

The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer — Volume 1 eBook

The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer — Volume 1 by Charles Lever

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Page 1

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

“Story! God bless you; I have none to tell, sir.”

It is now many—do not ask me to say how many—years since I received from the Horse Guards the welcome intelligence that I was gazetted to an insigny in his Majesty’s ___th Foot, and that my name, which had figured so long in the “Duke’s” list, with the words “a very hard case” appended, should at length appear in the monthly record of promotions and appointments.

Since then my life has been passed in all the vicissitudes of war and peace. The camp and the bivouac—the reckless gