see any reason, sir, that ought to exclude him the moment the marriage words are pronounced. I think, sir, with humility, that it is not only his right, but his duty, to be present, and that it is a very proper occasion for you to acknowledge him openly.”

“It would be a devilish good hit at Dunroe, for, between you and me, Corbet, I fear that his heart is fixed more upon the Gourlay estates and her large fortune than upon the girl herself.”

If I might advise, sir, I think he ought to be present.”

“And the moment the ceremony is over, be introduced to his brother-in-law. A good hit. I shall do it. Send word to him, then, Corbet. As it must be done some time, it may as well be done now. Dunroe will of course be too much elated, as he ought to be, to feel the blow—or to appear to feel it, at all events—for decency’s sake, you know, he must keep up appearances; and if it were only on that account, we will avail ourselves of the occasion which presents itself. This is another point gained. I think I may so ‘Bravo!’ Corbet: I have managed everything admirably, and accomplished all my purposes single-handed.”

Thomas Corbet himself, deep and cunning as he was, yet knew not how much he had been kept in the dark as to the events of this fateful day. He had seen his father the day before, as had his sister, and they both felt surprised at the equivocal singularity of his manner, well and. thoroughly as they imagined they had known him. It was, in fact, at his suggestion that the baronet’s son had been induced to ask permission to be present at the wedding, and also to be then and there acknowledged; a fact which the baronet either forgot or omitted to mention to Corbet. Anthony also insisted that his daughter should make one of the spectators, under pain of disclosing to Sir Thomas the imposition that had been practised on him in the person of her son. Singular as it may appear, this extraordinary old man, in the instance before us, moved, by his peculiar knowledge and sagacity, as if he had them on wires, almost every person with whom he came in contact, or whose presence he considered necessary on the occasion.

“What can he mean?” said Thomas to his sister. “Surely he would not be mad enough to make Sir Thomas’s house the place in which to produce Lady Gourlay’s son, the very individual who is to strip him of his title, and your son of all his prospects?”

“Oh no,” replied Ginty, “certainly not; otherwise, why have lent himself to the carrying out of our speculation with respect to that boy. Such a step would ruin him—ruin us all—but then it would ruin the man he hates, and that would gratify him, I know. He is full of mystery, certainly; but as he will disclose nothing as to his movements, we must just let him have his own way, as that is the only chance of managing him.”

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Poor Lucy could not be said to have awoke to a morning of despair and anguish, because she had not slept at all the night before. Having got up and dressed herself, by the aid of Alice, she leaned on her as far as the boudoir to which allusion has already been made. On arriving there she sat down, and when her maid looked upon her countenance she became so much alarmed and distressed that she burst into tears.

“What, my darling mistress, is come over you?” she exclaimed. “You have always spoken to me until this unhappy mornin’ Oh, you are fairly in despair now; and indeed is it any wonder? I always thought, and hoped, and prayed that something might turn up to prevent this cursed marriage. I see, I read, despair in your face.”

Lucy raised her large, languid eyes, and looked upon her, but did not speak. She gave a ghastly smile, but that was all.

“Speak to me, dear Miss Gourlay,” exclaimed the poor girl, with a flood of tears. “Oh, only speak to me, and let me hear your voice!”

Lucy beckoned her to sit beside her, and said, with difficulty, that she wished to wet her lips. The girl knew by the few words she uttered that her voice was gone; and on looking more closely she saw that her lips were dry and parched. In a few moments she got her a glass of water, a portion of which Lucy drank.

“Now,” said Alice, “that will relieve and refresh you; but oh, for God’s sake, spake to me, and tell me how you feel! Miss Gourlay, darlin’, you are in despair!”

Lucy took her maid’s hand in hers, and after looking upon her with a smile resembling the first, replied, “No, Alice, I will not despair, but I feel that I will die. No, I will not despair, Alice. Short as the time is, God may interpose between me and misery—-between me and despair. But if I am married to this man, Alice, my faith in virtue, in a good conscience, in truth, purity, and honor, my faith in Providence itself will be shaken; and then I will despair and die.”

“Oh, what do you mean, my darlin’ Miss Gourlay?” exclaimed her weeping maid. “Surely you couldn’t think of having a hand in your own death? Oh, merciful Father, see what they have brought you to!”

“Alice,” said she, “I have spoken wrongly: the moment in which I uttered the last expression was a weak one. No, I will never doubt or distrust Providence; and I may die, Alice, but I will never despair.”

“But why talk about death, miss, so much?”

“Because I feel it lurking in my heart. My physical strength will break down under this woful calamity. I am as weak as an infant, and all before me is dark—in this world I

mean—but not, thank God, in the next. Now I cannot speak much more, Alice. Leave me to my silence and to my sorrow."

The affectionate girl, utterly overcome, laid her head upon her bosom and wept, until Lucy was forced to soothe and comfort her as well as she could. They then sat silent for a time, the maid, however, sobbing and sighing bitterly, whilst Lucy only uttered one word in an undertone, and as if altogether to herself, "Misery! misery!"

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At this moment her father tapped at the door, and on being admitted, ordered Alice to leave the room; he wished to have some private conversation, he said, with her mistress.

“Don’t make it long, if you please, sir,” said she, “for my mistress won’t be aquil to it. It’s more at the point of death than the point of marriage she is.”

One stern look from the baronet, however, silenced her in a moment, and after a glance of most affectionate interest at her mistress she left the room.

“Lucy,” said her father, after contemplating that aspect of misery which could not be concealed, “I am not at all pleased with this girlish and whining appearance. I have done all that man could do to meet your wishes and to make you happy. I have become reconciled to your aunt for your sake. I have allowed her and Mrs. Norton—Mainwaring I mean—to be present at your wedding, that they might support and give you confidence. You are about to be married to a handsome young fellow, only a little wild, but who will soon make you a countess. Now, in God’s name, what more do you want?”

“I think,” she replied, “that I ought not to marry this man. I believe that I stand justified in the sight of God and man in refusing to seal my own misery. The promise I made you, sir, was given under peculiar circumstances—under terror of your death. These circumstances are now removed, and it is cruel to call on me to make a sacrifice that is a thousand times worse than death. No, papa, I will not marry this depraved man—this common seducer. I shall never unite myself to him, let the consequences be what they may. There is a line beyond which parental authority ought not to go—you have crossed it.”

“Be it so, madam; I shall see you again in a few minutes,” he replied, and immediately left the room, his face almost black with rage and disappointment. Lucy grew alarmed at the terrible abruptness and significance of his manner, and began to tremble, although she knew not why.

“Can I violate my promise,” said she to herself, “after having made it so solemnly? And ought I to marry this man in obedience to my father? Alas! I know not; but may heaven direct me for the best! If I thought it would make papa happy—but his is a restless and ambitious spirit, and how can I be certain of that? May heaven direct me and guide me!”

In a few minutes afterwards her father returned, and taking out of his pockets a pair of pistols, laid them on the table.

“Now, Lucy,” said he solemnly, and with a vehemence of manner almost frantic, “we will see if you cannot yet save your father’s life, or whether you will prefer to have his blood on your soul.”

“For heaven’s sake, papa,” said his daughter, running to him, and throwing or attempting to throw her arms about him, partly, in the moment of excitement, to embrace, and partly to restrain him.

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“Hold off, madam,” he replied; “hold off; you have made me desperate—you have driven me mad. Now, mark me. I will not ask you to marry this man; but I swear by all that is sacred, that if you disgrace me—if you insult Lord Dunroe by refusing to be united to him this day—I shall put the contents of one or both of these pistols through my brains; and you may comfort yourself over the corpse of a suicide father, and turn to your brother for protection.”

Either alternative was sufficiently dreadful for the poor worn and wearied out girl.

“Oh, papa,” she exclaimed, again attempting to throw her arms around him; “put these fearful weapons aside. I will obey you—I will marry him.”

“This day?”

“This day, papa, as soon as my aunt and Mrs. Mainwaring come, and I can get myself dressed.”

“Do so, then; or, if not I shall not survive your refusal five minutes.”

“I will, papa,” she replied, laying her head upon his breast and sobbing; “I will marry him; but put those vile and dangerous weapons away, and never talk so again.”

At this moment the door opened, and Alice, who had been listening, entered the room in a high and towering passion. Her eyes sparkled: her complexion was scarlet with rage; her little hands were most heroically clenched; and, altogether, the very excitement in which she presented herself, joined to a good face and fine figure, made her look exceedingly interesting and handsome.

“How, madam,” exclaimed the baronet, “what brings you here? Withdraw instantly!”

“How, yourself, sir,” she replied, walking up and looking him fearlessly in the face; “none of your ‘how, madams,’ to me any more; as there’s neither man nor woman to interfere here, I must only do it myself.”

“Leave the room, you brazen jade!” shouted the baronet; “leave the room, or it’ll be worse for you.”

“Deuce a one toe I’ll lave it. It wasn’t for that I came here, but to tell you that you are a tyrant and a murdherer, a mane old schemer, that would marry your daughter to a common swindler and reprobate, because he’s a lord. But here I stand, the woman that will prevent this marriage, if there wasn’t another faymale from here to Bally-shanny.”

“Alice!” exclaimed Lucy, “for heaven’s sake, what do you mean?—what awful language is this? You forget yourself.”

“That may be, miss, but, by the life in my body, I won’t forget you. A ring won’t go on you to that titled scamp so long as I have a drop of manly blood in my veins—deuce a ring!”

Amazement almost superseded indignation on the part of the baronet, who unconsciously exclaimed, “A ring!”

“No—pursuin’ to the ring!” she replied, accompanying the words with what was intended to be a fearful blow of her little clenched hand upon the table.

“Let me go, Lucy,” said her father, “till I put the termagant out of the room.”

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“Yes, let him go, miss,” replied Alley; “let us see what he’ll do. Here I stand now,” she proceeded, approaching him; “and if you offer to lift a hand to me, I’ll lave ten of as good marks in your face as ever a woman left since the creation. Come, now—am I afeard of you?” and as she spoke she approached him still more nearly, with both her hands close to his face, her fingers spread out and half-clenched, reminding one of a hawk’s talons.

“Alice,” said Lucy, “this is shocking; if you love me, leave the room.”

“Love you! miss,” replied the indignant but faithful girl, bursting into bitter tears; “love you!—merciful heaven, wouldn’t I give my life for you?—who that knows you doesn’t love you? and it’s for that reason that I don’t wish to see you murdhered—nor won’t. Come, sir, you must let her out of this marriage. It’ll be no go, I tell you. I won’t suffer it, so long as I’ve strength and life. I’ll dash myself between them. I’ll make the ole clergyman skip if he attempts it; ay, and what’s more, I’ll see Dandy Dulcimer, and we’ll collect a faction.”

“Do not hold me, Lucy,” said her father; “I must certainly put her out of the room.”

“Don’t, papa,” replied Lucy, restraining him from laying hands upon her, “don’t, for the sake of honor and manhood. Alice, for heaven’s sake! if you love me, as I said, and I now add, if you respect me, leave the room. You will provoke papa past endurance.”

“Not a single toe, miss, till he promises to let you cut o’ this match. Oh, my good man,” she said, addressing the struggling baronet, “if you’re for fighting, here I am I for you; or wait,” she added, whipping up one of the pistols, “Come, now, if you’re a man; take your ground there. Now I can meet you on equal terms; get to the corner there, the distance is short enough; but no matther, you’re a good mark. Come, now, don’t think I’m the bit of goods to be afeard o’ you—it’s not the first jewel I’ve seen in my time, and remember that my name is Mahon”—and she posted herself in the corner, as if to take her ground. “Come, now,” she repeated, “you called me a ‘brazen jade’ awhile ago, and I demand satisfaction.”

“Alice,” said Lucy, “you will injure yourself or others, if you do not lay that dangerous weapon down. For God’s sake, Alice, lay it aside—it is loaded.”

“Deuce a bit o’ danger, miss,” replied the indignant heroine. “I know more about fire-arms than you think; my brothers used to have them to protect the house. I’ll soon see, at any rate, whether it’s loaded or not.”

While speaking she whipped out the ramrod, and, making the experiment found, that it was empty.

“Ah,” she exclaimed, “you desateful old tyrant: and so you came down blusterin’ and bullyin’, and frightenin’ your child into compliance, with a pair of empty pistols! By the life in my body, if I had you in Ballytrain, I’d post you.”

“Papa,” said Lucy, “you must excuse this—it is the excess of her affection for me. Dear Alice,” she said, addressing her, and for a moment forgetting her weakness, “come with me; I cannot, and will not bear this; come with me out of the room.”

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“Very well; I’ll go to plaise you, miss, but I’ve made up my mind that this marriage mustn’t take place. Just think of it,” she added, turning to her master; “if you force her to marry this scamp of a lord, the girl has sense, and spirit, and common decency, and of course she’ll run away from him; after that, it won’t be hard to guess who she’ll run to—-then there’ll be a con. crim. about it, and it’ll go to the lawyers, and from the lawyers it’ll go to the deuce, and that will be the end of it; and all because you’re a coarse-minded tyrant, unworthy of having such a daughter. Oh, you needn’t shake your hand at me. You refused to give me satisfaction, and I’d now scorn to notice you. Remember I cowed you, and for that reason never pretend to be a gentleman afther this.”

Lucy then led her out of the room, which she left, after turning upon her master a look of the proudest and fiercest defiance, and at the same time the most sovereign contempt.

“Lucy,” said her father, “is not this a fine specimen of a maid to have in personal attendance upon you?”

“I do not defend her conduct now, sir,” she replied; “but I cannot overlook her affection, her truth, her attachment to me, nor the many other virtues which I know she possesses. She is somewhat singular, I grant, and a bit of a character, and I could wish that her manners were somewhat less plain; but, on the other hand, she does not pretend to be a fine lady with her mistress, although she is not without some harmless vanity; neither is she frivolous, giddy, nor deceitful; and whatever faults there may be, papa, in her head, there are none in her heart. It is affectionate, faithful, and disinterested. Indeed, whilst I live I shall look upon her as my friend.”

“I am determined, however, she shall not be long under my roof, nor in your service; her conduct just now has settled that point; but, putting her out of the question, I trust we understand each other, and that you are prepared to make your father’s heart happy. No more objections.”

“No, sir; I have said so.”

“You will go through the ceremony with a good grace?’

“I cannot promise that, sir; but I shall go through the ceremony.”

“Yes, but you must do it without offence to Dunroe, and with as little appearance of reluctance as possible.”

“I have no desire to draw a painful attention to myself, papa; but you will please to recollect that I have all my horror, all my detestation of this match to contend with; and, I may add, my physical weakness, and the natural timidity of woman. I shall, however, go through the ceremony, provided nature and reason do not fail me.”

“Well, Lucy, of course you will do the best you can. I must go now, for I’ve many things to think of. Your dresses are admirable, and your trousseau, considering the short time Dunroe had, is really superb. Shake hands, my dear Lucy; you know I will soon lose you.”

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Lucy, whose heart was affection itself, threw herself into his arms, and exclaimed, in a burst of grief:

“Yes, papa, I feel that you will; and, perhaps, when I am gone, you will say, with sorrow, that it would have been better to have allowed Lucy to be happy her own way.”

“Come, now, you foolish, naughty girl,” he exclaimed affectionately, “be good—be good.” And as he spoke, he kissed her, pressed her hand tenderly, and then left the room.

“Alas!” exclaimed Lucy, still in tears, “how happy might we have been, had this ambition for my exaltation not existed in my father’s heart!”

If Lucy rose with a depressed spirit on that morning of sorrow, so did not Lord Dunroe. This young nobleman, false and insincere in everything, had succeeded in inducing his sister to act as brides-maid, Sir Thomas having asked her consent as a personal compliment to himself and his daughter. She was told by her brother that young Roberts would act in an analogous capacity to him; and this he held out as an inducement to her, having observed something like an attachment between her and the young ensign. Not that he at all approved of this growing predilection, for though strongly imbued with all the senseless and absurd prejudices against humble birth which disgrace aristocratic life and feeling, he was base enough to overrule his own opinions on the subject, and endeavor, by this unworthy play upon his sister’s feelings, to prevail upon her to do an act that would throw her into his society, and which, under any other circumstances, he would have opposed. He desired her, at the same time, not to mention the fact to their father, who, he said, entertained a strong prejudice against upstarts, and was besides, indisposed to the marriage, in consequence of Sir Thomas Goulray’s doubtful reputation, as regarding the disappearance of his brother’s heir. In consequence of these representations, Lady Emily not only consented to act as bride’s-maid; but also to keep her knowledge of the forthcoming marriage a secret from her father.

At breakfast that morning Dunroe was uncommonly cheerful. Norton, on the other hand, was rather depressed, and could not be prevailed upon to partake of the gay and exuberant spirit of mirth and buoyancy which animated Dunroe.

“What the deuce is the matter with you, Norton?” said his lordship. “You seem rather annoyed that I am going to marry a very lovely girl with an immense fortune? With both, you know very well that I can manage without either the Cullamore title or property. The Gourlay property is as good if not better. Come, then, cheer up; if the agency of the Cullamore property is gone, we shall have that on the Gourlay side to look to.”

“Dunroe, my dear fellow,” replied Norton, “I am thinking of nothing so selfish. That which distresses me is, that I will lose my friend. This Miss Gourlay is, they say, so

confoundedly virtuous that I dare say she will allow no honest fellow, who doesn't carry a Bible and a Prayer-book in his pocket, and quote Scripture in conversation, to associate with you."

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“Nonsense, man,” replied Dunroe, “I have satisfied you on that point before. But I say, Norton, is not this a great bite on the baronet, especially as he considers himself a knowing one?”

“Yes, I grant you, a great bite, no doubt; but, at the same time, I rather guess you may thank me for the possession of Miss Gourlay, and the property which will go along with her.”

“As how, Norton?”

“Why, don’t you remember the anonymous note which I wrote to the baronet, when I was over in Dublin to get the horse changed? He was then at Red Hall. I am certain that were it not for that hint, there would have been an elopement. You know it was the fellow who shot you, that was then in her neighborhood, and he is at present in town. I opened the baronet’s eyes at all events.”

“Faith, to tell you the truth, Norton, although I know you do me in money matters now and then, still I believe you to be a faithful fellow. In fact, you owe me more than you are aware of. You know not how I have resisted the respectable old nobleman’s wishes to send you adrift as an impostor and cheat. I held firm, however, and told him I could never with honor abandon my friend.”

“Many thanks, Dunroe; but I really must say that I am neither an impostor nor a cheat; and that if ever a man was true friend and faithful to man, I am that friend to your lordship; not, God knows, because you are a lord, but because you are a far better thing—a regular trump. A cheat! curse it,” clapping his hands over his eyes, to conceal his emotion, “isn’t my name Norton? and am I not your friend?”

At this moment a servant came in, and handed Lord Dunroe a note, which he was about to throw to Norton, who generally acted as a kind of secretary to him; but observing the depth and sincerity and also the modesty of his feelings, he thought it indelicate to trouble him with it just then. Breakfast was now over, and Dunroe, throwing himself back in an arm-chair, opened the letter—read it—then another that was contained in it; after which he rose up, and travelled the room with a good deal of excitement. He then approached Norton, and said, in a voice that might be said to have been made up of heat and cold, “What disturbs you?”

Norton winked both eyes, did the pathetic a bit, then pulled out his pocket handkerchief, and blew his nose up to a point little short of distress itself. In the meantime, Dunroe suddenly left the room without Norton’s knowledge, who replied, however, to the last question, under the impression that his lordship was present,

“Ah, my dear Dunroe, the loss of a true friend is a serious thing in a world like this, where so many cheats and impostors are going.”

To this, however, he received no reply; and on looking round and finding that his dupe had gone out, he said:

“Curse the fellow—he has cut me short. I was acting friendship to the life, and now he has disappeared. However, I will resume it when I hear his foot on the return. His hat is there, and I know he will come back for it.”

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Nearly ten minutes had elapsed, during which he was making the ham and chicken disappear, when, on hearing a foot which he took for granted must be that of his lordship, he once more threw himself into his former attitude, and putting the handkerchief again to his eyes, exclaimed:

“No, my lord. A cheat! Curse it, isn’t my name Norton? and am I not your friend?”

“Why, upon my soul, Barney, you used of ould to bring out only one lie at a time but now you give them in pairs. ‘Isn’t my name Norton?’ says you. I kept the saicret bekaise you never meddled with Lord Cullamore or Lady Emily, or attempted your tricks on them, and for that raison you ought to thank me. Here’s a note from Lord Dunroe, who looks as black as midnight.”

“What! a note from Dunroe!” exclaimed Norton. “Why he only left me this minute! What the deuce can this mean?”

He opened the note, and read, to his dismay and astonishment as follows:

“Infamous and treacherous scoundrel,—I have this moment received your letter to Mr. Birney, enclosed by that gentleman to me, in which you offer, for a certain sum, to betray me, by placing in the hands of my enemies the very documents you pretended to have destroyed. I now know the viper I have cherished—begone. You are a cheat, an impostor, and a villain, whose name is not Norton, but Bryan, once a horse-jockey on the Curragh, and obliged to fly the country for swindling and dishonesty. Remove your things instantly; but that shall not prevent me from tracing you and handing you over to justice for your knavery and fraud.

“DUNROE.”

“All right! Morty——all right!” exclaimed Norton; “upon my soul, Dunroe is too generous. You know he is going to be married to-day. Was that Roberts who went up stairs?”

“It was the young officer, if that’s his name,” replied Morty.

“All right! Morty; he’s to be groom’s-man—that will do; this requires no answer. The generous fellow has made me a present on his wedding-day. That will do, Morty; you may go.”

“All’s discovered,” he exclaimed, when Morty was gone; “however, it’s not too late: I shall give him a Roland for his Oliver before we part. It will be no harm to give the the respectable old nobleman a hint of what’s going on, at any rate. This discovery, however, won’t signify, for I know Dunroe. The poor fool has no self-reliance; but if left to himself would die. He possesses no manly spirit of independent will, no firmness, no fixed principle—he is, in fact, a noun adjective, and cannot stand alone. Depraved in his appetites and habits of life, he cannot live without some hanger-on to enjoy his

freaks of silly and senseless profligacy, who can praise and laugh at him, and who will act at once as his butt, his bully, his pander, and his friend; four capacities in which I have served him—at his own expense, be it said. No; my ascendancy over him has been too long established, and I know that, like a prime

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minister who has been hastily dismissed, I shall be ultimately recalled. And yet he is not without gleams of sense, is occasionally sprightly, and has perceptions of principle that might have made him a man—an individual being: but now, having neither firmness, resolution to carry out a good purpose, nor self-respect, he is a miserable and wretched cipher, whose whole value depends on the figure that is next him. Yes, I know—I feel—he will recall me to his councils."

At length the hour of half-past eleven arrived, and in Sir Thomas Gourlay's drawing-room were assembled all those who had been asked to be present, or to take the usual part in the marriage ceremony. Dr. Sombre, the clergyman of the parish, had just arrived, and, having entered the drawing-room, made a bow that would not have disgraced a bishop. He was pretty well advanced in years, excessively stupid, and possessed so vile a memory for faces, that he was seldom able to recognize his own guests, if he happened to meet them in the streets on the following day. He was an expectant for preferment in the church, and if the gift of a good appetite were a successful recommendation for a mitre, as that of a strong head has been before now, no man was better entitled to wear it. Be this as it may, the good man, who expected to partake of an excellent *dejuner*, felt that it was a portion of his duty to give a word or two of advice to the young couple upon the solemn and important duties into the discharge of which they were about to enter. Accordingly, looking round the room, he saw Mr. Roberts and Lady Emily engaged, at a window, in what appeared to him to be such a conversation as might naturally take place between parties about to be united. Lucy had not yet made her appearance, but Dunroe was present, and on seeing the Rev. Doctor join them, was not at all sorry at the interruption. This word of advice, by the way, was a stereotyped commodity with the Doctor, who had not married a couple for the last thirty years, without palming it on them as an extempore piece of admonition arising from that particular occasion. The worthy man was, indeed, the better qualified to give it, having never been married himself, and might, therefore, be considered as perfectly free from prejudices affecting either party upon the subject.

"You, my dear children, are the parties about to be united?" said he, addressing Roberts and Lady Emily, with a bow that had in it a strong professional innuendo, but of what nature was yet to be learned.

"Yes, sir," replied Roberts, who at once perceived the good man's mistake, and was determined to carry out whatever jest might arise from it.

"Oh no, sir," replied Lady Emily, blushing deeply; "we are not the parties."

"Because," proceeded the Doctor, "I think I could not do better than give you, while together, a few words—just a little homily, as it were—upon the nature of the duties into which you are about to enter."

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“Oh, but I have told you,” replied Lady Emily, again, “that we are not the parties, Dr. Sombre.”

“Never mind her, Doctor,” said Roberts—assuming, with becoming gravity, the character of the intended husband: “the Doctor, my dear, knows human nature too well not to make allowances for the timidity peculiar to your situation. Come, my, love be firm, and let us hear what he has to say.”

“Yes,” replied the Doctor, “I can understand that; I knew I was right: and all you want now is the ceremony to make you man and wife.”

“Indisputable, Doctor; nothing can be more true. These words might almost appear as an appendix to the Gospel.”

“Well, my children,” proceeded the Doctor, “listen—marriage may be divided—”

“I thought it was rather a union, Doctor.”

“So it is, child,” replied the Doctor, in the most matter-of-fact spirit; “but you know that even Unions can be divided. When I was induced to the Union of Ballycomeasy and Ballycomsharp I—”

“But, Doctor,” said Roberts, “I beg your pardon, I have interrupted you. Will you have the kindness to proceed? my fair partner, here, is very anxious to hear your little homily—are you not, my love?”

Lady Emily was certainly pressed rather severely to maintain her gravity—in fact, so much so, that she was unable to reply, Robert’s composure being admirable.

“Well,” resumed the Doctor, “as I was saying—Marriage may be divided into three heads—”

“For heaven’s sake, make it only two, if possible, my dear Doctor,” said Roberts: “the appearance of a third head is rather uncomfortable, I think.”

—“Into three heads—first, its duties; next, its rights; and lastly, its tribulations.”

The Doctor, we may observe, was in general very unlucky, in the reception which fell to the share of his little homily—the fact being with it as with its subject in actual life, that his audience, however they might feel upon its rights and duties, were very anxious to avoid its tribulations in any sense, and the consequence was, that in nineteen cases out of twenty the reverend bachelor himself was left in the midst of them. Such was his fate here; for at this moment Sir Thomas Gourlay entered the drawing-room, and approaching Lady Emily, said, “I have to apologize to you, Lady Emily, inasmuch as it is I who am to blame for Miss Gourlay’s not having seen you sooner. On a subject of such

importance, it is natural that a father should have some private conversation with her, and indeed this was the case; allow me now to conduct you to her."

"There is no apology whatsoever necessary, Sir Thomas," replied her ladyship, taking his arm, and casting a rapid but precious glance at Roberts. As they went up stairs, the baronet said, in a voice of great anxiety,

"You will oblige me, Lady Emily, by keeping her from the looking-glass as much as possible. I have got her maid—who, although rather plain in her manners, has excellent taste in all matters connected with the toilette—I have got her to say, while dressing her, that it is not considered lucky for a bride to see herself in a looking-glass on the day of her marriage."

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“But why should she not, Sir Thomas?” asked the innocent and lovely girl: “if ever a lady should consult her glass, it is surely upon such an occasion as this.”

“I grant it,” he replied; “but then her paleness—is—is—her looks altogether are so—in fact, you may understand me, Lady Emily—she is, in consequence of her very delicate health—in consequence of that, I say, she is more like a corpse than a living being—in complexion I mean. And now, my dear Lady Emily, will you hurry her? I am anxious—-that is to say, we all are—to have the ceremony over as soon as it possibly can. She will then feel better, of course.”

Dr. Sombre, seeing that one of the necessary audience to his little homily had disappeared, seemed rather disappointed, but addressed himself to Roberts upon a very different subject.

“I dare say,” said he, “we shall have a very capital dejeuner to-day.”

Roberts was startled at the rapid and carnal nature of the transition in such a reverend-looking old gentleman; but as the! poor Doctor had sustained a disappointment on the subject of the homily, he was determined to afford him some comfort on this.

“I understand,” said he, “from the best authority, that nothing like it has been seen for years in the city. Several of the nobility and gentry have privately solicited Sir Thomas for copies of the bill of fare.”

“That is all right,” replied the Doctor, “that is all excellent, my good young friend. Who is that large gentleman who has just come in?”

“Why, sir,” replied Roberts, astonished, “that is Sir Thomas Gourlay himself.”

“Bless me, and so it is,” replied the Doctor; “he is getting very fat—eh? Ay, all right, and will make excellent eating if the cooking be good.”

Roberts saw at once what the worthy Doctor was thinking of, and resolved Lo suggest some other topic, if it were only to punish him for bestowing such attention upon a subject so much at variance with thoughts that ought to occupy the mind of a minister of God.

“I have heard, Doctor, that you are a bachelor,” said he. “How did it happen, pray, that you kept aloof from marriage?”

The Doctor, who had been contemplating his own exploits at the dejuner, now that Roberts had mentioned marriage, took it for granted that he wanted him to proceed with his homily, and tried to remember where he had left off.

“Oh, yes,” said he, “about marriage; I stopped at its tribulations. I think I had got over its rights and duties, but I stopped at its tribulations—yes, its tribulations. Very well my dear friend,” he proceeded, taking him by the hand, and leading him over to a corner, “accompany me, and you shall enter them now. Where is the young lady?”

“She will be here by and by,” replied Roberts; “I think you had better wait till she comes.”

The Doctor paused for some time, and following up the idea of the dejuner, said, “I am fond of wild fowl now.”

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“Oh, fie, Doctor,” replied the Ensign; “I did not imagine that so grave a personage as you are could be fond of anything wild.”

“Oh, yes,” replied the Doctor, “ever while you live prefer the wild to the tame; every one, sir,” he added, taking the other by the button, “that knows what’s what, in that respect, does it. Well, but about the tribulations.”

As usual the Doctor was doomed to be left in them, for just as he spoke the doors were thrown more widely open, and Lucy, leaning upon, or rather supported by, her aunt and Lady Emily, accompanied by Mrs. Mainwaring, entered the room. Her father had been in close conversation with Dunroe; but not all his efforts at self-possession and calmness could prevent his agitation and anxiety from being visible. His eye was unsettled and blood-shot; his manner uneasy, and the whole bearing indicative of hope, ecstasy, apprehension, and doubt, all flitting across each other like clouds in a sky troubled by adverse currents, but each and all telling a tale of the tumult which was going on within him.

Yes, Lucy was there, but, alas the day! what a woful sight did she present to the spectators. The moment she had come down, the servants, and all those who had obtained permission to be present at the ceremony, now entered the large drawing-room to witness it. Tom Gourlay entered a little after his sister, followed in a few minutes by old Anthony, accompanied by Fenton, who leant upon him, and was provided with an arm-chair in a remote corner of the room. After them came Thomas Corbet and his sister, Ginty Cooper, together with old Sam Roberts, and the man named Skipton, with whom the reader has already been made acquainted.

But how shall we describe the bride—the wretched, heart-broken victim of an ambition that was as senseless as it was inhuman? It was impossible for one moment to glance at her without perceiving that the stamp of death, misery, and despair, was upon her; and yet, despite of all this, she carried with her and around her a strange charm, an atmosphere of grace, elegance, and beauty, of majestic virtue, of innate greatness of mind, of wonderful truth, and such transparent purity of heart and thought, that when she entered the room all the noise and chat and laughter were instantly hushed, and a sense of solemn awe, as if there were more than a marriage here, came over all present. Nay, more. We shall not pretend to trace the cause and origin of this extraordinary sensation. Originate as it may, it told a powerful and startling tale to her father’s heart; but in truth she had not been half a minute in the room when, such was the dignified but silent majesty of her sorrow, that there were few eyes there that were not moist with tears. The melancholy impressiveness of her character, her gentleness, her mournful resignation, the patience with which she suffered, could not for one moment be misunderstood, and the contagion of sympathy, and of common humanity, in the fate of a creature apparently more divine than human, whose sorrow was read as if by intuition, spread through them with a feeling of strong compassion that melted almost every I heart, and sent the tears to every eye.

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Her father approached her, and whispered to her, and caressed her, and seemed playful and even light-hearted, as if the day were a day of joy; but out strongly against his mirth stood the solemn spirit of her sorrow; and when he went to bring over Dunroe, and when he took her passive hand, in order to place it in his—the agony, the horror, with which she submitted to the act, were expressed in a manner that made her appear, as that which she actually was, the lovely but pitiable victim of ambition. Alley Mahon's grief was loud; Lady Gourlay, Mrs. Mainwaring, Lady Emily, all were in tears.

"I am proud to see this," said Sir Thomas, bowing, as if he were bound to thank them, and attempting, with his usual tact, to turn their very sympathy into a hollow and untruthful compliment; "I am proud to see this manifestation of strong attachment to my daughter; it is a proof of how she is loved."

Lucy had not once opened her lips. She had not strength to do so; her very voice had abandoned her.

Two or three persons besides the baronet and the bridegroom felt a deep interest in what was going forward, or about to go forward. Thomas Gourlay now absolutely hated her; so did his mother; so did his uncle, Thomas Corbet. Each and all of them felt anxious to have her married, in order that she might be out of Tom's way, and that he might enjoy a wider sphere of action. Old Anthony Corbet stood looking on, with his thin lips compressed closely together, his keen eyes riveted on the baronet, and an expression legible on every trace of his countenance, such as might well have constituted him some fearful incarnation of hatred and vengeance. Lady Gourlay was so completely engrossed by Lucy that she did not notice Fenton, and the latter, from his position, could see nothing of either the bride or the baronet, but their backs.

Lord Dunroe felt that his best course was to follow the advice of Sir Thomas, which was, not to avail himself of his position with Lucy, but to observe a respectful manner, and to avoid entering into any conversation whatsoever with her, at least until after the ceremony should be performed. He consequently kept his distance, with the exception of receiving her passive hand, as we have shown, and maintained a low and subdued conversation with Mr. Roberts. The only person likely to interrupt the solemn feeling which prevailed was old Sam, who had his handkerchief several times alternately to his nose and eyes, and who looked about him with an indignant expression, that seemed to say, "There's something wrong here—some one ought to speak; I wish my boy would step forward. This, surely, is not the heart of man."

At length the baronet approached Lucy, and seemed, by his action, as well as his words, to ask her consent to something. Lucy looked at him, but neither by her word nor gesture appeared to accede to or refuse his request; and her father, after complacently bowing, as if to thank her for her acquiescence, said,

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“I think, Dr. Sombre, we require your services; the parties are assembled and willing, and the ceremony had better take place.”

Thomas Corbet had been standing at a front window, and Alley Mahon, on hearing the baronet’s words, instantly changed her position to the front of Lucy, as if she intended to make a spring between her and Dunroe, as soon as the matter should come to a crisis.

In the meantime Dr. Sombre advanced with his book, and Lord Dunroe was led over by Roberts to take his position opposite the bride, when a noise of carriage-wheels was heard coming rapidly along, and stopping as rapidly at the hall door. In an instant a knock that almost shook the house, and certainly startled some of the females, among whom was the unhappy bride herself, was heard at the hall door, and the next moment Thomas Corbet hurried out of the room, as if to see who had arrived, instantly followed by Gibson.

Dr. Sombre, who now stood with his finger between the leaves of his book, where its frequent pressure had nearly obliterated the word “obedience” in the marriage ceremony, said,

“My dear children, it is a custom of mine—and it is so because I conceive it a duty—to give you a few preliminary words of advice, a little homily, as it were, upon the nature of the duties into which you are about to enter.”

This intimation was received with solemn silence, if we except the word “Attention!” which proceeded in a respectful and earnest, but subdued tone from old Sam. The Doctor looked about him a little startled, but again proceeded,

“Marriage, my children, may be divided into three heads: first, its duties; next, its rights; and lastly, its tribulations. I place tribulations last, my children, because, if it were not for its tribulations—”

“My good friend,” said Sir Thomas, with impatience, “we will spare you the little homily you speak of, until after the ceremony. I dare say it is designed for married life and married people; but as those for whose especial advantage you are now about to give it are not man and wife yet, I think you had better reserve it until you make them so. Proceed, Doctor, if you please, with the ceremony.”

“I have not the pleasure of knowing you, sir,” replied the Doctor; “I shall be guided here only by Sir Thomas Gourlay himself, as father of the bride.”

“Why, Doctor, what the deuce is the matter with you? Am not I Sir Thomas Gourlay?”

The Doctor put up his spectacles on his forehead, and looking at him more closely, exclaimed,

“Upon my word, and so you are. I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas, but with respect to this dejeuner—homily, I would say—its enunciation here is exceedingly appropriate, and it is but short, and will not occupy more than about half-an-hour, or three-quarters, which is only a brief space when the happiness of a whole life is concerned. Well, my children, I was speaking about this *dejuner*,” he proceeded; “the time, as I said, will not occupy more than half-an-hour, or probably three-quarters; and, indeed, if our whole life were as agreeably spent—I refer now especially to married life—its tribulations would not—”

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Here he was left once more in his tribulations, for as he uttered the last word, Gibson returned, pronouncing in a distinct but respectful voice, “The Earl of Cullamore;” and that nobleman, leaning upon the arm of his confidential servant, Morty O’Flaherty, immediately entered the room.

His venerable look, his feeble state of health, but, above all his amiable character, well known as it was for everything that was honorable and benevolent, produced the effect which might be expected. All who were not standing, immediately rose up to do him reverence and honor. He inclined his head in token of acknowledgment, but even before the baronet had time to address him, he said,

“Sir Thomas Gourlay, has this marriage yet taken place?”

“No, my lord,” replied Sir Thomas, “and I am glad it has not. Your lordship’s presence is a sanction and an honor which, considering your state of ill-health, is such as we must all duly appreciate. I am delighted to see you here, my lord; allow me to help your lordship to a seat.”

“I thank you, Sir Thomas,” replied his lordship; “but before I take a seat, or before you proceed further in this business, I beg to have some private conversation with you.”

“With infinite pleasure, my lord,” replied the baronet. “Dr. Sombre, whilst his lordship and I are speaking, you may as well go on with the ceremony. When it is necessary, call me, and I shall give the bride away.”

“Dr. Sombre,” said his lordship, “do not proceed with the ceremony, until I shall have spoken to Miss Gourlay’s father. If it be necessary that I should speak more plainly, I say, I forbid the banns. You will not have to wait long, Doctor; but by no means proceed with the ceremony until you shall have permission from Sir Thomas Gourlay.”

In general, any circumstance that tends to prevent a marriage, where all the parties are assembled to witness it, and to enjoy the festivities that attend it, is looked upon with a strong feeling of dissatisfaction. Here, however, the case was different. Scarcely an individual among them, with the exception of those who were interested in the event, that did not feel a sense of relief at what had occurred in consequence of the appearance of Lord Cullamore. Dunroe’s face from that moment was literally a sentence of guilt against himself. It became blank, haggard, and of a ghastly white; while his hope of securing the rich and lovely heiress died away within him. He resolved, however, to make a last effort.

“Roberts,” said he, “go to Sombre, and whisper to him to proceed with the ceremony. Get him to perform it, and you are sure of a certain sister of mine, who I rather suspect is not indifferent to you.”

“I must decline to do so, my lord,” replied Roberts. “After what has just occurred, I feel that it would not be honorable in me, neither would it be respectful to your father. However I may esteem your sister, my lord, and appreciate her virtues, yet I am but a poor ensign, as you know, and not in a capacity to entertain any pretensions—”

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“Well, then,” replied Dunroe, interrupting him, “bring that old dog Sombre here, will you? I trust you will so far oblige me.”

Roberts complied with this; but the Doctor was equally firm.

“Doctor,” said his lordship, after urging several arguments, “you will oblige Sir Thomas Gourlay very much, by having us married when they come in. It’s only a paltry matter of property, that Sir Thomas acceded to this morning. Pray, proceed with the ceremony, Doctor, and make two lovers happy.”

“The word of your honorable father,” replied the Doctor, “shall ever be a law to me. He was always a most hospitable man; and, unless my bishop, or the chief secretary, or, what is better still, the viceroy himself, I do not know a nobleman more worthy of respect. No, my lord, there is not in the peerage a nobleman who—gave better dinners.”

What with this effort on the part of Dunroe, and a variety of chat that took place upon the subject of the interruption, at least five-and-twenty minutes had elapsed, and the company began to feel somewhat anxious and impatient, when Sir Thomas Gourlay entered; and, gracious heaven, what a frightful change had taken place in him! Dismay, despair, wretchedness, misery, distraction, frenzy, were all struggling for expression in his countenance. He was followed by Lord Cullamore, who, when about to proceed home, had changed his mind, and returned for Lady Emily. He advanced, still supported by Morty, and approaching Lucy, took her hand, and said,

“Miss Gourlay, you are saved; and I thank God that I was made the instrument of rescuing you from wretchedness and despair, for I read both in your face. And now,” he proceeded, addressing the spectators, “I beg it to be understood, that in the breaking off of this marriage, there is no earthly blame, not a shadow of imputation to be attributed to Miss Gourlay, who is all honor, and delicacy, and truth. Her father, if left to himself, would not now permit her to become the wife of my son; who, I am sorry to say, is utterly unworthy of her.”

“Attention!” once more was heard from the quarter in which old Sam stood, as if bearing testimony to the truth of his lordship’s assertion. “John,” said the latter, “you may thank your friend, Mr. Norton, for enabling me, within the last hour, to save this admirable girl from the ruin which her union with you would have entailed upon her. You will now know how to appreciate so faithful and honorable a friend.”

All that Dunroe must have felt, may be easily conceived by the reader. The baronet, however, becomes the foremost figure in the group. The strong, the cunning, the vehement, the overbearing, the plausible, the unbelieving, the philosophical, and the cruel—these were the divided streams, as it were, of his character, which all, however,

united to make up the dark and terrible current of his great ambition; great, however, only as a passion and a moral impulse of action, but

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puny, vile, and base in its true character and elements. Here, then, stood the victim of his own creed, the baffled antagonist of God's providence, who despised religion, and trampled upon its obligations; the man who strove to make himself his own deity, his own priest, and who administered to his guilty passions on the altar of a hardened and corrupted heart—here he stood; now, struck, stunned, prostrated; whilst the veil which had hitherto concealed the hideousness of his principles, was raised up, as if by an awful hand, that he might know what it is for man to dash himself against the bosses of the Almighty's buckler. His heart beat, and his brain throbbed; all presence of mind, almost all consciousness, abandoned him, and he only felt that the great object of his life was lost—the great plan, to the completion of which he had devoted all his energies, was annihilated. He imagined that the apartment was filled with gloom and fire, and that the faces he saw about him were mocking at him, and disclosing to each other in whispers the dreadful extent, the unutterable depth of his despair and misery. He also felt a sickness of heart, that was in itself difficult to contend with, and a weakness about the knees that rendered it nearly impossible for him to stand. His head, too, became light and giddy, and his brain reeled so much that he tottered, and was obliged to sit, in order to prevent himself from falling. All, however, was not to end here. This was but the first blow.

Lord Cullamore was now about to depart; for he, too, had become exceedingly weak and exhausted, by the unusual exercise and agitation to which he had exposed himself.

Old Anthony Corbet then stepped forward, and said,

"Don't go, my lord. There's strange things to come to light this day and this hour, for this is the day and this is the hour of my vengeance."

"I do not understand you," replied his lordship; "I was scarcely equal to the effort of coming here, and I feel myself very feeble."

"Get his lordship some wine," said the old man, addressing his son. "You will be good enough to stop, my lord," he proceeded, "for a short time. You are a magistrate, and your presence here may be necessary."

"Ha!" exclaimed his lordship, surprised at such language: "this may be serious. Proceed, my friend: what disclosures have you to make?"

Old Corbet did not answer him, but turning round to the baronet, who was not then in a capacity to hear or observe anything apart from the terrible convulsions of agony he was suffering, he looked upon him, his keen old eyes in a blaze, his lips open and their expression sharpened by the derisive and satanic triumph that was legible in the demon sneer which kept them apart.

“Thomas Gourlay!” he exclaimed in a sharp, piercing voice of authority and conscious power, “Thomas Gourlay, rise up and stand forward, your day of doom is come.”

“Who is it that has the insolence to call my father Thomas Gourlay under this roof?” asked his son Thomas, alias Mr. Ambrose Gray. “Begone, old man, you are mad.”

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“Bastard and impostor!” readied Anthony, “you appear before your time. Thomas Gourlay, did you hear me?”

By an effort—almost a superhuman effort—the baronet succeeded in turning his attention to what was going forward.

“What is this?” he exclaimed; “is this a tumult? Who dares to stir up a tumult in such a scene as this? Begone!” said he, addressing several strangers, who appeared to take a deep interest in what was likely to ensue. The house was his own, and, as a matter of course, every one left the room with the exception of those immediately connected with both families, and with the incidents of our story.

“Let no one go,” said Anthony, “that I appointed to come here.”

“What!” said Dunroe, after the strangers had gone, and with a look that indicated his sense of the baronet’s duplicity, “is this gentleman your son?”

“My acknowledged son, sir,” replied the other.

“And, pray, were you aware of that this morning?”

“As clearly and distinctly as you were that you had no earthly claim to the title which you bear, nor to the property of your father,” replied the baronet, with a look that matched that of the other. There they stood, face to face, each detected in his dishonor and iniquity, and on that account disqualified to recriminate upon each other, for their mutual perfidy.

“Corbet,” said the baronet, now recovering himself, “what is this? Respect my house and family—respect my guests. Go home; I pardon you this folly, because I see that you have been too liberal in your potations this morning.”

“You mistake me, sir,” replied the adroit old man; “I am going to do you a service. Call forward Thomas Gourlay.”

This considerably relieved the baronet, who took it for granted that it was his son whom he had called in the first instance.

“What!” exclaimed Lord Cullamore, “is it possible, Sir Thomas, that you have recovered your lost son?”

“It is, my lord,” replied the other. “Thomas, come over till I present you to my dear friend Lord Cullamore.”

Young Gourlay advanced, and the earl was in the act of extending his hand to him, when old Anthony interposed, by drawing it back.

“Stop, my lord,” said he; “that hand is the hand of a man of honor, but you must not soil it by touchin’ that of a bastard and impostor.”

“That is my son, my lord,” replied Sir Thomas, “and I acknowledge him as such.”

“So you may, sir,” replied Corbet, “and so you ought; but I say that if he is your son, he is also my grandson.”

“Corbet,” said his lordship, “you had better explain yourself. This, Sir Thomas, is a matter very disagreeable to me, and which I should not wish even to hear; but as it is possible that the interests of my dear friend here. Lady Gourlay, may be involved in it, I think it my duty not to go.”

“Her ladyship’s interests are involved in it, my lord,” replied Corbet; “and you are right to stay, if it was only for her sake. Now, my lady,” he added, addressing her, “I see how you are sufferin’, but I ask it as a favor that you will keep yourself quiet, and let me go on.”

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“Proceed, then,” said Lord Cullamore; “and do you, Lady Gourlay, restrain your emotion, if you can.”

“Thomas Gourlay—I spake now to the father, my lord,” said Corbet.

“Sir Thomas Gourlay, sir!” said the baronet, haughtily and indignantly, “Sir Thomas Gourlay!”

“Thomas Gourlay,” persisted Corbet, “it is now nineteen years, or thereabouts, since you engaged me, myself—I am the man—to take away the son of your brother, and you know the ordhers you gave me. I did so: I got a mask, and took him away with me on the pretence of bringin’ him to see a puppet-show. Well, he disappeared, and your mind, I suppose, was aisy. I tould you all was right, and every year from that to this you have paid me a pension of fifty pounds.”

“The man is mad, my lord,” said Sir Thomas; “and, under all circumstances, he makes himself out a villain.”

“I can perceive no evidence of madness, so far,” replied his lordship; “proceed.”

“None but a villain would have served your purposes; but if I was a villain, it wasn’t to bear out your wishes, but to satisfy my own revenge.”

“But what cause for revenge could you have had against him?” asked, his lordship.

“What cause?” exclaimed the old man, whilst his countenance grew dark as night, “what cause against the villain that seduced my daughter—that brought disgrace and shame upon my family—that broke through the ties of nature, which are always held sacred in our country, for she was his own foster-sister, my lord, suckled at the same breasts, nursed in the same arms, and fed and clothed and nourished by the same hand;—yes, my lord, that brought shame and disgrace and madness, my lord—ay, madness upon my child, that he deceived and corrupted, under a solemn oath of marriage. Do you begin to undherstand me now, my lord?”

His lordship made no reply, but kept his eyes intently fixed upon him.

“Well, my lord, soon after the disappearance of Lady Gourlay’s child, his own went in the same way; and no search, no hunt, no attempt to get him ever succeeded. He, any more than the other, could not be got. My lord, it was I removed him. I saw far before me, and it was I removed him; yes, Thomas Gourlay, it was I left you childless—at least of a son.”

“You must yourself see, my lord,” said the baronet, “that—that—when is this marriage to take place?—what is this?—I am quite confused; let me see, let me see—yes, he is

such a villain, my lord, that you must perceive he is entitled to no credit—to none whatsoever."

"Well, my lord," proceeded Corbet.

"I think, my lord," said Thomas Corbet, stepping forward, "that I ought to acquaint your lordship with my father's infirmity. Of late, my lord, he has been occasionally unsettled in his senses. I can prove this on oath."

"And if what he states be true," replied his lordship, "I am not surprised at it; it is only right we should hear him, however, as I have already said, I can perceive no traces of insanity about him."

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“Ah, my lord,” replied the old man, “it would be well for him if he could prove me mad, for then his nephew, the bastard, might have a chance of succeeding to the Gourlay title, and the estates. But I must go on. Well, my lord, after ten years or so, I came one day to Mr. Gourlay—he was then called Sir Thomas—and I tould him that I had relented, and couldn’t do with his brother’s son as I had promised, and as he wished me. ‘He is living,’ said I, ’and I wish you would take him undher your own care.’ I won’t wait to tell you the abuse I got from him for not fulfillin’ his wishes; but he felt he was in my power, and was forced to continue my pension and keep himself quiet. Well, my lord, I brought him the boy one night, undher the clouds of darkness, and we conveyed him to a lunatic asylum.”

Here he was interrupted by something between a groan and a scream from Lady Gourlay, who, however, endeavored immediately to restrain her feelings.

“From that day to this, my lord, the cruelty he received, sometimes in one madhouse and sometimes in another, sometimes in England and sometimes in Ireland, it would be terrible to know. Everything that could wear away life was attempted, and the instruments in that black villain’s hands were well paid for their cruelty. At length, my lord, he escaped, and wandhered about till he settled down in the town of Ballytrain. Thomas Gourlay—then Sir Thomas—had been away with his family for two or three years in foreign parts, but when he went to his seat, Red Hall, near that town, he wasn’t long there till he found out that the young man named Fenton—something unsettled, they said, in his mind—was his brother’s son, for the baronet had been informed of his escape. Well, he got him once more into his clutches, and in the dead hour of night, himself—you there, Thomas Gourlay—one of your villain servants, by name Gillespie, and my own son—you that stand there, Thomas Corbet—afther making the poor boy dead drunk, brought him off to one of the mad-houses that he had been in before. He, Mr. Gourlay, then—or Sir Thomas, if you like—went with them a part of the way. Providence, my lord, is never asleep, however. The keeper of the last mad-house was more of a devil than a man. The letter of the baronet was written to the man that had been there before him, but he was dead, and this villain took the boy and the money that had been sent with him, and there he suffered what I am afraid he will never get the betther of.”

“But what became of Sir Thomas Gourlay’s son?” asked his lordship; “and where now is Lady Gourlay’s?”

“They are both in this room, my lord. Now, Thomas Gourlay, I will restore your son to you. Advance, Black Baronet,” said the old man, walking over to Fenton, with a condensed tone of vengeance and triumph in his voice and features, that filled all present with awe. “Come, now, and look upon your own work—think, if it will comfort you, upon what you made your own flesh and blood suffer. There he is, Black Baronet; there is your son—dead!”

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A sudden murmur and agitation took place as he pointed to Fenton; but there was now something of command, nay, absolutely of grandeur, in his revenge, as well as in his whole manner.

“Keep quiet, all of you,” he exclaimed, raising his arm with a spirit of authority and power; “keep quiet, I say, and don’t disturb the dead. I am not done.”

“I must interrupt you a moment,” said Lord Dunroe. “I thought the person—the unfortunate young man here—was the son of Sir Thomas’s brother?”

“And so did he,” replied Corbet; “but I will make the whole thing simple at wanst. When he was big enough to be grown out of his father’s recollection, I brought back his own son to him as the son of his brother. And while the black villain was huggin’ himself with delight that all the sufferings, and tortures, and hellish scourgings, and chains, and cells, and darkness, and damp, and cruelty of all shapes, were breakin’ down the son of his brother to death—the heir that stood between himself and his unlawful title, and his unlawful property—instead of that, they were all inflicted upon his own lawfully begotten son, who now lies there—dead!”

“What is the matter with Sir Thomas Gourlay?” said his lordship; “what is wrong?”

Sir Thomas’s conduct, whilst old Corbet was proceeding to detail these frightful and harrowing developments, gave once or twice strong symptoms of incoherency, more, indeed, by his action than his language. He seized, for instance, the person next him, unfortunate Dr. Sombre, and after squeezing his arm until it became too painful to bear, he ground his teeth, looked into his face, and asked, “Do you think—would you swear—that—that—ay—that there is a God?” Then, looking at Corbet, and trying to recollect himself, he exclaimed, “Villain, demon, devil;” and he then struck or rather throttled the Doctor, as he sat beside him. They succeeded, however, in composing him, but his eyes were expressive of such wildness and horror and blood-shot frenzy, that one or two of them sat close to him, for the purpose of restraining his tendency to violence.

Lady Gourlay, on hearing that Fenton was not her son, wept bitterly, exclaiming, “Alas! I am twice made childless.” But Lucy, who had awakened out of the deathlike stupor of misery which had oppressed her all the morning, now became conscious of the terrible disclosures which old Corbet was making; and on hearing that Fenton was, or rather had been, her brother, she flew to him, and on looking at his pale, handsome, but lifeless features, she threw her arms around him, kissed his lips in an agony of sorrow, and exclaimed, “And is it thus we meet, my brother! No word to recognize your sister? No glance of that eye, that is closed forever, to welcome me to your heart? Oh! miserable fate, my brother! We meet in death. You are now with our mother; and Lucy, your sister, whom you never saw, will soon join you. You are gone! Your wearied and

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broken spirit fled from disgrace and sorrow. Yes; I shall soon meet you, where your lips will not be passive to the embraces of a sister, and where your eyes will not be closed against those looks of affection and tenderness which she was prepared to give you, but which you could not receive. Ah, here there is no repugnance of the heart, as there was in the other instance. Here are my blessed mother's features; and nature tells me that you are—oh, distressing sight!—that you were my brother."

"Keep silence," exclaimed Corbet, "you must hear me out. Thomas Gourlay, there lies your son; I don't know what you may feel now that you know he's your own—and well you know it;—but I know his sufferings gave you very little trouble so long as you thought that he was the child of the widow of your brother that was dead. Well now, my lord," he proceeded, "you might think I've had very good revenge upon Thomas Gourlay; but there's more to come."

"Attention!" from old Sam, in a voice that startled almost every one present.

"Yes, my lord, I must fulfil my work. Stand forward, Sir Edward Gourlay. Stand forward, and go to your affectionate mother's arms."

"I fear the old man is unsettled, certainly," said his lordship. "Sir Edward Gourlay!—-there is no Sir Edward Gourlay here."

"Attention, Ned!" exclaimed old Sam, again taking the head of his cane out of his mouth, where it had got a merciless mumbling for some time past. "Attention, Ned! you're called, my boy."

Old Corbet went over to Ensign Roberts, and taking him by the hand, led him to Lady Gourlay, exclaiming, "There, my lady, is your son, and proud you may be out of him. There is the real heir of the Gourlay name and the Gourlay property. Look at him and his cousin, your niece, and see how they resemble one another. Look at his father's features in his face; but I have plenty of proof, full satisfaction to give you besides."

Lady Gourlay became pale as death. "Mysterious and just Providence," she exclaimed, "can this be true? But it is—it must—there are the features of his departed father—his figure—his every look. He is mine!—he is mine! My heart recognizes him. Oh, my son! —my child!—are you at length restored to me?"

Young Roberts was all amazement. Whilst Lady Gourlay spoke, he looked over at old Sam, whose son he actually believed himself to be (for the fine old fellow had benevolently imposed on him), and seemed anxious to know what this new parentage, now ascribed to him, could mean.

“All right, Ned! Corbet is good authority: but although I knew you were not mine, I could never squeeze the truth out of him as to who your father was. It’s true, in spite of all he said, I had suspicions; but what could I do?——I could prove nothing.”

We will not describe this restoration of the widow’s son. Our readers can easily conceive it, and, accordingly, to their imagination we will leave it.

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It was attended, however, by an incident which we cannot pass over without some notice. Lady Emily, on witnessing the extraordinary turn which had so providentially taken place in the fate and fortune of her lover, was observed by Mrs. Mainwaring to grow very pale. A consciousness of injury, which our readers will presently understand, prevented her from offering assistance, but running over to Lucy, she said, “I fear, Miss Gourlay, that Lady Emily is ill.”

Lucy, who was all tenderness, left her brother, over whom she had been weeping, and flew to her assistance just in time to prevent her from falling off her chair. She had swooned. Water, however, and essences, and other appliances, soon restored her; and on recovering she cast her eyes about the room as if to search for some one. Lady Gourlay had her arm round her, and was chafing her temples at the time. Those lovely fawn-like eyes of hers had not far to search. Roberts, now young Sir Edward Gourlay, had been standing near, contemplating her beautiful features, and deeply alarmed by her illness, when their eyes met; and, to the surprise of Lucy Gourlay, a blush so modest, so beautiful, so exquisite, but yet so legible in its expression, took place of the paleness which had been there before. She looked up, saw the direction of her son’s eyes, then looked significantly at Lucy, and smiled. The tell-tale blush, in fact, discovered the state of their hearts, and never was a history of pure and innocent love more appropriately or beautifully told.

This significant little episode did not last long; and when Lady Emily found herself recovered, Thomas Corbet advanced, and said: “I don’t know what you mean, father, by saying that the young man who has just died was Sir Thomas Gourlay’s son. You know in your heart that this”—pointing to his nephew—“is his true and legitimate heir. You know, too, that his illegitimate son has been dead for years, and that I myself saw him buried.”

“My lord, pay attention to what I’ll speak,” said his father. “If the bastard died, and if my son was at his burial, and saw him laid in the grave, he can tell us where that grave is to be found, at least. His father, however, will remember the tattooing.”

The unexpected nature of the question, and its direct bearing upon the circumstance before them, baffled Thomas Corbet, who left the room, affecting to be too indignant to reply.

“Now,” proceeded his father, “he knows he has stated a falsehood. I have proof for every word I said, and for every circumstance. There’s a paper,” he added, “a pound note, that will prove one link in the chain, for the very person’s name that is written on it by the poor young man himself, I have here. He can prove the mark on his neck, when in outlier despair, the poor creature made an attempt on his own life with a piece of glass. And what is more, I have the very clothes they both wore when I took them away. In short, I have everything full and clear; but I did

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not let either my son or daughter know of my exchangin' the childre', and palmin' Thomas Gourlay's own son on him as the son of his brother. That saicret I kept to myself, knowin' that I couldn't trust them. And now, Thomas Gourlay," he said, "my revenge is complete. There you stand, a guilty and a disgraced man; and with all your wisdom, and wealth, and power, what were you but a mere tool and puppet in my hands up to this hour? There you stand, without a house that you can call your own—stripped of your false title—of your false property—but not altogether of your false character, for the world knew pretty well what that was."

Corbet's daughter then came forward, and laying her hand on the baronet's shoulder, said, "Do you know me, Thomas Gourlay?"

"No," replied the other, looking at her with fury; "you are a spectre; I have seen you before; you appeared to me once, and your words were false. Begone, you are a spectre—a spirit of evil."

"I am the spirit of death to you," she replied; "but my prophetic announcement was true. I called you Thomas Gourlay then, and I call you Thomas Gourlay now—for such is your name; and your false title is gone. That young man there, named after you, is my son, and you are his father—for I am Jacinta Corbet: so far my father's words are true; and if it were not for his revenge, my son would have inherited your name, title, and property. Here now I stand the victim of your treachery and falsehood, which for years have driven me mad. But now the spirit of the future is upon me; and I tell you, that I read frenzy, madness, and death in your face. You have been guilty of great crimes, but you will be guiltier of a greater and a darker still. I read that in your coward spirit, for I know you well. I also am revenged, but I have been punished; and my own sufferings have taught me to feel that I am still a woman. I loved you once—I hated you long; but now I pity you. Yes, Thomas Gourlay, she whom you drove to madness, and imposture, and misery, for long years, can now look down upon you with pity!"

Having thus spoken, she left the room.

We may add here, in a few brief words, that the proof of the identity of each of the two individuals in question was clearly, legally, and most satisfactorily established; in addition to which, if farther certainty had been wanting, Lady Gourlay at once knew her son by a very peculiar mole on his neck, of a three-cornered shape, resembling a triangle.

The important events of the day, so deeply affecting Sir Thomas Gourlay and his family, had been now brought to a close; all the strangers withdrew, and Fenton's body was brought up stairs and laid out. Lady Emily and her father went home together; so did Roberts, now Sir Edward Gourlay, and his delighted and thankful mother. Her

confidence in the providence of God was at length amply rewarded, and the widow's heart at last was indeed made to sing for joy.

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“Well, Ned, my boy,” said old Sam, turning to Sir Edward, after having been introduced to his mother, “I hope I haven’t lost a son to-day, although your mother gained one?”

“I would be unworthy of my good fortune, if you did,” replied Sir Edward. “Whilst I have life and sense and memory I shall ever look upon you as my father, and my best friend.”

“Eight,” replied the old soldier; “but I knew it was before you. He was no everyday plant, my lady, and so I told my Beck. Your ladyship must see my Beck,” he added; “she’s the queen of wives, and I knew it from the first day I married her; my heart told me so, and it was all right—all the heart of man.”

The unfortunate old Doctor was to be pitied. He walked about with his finger in his book, scarcely knowing whether what he had seen and heard was a dream, or a reality. Seeing Lord Dunroe about to take his departure, he approached him, and said, “Pray, sir, are we to have no dejeuner after all? Are not you the young gentleman who was this day found out—discovered?”

Dunroe was either so completely absorbed in the contemplation of his ill fortune, that he did not hear him, or he would not deign him an answer.

“This is really too bad,” continued the Doctor; “neither a marriage fee nor a dejeuner! Too bad, indeed! Here are the tribulations, but not the marriage; under which melancholy circumstances I may as well go on my way, although I cannot do it as I expected to have done—rejoicing. Good morning, Mr. Stoker.”

Our readers ought to be sufficiently acquainted, we presume, with the state of Lucy’s feelings after the events of the day and the disclosures that had been made. Sir Thomas Gourlay—we may as well call him so for the short time he will be on the stage—stunned—crushed—wrecked— ruined, was instantly obliged to go to bed. The shock sustained by his system, both physically and mentally, was terrific in its character, and fearful in its results. His incoherency almost amounted to frenzy. He raved—he stormed—he cursed—he blasphemed; but amidst this dark tumult of thought and passion, there might ever be observed the prevalence of the monster evil—the failure of his ambition for his daughter’s elevation to the rank of a countess. Never, indeed, was there such a tempest of human passion at work in a brain as raged in his.

“It’s a falsehood, I didn’t murder my son,” he raved; “or if I did, what care I about that? I am a man of steel. My daughter—my daughter was my thought. Well, Dunroe, all is right at last—eh? ha—ha—ha! I managed it; but I knew my system was the right one. Lady Dunroe!—very good, very good to begin with; but not what I wish to see, to hear, to feel before I die. Nurse me, now, if I died without seeing her Countess of Cullamore, but I’d break my heart. ’Make way, there—way for the Countess of Cullamore!’—ha! does not that sound well? But then, the old Earl! Curse him, what keeps him on the stage so long?

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Away with the old carrion!—away with him! But what was that that happened to-day, or yesterday? Misery, torture, perdition!—disgraced, undone, ruined! Is it true, though? Is this joy? I expected—I feared something like this. Will no one tell me what has happened? Here, Lucy—Countess of Cullamore!—where are you? Now, Lucy, now—-put your heel on them—grind them, my girl—remember the cold and distrustful looks your father got from the world—especially from those of your own sex—remember it all, now, Lucy—Countess of Cullamore, I mean—remember it, I say, my lady, for your father's sake. Now, my girl, for pride; now for the haughty sneer; now for the aristocratic air of disdain; now for the day of triumph over the mob of the great vulgar. And that fellow—that reverend old shark who would eat any one of his Christian brethren, if they were only sent up to him disguised as a turbot—the divine old lobster, for his thin red nose is a perfect claw—the divine old lobster couldn't tell me whether there was a God or not. Curse him, not he; but hold, I must not be too severe upon him: his god is his belly, and mine was my ambition. Oh, oh! what is this—what does it all mean? What has happened to me? Oh, I am ill, I fear: perhaps I am mad. Is the Countess there—-the Countess of Cullamore, I mean?"

Many of his subsequent incoherencies were still more violent and appalling, and sometimes he would have got up and committed acts of outrage, if he had not been closely watched and restrained by force. Whether his complaint was insanity or brain fever, or the one as symptomatic of the other, even his medical attendants could scarcely determine. At all events, whatever medical skill and domestic attention could do for him was done, but with very little hopes of success.

The effect of the scene which the worn and invalid Earl had witnessed at Sir Thomas Gourlay's were so exhausting to his weak frame that they left very little strength behind them. Yet he complained of no particular illness; all he felt was, an easy but general and certain decay of his physical powers, leaving the mind and intellect strong and clear. On the day following the scene in the baronet's house, we must present him to the reader seated, as usual—for he could not be prevailed upon to keep his bed—in his arm-chair, with the papers of the day before him. Near him, on another seat, was Sir Edward Gourlay.

"Well, Sir Edward, the proofs, you say, have been all satisfactory."

"Perfectly so, my lord," replied the young baronet; "we did not allow yesterday to close without making everything clear. We have this morning had counsel's opinion upon it, and the proof is considered decisive."

"But is Lady Emily herself aware of your attachment?"

“Why, my lord,” replied Sir Edward, blushing a little, “I may say I think that—ahem!—she has, in some sort, given—a—ahem!—a kind of consent that I should speak to your lordship on the subject.’

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“My dear young friend,” said his lordship, whose voice became tremulous, and whose face grew like the whitest ashes.

“Have you got ill, my lord?” asked Sir Edward, a good deal alarmed: “shall I ring for assistance?”

“No,” replied his lordship; “no; I only wish to say that you know not the extent of your own generosity in making this proposal.”

“Generosity, my lord! Your lordship will pardon me. In this case I have all the honor to receive, and nothing to confer in exchange.”

“Hear me for a few minutes,” replied his lordship, “and after you shall have heard me, you will then be able at least to understand whether the proposal you make for my daughter’s hand is a generous one or not. My daughter, Sir Edward, is illegitimate.”

“Illegitimate, my lord!” replied the other, with an evident shock which he could not conceal. “Great God! my lord, your words are impossible.”

“My young friend, they are both possible and true. Listen to me:

“In early life I loved a young lady of a decayed but respectable family. I communicated our attachment to my friends, who pronounced me a fool, and did not hesitate to attribute my affection for her to art on the part of the lady, and intrigue on that of her relatives. I was at the time deeply, almost irretrievably, embarrassed. Be this as it may, I knew that the imputations against Maria, for such was her name, as well as against her relatives, were utterly false; and as a proof I did so, I followed her to France, where, indeed, I had first met her. Well, we were privately married there; for, although young at the time, I was not without a spirit of false pride and ambition, that tended to prevent me from acknowledging my marriage, and encountering boldly, as I ought to have done, the resentment of my relations and the sneers of the world. Owing to this unmanly spirit on my part, our marriage, though strictly correct and legal in every respect, was nevertheless a private one, as I have said. In the meantime I had entered parliament, and it is not for me to dwell upon the popularity with which my efforts there were attended. I consequently lived a good deal apart from my wife, whom I had not courage to present as such to the world. Every day now established my success in the House of Commons, and increased my ambition. The constitution of my wife had been naturally a delicate one, and I understood, subsequently to our union, that there had been decline in her family to such an extent, that nearly one-half of them had died of it. In this way we lived for four years, having no issue. About the commencement of the fifth my wife’s health began to decline, and as that session of parliament was a very busy and a very important one, I was but little with her. Ever since the period of our marriage, she had been attended by a faithful maid, indeed, rather a companion, well educated and accomplished, named Norton, subsequently married to a cousin of her

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own name. After a short visit to my wife, in whose constitution decline had now set in, and whom I ought not to have left, I returned to parliament, more than ever ambitious for distinction. I must do myself the justice to say that I loved her tenderly; but at the same time I felt disappointed at not having a family. On returning to London I found that my brother, who had opposed all notion of my marriage with peculiar bitterness, and never spoke of my wife with respect, was himself about to be married to one of the most fascinating creatures on whom my eyes ever rested; and, what was equally agreeable, she had an immense fortune in her own right, and was, besides, of a high and distinguished family. She was beautiful, she was rich—she was, alas! ambitious. Well, we met, we conversed, we compared minds with each other; we sang together, we danced together, until at length we began to feel that the absence of the one caused an unusual depression in the other. I was said to be one of the most eloquent commoners of the day—her family were powerful—my wife was in a decline, and recovery hopeless. Here, then, was a career for ambition; but that was not all. I was poor—-embarrassed almost beyond hope—on the very verge of ruin. Indeed, so poor, that it was as much owing to the inability of maintaining my wife in her proper rank, as to fear of my friends and the world, that I did not publicly acknowledge her. But why dwell on this? I loved the woman whose heart and thought had belonged to my brother—loved her to madness; and soon perceived that the passion was mutual. I had not, however, breathed a syllable of love, nor was it ever my intention to do so. My brother, however, was gradually thrown off, treated with coldness, and ultimately with disdain, while no one suspected the cause. It is painful to dwell upon subsequent occurrences. My brother grew jealous, and, being a high-spirited young man, released Lady Emily from her engagement. I was mad with love; and this conduct, honorable and manly as it was in him, occasioned an explanation between me and Lady Emily, in which, weak and vacillating as I was, in the frenzy of the moment I disclosed, avowed my passion, and—-but why proceed? We loved each other, not 'wisely, but too well.' My brother sought and obtained a foreign lucrative appointment, and left the country in a state of mind which it is very difficult to describe. He refused to see me on his departure, and I have never seen him since.

"The human heart, my young friend, is a great mystery. I now attached myself to Lady Emily, and was about to disclose my marriage to her; but as the state of my wife's health was hopeless, I declined to do so, in the expectation that a little time might set me free. My wife was then living in a remote little village in the south of France; most of her relatives were dead, and those who survived were at the time living in a part of Connaught, Galway, to which any kind of intelligence, much less foreign,

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seldom ever made its way. Now, I do not want to justify myself, because I cannot do so. I said this moment that the human heart is a great mystery. So it is. Whilst my passion for Lady Emily was literally beyond all restraint, I nevertheless felt visitations of remorse that were terrible. The image of my gentle Maria, sweet, contented, affectionate, and uncomplaining, would sometimes come before me, and—pardon me, my friend; I am very weak, but I will resume in a few moments. Well, the struggle within me was great. I had a young duke as a rival; but I was not only a rising man, but actually had a party in the House of Commons. Her family, high and ambitious, were anxious to procure my political support, and held out the prospect of a peerage. My wife was dying; I loved Lady Emily; I was without offspring; I was poor; I was ambitious. She was beautiful, of high family and powerful connections; she was immensely rich, too, highly accomplished, and enthusiastically attached to me. These were temptations.

“At this period it so fell out that a sister of my wife’s became governess in Lady Emily’s family; but the latter were ignorant of the connection. This alarmed me, frightened me; for I feared she would disclose my marriage. I lost no time in bringing about a private interview with her, in which I entreated her to keep the matter secret, stating that a short time would enable me to bring her sister with eclat into public life. I also prevailed upon her to give up her situation, and furnished her with money for Maria, to whom I sent her, with an assurance that my house should ever be her home, and that it was contrary to my wishes ever to hear my wife’s sister becoming a governess; and this indeed was true. I also wrote to my wife, to the effect that the pressure of my parliamentary duties would prevent me from seeing her for a couple of months.

“In this position matters were for about a fortnight or three weeks, when, at last, a letter reached me from my sister-in-law, giving a detailed account of my wife’s death, and stating that she and Miss Norton were about to make a tour to Italy, for the purpose of acquiring the language. This letter was a diabolical falsehood, Sir Edward; but it accomplished its purpose. She had gleaned enough of intelligence in the family, by observation and otherwise, to believe that my wife’s death alone would enable me, in a short time, to become united to Lady Emily; and that if my marriage with her took place whilst her sister lived, I believing her to be dead, she would punish me for what she considered my neglect of her, and my unjustifiable attachment to another woman during Maria’s life. All communication ceased between us. My wife was unable to write; but from what her sister stated to her, probably with exaggerations, her pride prevented her from holding any correspondence with a husband who refused to acknowledge his marriage with her, and whose affections had been transferred

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to another. At all events, the blow took effect. Believing her dead, and deeming myself at liberty, I married Lady Emily, after a lapse of six months, exactly as many weeks before the death of my first wife. Of course you perceive now, my friend, that my last marriage was null and void; and that, hurried on by the eager impulses of love and ambition, I did, without knowing it, an act which has made my children illegitimate. It is true, my union with Lady Emily was productive to me of great results. I was created an Irish peer, in consequence of the support I gave to my wife's connections. The next step was an earldom, with an English peerage, together with such an accession of property in right of my wife, as made me rich beyond my wishes. So far, you may say, I was a successful man; but the world cannot judge of the heart, and its recollections. My second wife was a virtuous woman, high, haughty, and correct; but notwithstanding our early enthusiastic affection, the experiences of domestic life soon taught us to feel, that, after all, our dispositions and tastes were unsuitable. She was fond of show, of equipage, of fashionable amusements, and that empty dissipation which constitutes, the substance of aristocratic existence. I, on the contrary, when not engaged in public life, with which I soon grew fatigued, was devoted to retirement, to domestic enjoyment, and to the duties which devolved upon me as a parent. I loved my children with the greatest tenderness, and applied myself to the cultivation of their principles, and the progress of their education. All, however, would not do. I was unhappy; unhappy, not only in my present wife, but in the recollection of the gentle and affectionate Maria. I now felt the full enormity of my crime against that patient and angelic being. Her memory began to haunt me—her virtues were ever in my thoughts; her quiet, uncomplaining submission, her love, devotion, tenderness, all rose up in fearful array against me, until I felt that the abiding principle of my existence was a deep remorse, that ate its way into my happiness day by day, and has never left me through my whole subsequent life. This, however, was attended with some good, as it recalled me, in an especial manner, to the nobler duties of humanity. I felt now that truth, and a high sense of honor, could alone enable me to redeem the past, and atone for my conduct with respect to Maria. But, above all, I felt that independence of mind, self-restraint, and firmness of character, were virtues, principles, what you will, without which man is but a cipher, a tool of others, or the sport of circumstances.

"My second wife died of a cold, caught by going rather thinly dressed to a fashionable party too soon after the birth of Emily; and my son, having become the pet and spoiled child of his mother and her relatives, soon became imbued with fashionable follies, which, despite of all my care and vigilance, I am grieved to say, have degenerated into worse and more indefensible principles. He had not reached the period of manhood when he altogether threw off all regard for my control over him as a father, and led a life since of which the less that is said the better.

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“The facts connected with my second marriage have been so clearly established that defence is hopeless. The registry of our marriage, and of my first wife’s death, have been laid before me, and Mrs. Mainwaring, herself, was ready to substantiate and prove them by her personal testimony. My own counsel, able and eminent men as they are, have dissuaded me from bringing the matter to a trial, and thus making public the disgrace which must attach to my children. You now understand, Sir Edward, the full extent of your generosity in proposing for my daughter’s hand, and you also understand the nature of my private communication yesterday with your uncle.”

“But, my lord, how did your brother become aware of the circumstances you have just mentioned?”

“Through Mrs. Mainwaring, who thought it unjust that a profligate should inherit so much property, with so bad a title to it, whilst there were virtuous and honorable men to claim it justly; such are the words of a note on the subject which I have received from her this very morning. Thus it is that vice often punishes itself. Now, Sir Edward, I am ready to hear you.”

“My lord,” replied Sir Edward, “the case is so peculiar, so completely out of the common course, that, morally speaking, I cannot look upon your children as illegitimate. I have besides great doubts whether the prejudice of the world, or its pride, which visits upon the head of the innocent child the error, or crime if you will, of the guilty parent, ought to be admitted as a principle of action in life.”

“Yes,” replied the earl; “but on the other hand, to forbid it altogether might tend to relax some of the best principles in man and woman. Vice must frequently be followed up for punishment even to its consequences as well as its immediate acts, otherwise virtue were little better than a name. For this, however, there is a remedy—an act of parliament must be procured to legitimatize my children. I shall take care of that, although I may not live to see it,” *

* This was done, and the circumstance is still remembered by many persons in the north of Ireland.

“Be that as it may, my lord, I cannot but think that in the eye of religion and morality your children are certainly legitimate; all that is against them being a point of law. For my part, I earnestly beg to renew my proposal for the hand of Lady Emily.”

“Then, Sir Edward, you do not feel yourself deterred by anything I have stated?”

“My lord, I love Lady Emily for her own sake—and for her own sake only.”

“Then,” replied her father, “bring her here. I feel very weak—I am getting heavy. Yesterday’s disclosures gave me a shock which I fear will—but I trust I am prepared—-

go—remember, however, that my darling child knows nothing of what I have mentioned to you—Dunroe does. I had not courage to tell her that she has been placed by her father's pride, by his ambition, and by his want of moral restraint, out of the pale of life. Go, and fetch her here."

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That they approached him with exulting hearts—that he joined their hands, and blessed them—is all that is necessary to be mentioned now.

In the course of that evening, a reverend dignitary of the church, Dean Palmer, whom we have mentioned occasionally in this narrative, and a very different man indeed from our friend Dr. Sombre, called at Sir Thomas Goulray's to inquire after his health, and to see Miss Gourlay. He was shown up to the drawing room, where Lucy, very weak, but still relieved from the great evil which she had dreaded so much, soon joined him.

"Miss Gourlay," said he, "I trust your father is better?"

"He is better, sir, in mere bodily health. The cupping, and blistering, and loss of blood from the arms, have relieved him, and his delirium has nearly passed away; but, then, he is silent and gloomy, and depressed, it would seem, beyond the reach of hope or consolation."

"Do you think he would see me?"

"No, sir, he would not," she replied. "Two or three clergymen have called for that purpose; but the very mention of them threw him into a state almost bordering on frenzy."

"Under these circumstances," replied the good Dean, "it would be wrong to press him. When he has somewhat recovered, I hope he may be prevailed on to raise his thoughts to a better life than this. And now, my dear young lady, I have a favor to request at your hands."

"At mine, sir! If there is any thing within my power—"

"This is, I assure you."

"Pray, what is it, sir?"

"Would you so far oblige me as to receive a visit from Lord Dunroe?"

"In any other thing within the limits of my power, sir—in anything that ought to be asked of me—I would feel great pleasure in obliging you; but in this you must excuse me."

"I saw Lord Cullamore in the early part of the day," replied Dean Palmer, "and he told me to say, that it was his wish you should see him; he added, that he felt it was a last request."

"I shall see him," replied the generous girl, "instantly; for his lordship's sake I shall see him, although I cannot conceive for what purpose Lord Dunroe can wish it."

“It is sufficient, Miss Gourlay, that you consent to see him. He is below in my carriage; shall I bring him up?”

“Do so, sir. I am going to prevail, if I can, on papa, to take a composing draught, which the doctors have ordered him. I shall return again in a few minutes.”

Sir Thomas Gourlay had got up some hours before, and was seated in an armchair as she entered.

“How do you feel now, papa?” she asked, with the utmost affection and tenderness; “oh, do not be depressed; through all changes of life your Lucy’s affections will be with you.”

“Lucy,” said he, “come and kiss me.”

In a moment her arms were about his neck, and she whispered encouragingly, whilst caressing him, “Papa, now that I have not been thrust down that fearful abyss, believe me, we shall be very happy yet.”

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He gave her a long look; then shook his head, but did not speak.

“Endeavor to keep up your spirits, dearest papa; you seem depressed, but that is natural after what you have suffered. Will you take the composing draught? It will relieve you.”

“I believe it will, but I cannot take it from your hand; and he kept his eyes fixed upon her with a melancholy gaze as he spoke.

“And why not from mine, papa? Surely you would not change your mind now. You have taken all your medicine from me, up to this moment.”

“I will take it myself, presently, Lucy.”

“Will you promise me, papa?” she said, endeavoring to smile.

“Yes, Lucy, I promise you.”

“But, papa, I had forgotten to say that Lord Dunroe has called to ask an interview with me. He and Dean Palmer are now in the drawing-room.”

“Have you seen him?” asked her father.

“Not yet, papa.”

“Will you see him?”

“Lord Cullamore sent the Dean to me to say, that it was his earnest request I should—-his last.”

“His last! Lucy. Well, then, see him—there is a great deal due to a last request.”

“Oh, yes, I shall see him. Well, good-by, papa. Remember now that you take the composing draught; I shall return to you after I have seen Lord Dunroe.”

She was closing the door, when he recalled her. “Lucy,” said he, “come here.”

“Well, papa; well, dearest papa?”

“Kiss me again,” said he.

She stooped as before, and putting her arms about his neck, kissed him like a child. He took her hand in his, and looked on her with the same long earnest look, and putting it to his lips, kissed it; and as he did, Lucy felt a tear fall upon it. “Lucy,” said he, “I have one word to say to you.”

Lucy was already in tears; that one little drop—the symptom of an emotion she had never witnessed before—and she trusted the forerunner of a softened and repentant heart, had already melted hers.

“Lucy,” he said, “forgive me.”

The floodgates of her heart and of her eyes were opened at once. She threw herself on his bosom; she kissed him, and wept long and loudly.

He, in the meantime, had regained the dread composure, that death-like calmness, into which he had passed from his frenzy.

“Forgive you, papa? I do—I do, a thousand times; but I have nothing to forgive. Do I not know that all your plans and purposes were for my advancement, and, as you hoped, for my happiness?”

“Lucy,” said he, “disgrace is hard to bear; but still I would have borne it had my great object in that advancement been accomplished; but now, here is the disgrace, yet the object lost forever. Then, my son, Lucy—I am his murderer; but I knew it not; and even that I could get over; but you, that is what prostrates me. And, again, to have been the puppet of that old villain! Even that, however, I could bear; yes, everything but you!—-that was the great cast on which my whole heart was set; but now, mocked, despised, detested, baffled, detected, defeated. However, it is all over, like a troubled dream. Dry your eyes now,” he added, “and see Dunroe.”

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“Would you wish to see Dean Palmer, papa?”

“No, no, Lucy; not at all; he could do me no good. Go, now, and see Dunroe, and do not let me be disturbed for an hour or two. You know I have seen the body of my son to-day, and I wish I had not.”

“I am sorry you did, papa; it has depressed you very much.”

“Go, Lucy, go. In a couple of hours I—Go, dear; don’t keep his lordship waiting.”

Poor Lucy’s heart was in a tumult of delight as she went down stairs. In the whole course of her life she had never witnessed in her father anything of tender emotion until then, and the tear that fell upon her hand she knew was the only one she ever saw him shed.

“I have hope for papa yet,” she said to herself, as she was about to enter the drawing-room; “I never thought I loved him so much as I find I do now.”

On advancing into the room, for an instant’s time she seemed confused; her confusion, however, soon became surprise—amazement, when Dean Palmer, taking our friend the stranger by the hand, led him toward her, exclaiming, “Allow me, Miss Gourlay, to have the honor of presenting to you Lord Dunroe.”

“Lord Dunroe!” exclaimed Lucy, in her turn, looking aghast with astonishment. “What is this, sir—what means this, gentlemen? This house, pray recollect, is a house of death and of suffering.”

“It is the truth, Miss Gourlay,” replied the Dean. “Here stands the veritable Lord Dunroe, whose father is now the earl of Cullamore.”

“But, sir, I don’t understand this.”

“It is very easily understood, however, Miss Gourlay. This gentleman’s father was the late Earl’s brother; and he being now dead, his son here inherits the title of Lord Dunroe.”

“But the late Earl’s son?”

“Has no claim to the title, Miss Gourlay. His lordship here will give you the particulars at leisure, and on a more befitting occasion. I saw the late Earl to-day, not long before his death. He was calm, resigned, and full of that Christian hope which makes the death of the righteous so beautiful. He was not, indeed, without sorrow; but it was soothed by his confidence in the mercy of God, and his belief in the necessity and wisdom of sorrow and affliction to purify and exalt the heart.”

“And now, Lucy,” said the stranger—for so we shall call him still—taking her hand in his, “I trust that all obstacles between our union are removed at last. Our love has been strongly tested, and you especially have suffered much. Your trust in Providence, however, like that of Lady Gourlay, has not been in vain; and as for me, I learned much, and I hope to learn more, from your great and noble example. I concealed my name for many reasons: partly from delicacy to my uncle, the late Earl, and his family; and I was partly forced to do it, in consequence of an apprehension that I had killed a nobleman in a hasty duel. He was not killed, however, thank

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God; nor was his wound so dangerous as it looked at first; neither was I aware until afterwards that the individual who forced me into it was my own cousin Dunroe. It would have been very inconvenient to me to have been apprehended and probably cast into prison at a time when I had so many interests to look after; and, indeed, not the least of my motives was the fear of precipitating your father's enmity against Lady Gourlay's son, by discovering that I, who am her nephew, should have been seen about the town of Ballytrain, where, when a boy, I had spent a good deal of my early life. Had he known my name, he would have easily suspected my object. Your mother was aware of my design in coming to Ireland; but as I knew the risk of involving my uncle's children, and the good old man's reputation besides, in a mesh of public scandal at a time when I did not feel certain of being able to establish my claims, or rather my father's, for I myself was indifferent to them, I resolved to keep as quiet as possible, and not to disclose myself even to you until necessity should compel me."

Much more conversation ensued in connection with matters in which our lovers felt more or less interest. At length the gentlemen rose to go away, when Gillespie thrust a face of horror into the door, and exclaimed, bolting, as he spoke, behind the Dean, "O, gentlemen, for God's sake, save me! I'll confess and acknowledge everything."

"What's the matter, Sir?" asked the Dean.

"The dead man, sir; he's sitting up in the bed; and I know what he's come back for. You're a parson, sir, and, for heaven's sake, stand between him and me."

On proceeding to the room where the baronet's son had been laid out, they found him sitting, certainly, on the bedside, wondering at the habiliments of death which were about him. That which all had supposed to have been death, was only a fit of catalepsy, brought on him by the appearance of his father, who had, on more than one occasion, left a terrible impress of himself upon his mind, and who, he had been informed some years before, was the cause of all his sufferings. Even at the sight of Lucy herself, he had been deeply agitated, although he could not tell why. He was immediately attended to, a physician sent for, and poor Lucy felt an elevation of heart and spirits which she had not experienced for many a long day.

"Oh, do not go," she said to her lover and the Dean, "until I communicate to papa this twofold intelligence of delight; your strange good fortune, and the resurrection, I may term it, of my brother. The very object—the great engrossing object of papa's life and ambition gained in so wonderful a way! Do, pray, gentlemen, remain for a few minutes until I see him. O, what delight, what ecstasy will it not give him!"

She accordingly went up stairs, slowly it is true, for she was weak; and nothing further was heard except one wild and fearful scream, whose sharp tones penetrated through the whole house.

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“Ha!” exclaimed Lord Dunroe, “here is evil. Goodness me!—it is Miss Gourlay’s voice; I know it. Let us go up; I fear something is wrong with her father.”

They accordingly sought the baronet’s apartment, attended by the servants, whom Lucy’s wild scream had alarmed, and brought also toward the same direction. On entering the room, the body of Lucy was found lying beside, or rather across that of her father, whom, on removing her, they found to be dead. Beside him lay a little phial, on which there was no label, but the small portion of liquid that was found in it was clear and colorless as water. It was prussic acid. Lucy was immediately removed, and committed to the care of Alley Mahon and some of the other females, and the body of the baronet was raised and placed upon his own bed. The Dean and Lord Dunroe looked upon his lifeless but stern features with a feeling of awe.

“Alas!” exclaimed the good Dean, “and is it thus he has gone to his great account? We shall not follow his spirit into another life; but it is miserable to reflect that one hour’s patience might have saved him to the world and to God, and showed him, after all, that the great object of his life had been accomplished. Blind and impatient reasoner!—what has he done?”

“Yes,” replied Dunroe, looking on him with a feeling of profound melancholy; “there he lies—quiet enough now—the tumults of his strong spirit are over forever. That terrible heart is still at last—that fiery pulse will beat no more!”

We have now very little to state which our readers may not anticipate. Lucy and Lady Emily, each made happy in the great object of woman’s heart—love, only exchanged residences.

Lucy’s life was a long and bountiful blessing to her fellow-creatures. Her feelings were never contracted within the narrow circle of her own class, but embraced the great one of general humanity. She acted upon the noble principle of receiving from God the ample gifts of wealth and position, not for the purpose of wasting them in expensive and selfish enjoyments, but for that of causing them to diffuse among her fellow-creatures the greatest possible portion of happiness. This she considered her high destination, and well and nobly she fulfilled it in this, the great and true purpose of life, her husband and she went heart-in-heart, hand-in-hand; nor were Sir Edward Gourlay, and his kind and gentle Emily, far behind them in all their good-will and good works.

Lord Dunroe, having no strength of character to check his profligate impulses, was, in the course of some years, thrown off by all his high connections, and reduced to great indigence. Norton’s notion of his character was correct. The society of that treacherous sharper was necessary to him, and in some time after they were reconciled. Norton ultimately became driver of a celebrated mail-coach on the great York road, and the other, its guard; thus resolving, as it would seem, to keep the whip-hand of the weak and foolish nobleman in every position of life. Several of our English readers may

remember them, for they were both remarkable characters, and great favorites with the public.

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Dandy Dulcimer and Alley followed the example of their master and mistress, and were amply provided for by their friends, with whom they lived in confidential intimacy for the greater portion of their lives.

Thomas Corbet, his sister, and her son, disappeared; and it was supposed that they went to America.

M'Bride, in a short time after the close of our narrative, took a relish for foreign travel, and resolved to visit a certain bay of botanical celebrity not far from the antipodes. That he might accomplish this point with as little difficulty as possible, he asked a gentleman one evening for the loan of his watch and purse; a circumstance which so much tickled the fancy of a certain facetious judge of witty memory, that, on hearing a full account of the transaction, he so far and successfully interfered with the government as to get his expenses during the journey defrayed by his Majesty himself. His last place of residence in this country was a very magnificent one near Kilmainham, where he led a private and secluded life, occasionally devoting' himself to the progress of machinery in his hours of recreation, but uniformly declining to take country exercise.

Poor Trailcudgel was restored to his farm; and Lucy's brother lived with her for many years, won back by her affection and kindness to the perfect use of his reason; and it was well known that her children, boys and girls, were all very fond of Uncle Thomas.

Old Corbet took to devotion, became very religious, and lost in temper, which was never good, as much as he seemed to gain by penitence. He died suddenly from a fit of paralysis, brought on by the loss of a thirty shilling note, which was stolen from his till by Mrs. M'Bride.

On the occasion of Lucy's marriage with her lover, Father M'Mahon, who was invited to a double wedding—both Sir Edward and Dunroe being married on the same day—rode all the way to Dublin upon Freney the Robber, in order that his friend might see the new saddle upon Freney, and the priest himself upon the new saddle. Mr. Briney was also of the party, and never was his round rosy face and comic rolling eye more replete with humor and enjoyment; and as a reward for his integrity, as well as for the ability with which he assisted the stranger, we may as well mention that he was made Law Agent to both properties—a recompense which he well deserved. We need scarcely say that old Sam and Beck were also there; that their healths were drunk, and that old Sam told them how there was nothing more plain than that there never was such a wife in existence as his Beck, and that Providence all through intended Ned to be restored to his own—he, old Sam, always acting in this instance as Adjutant under Providence. It was clear, he said—quite evident—everything the work of Providence on the one hand, and on the other, *"all the heart of man!"*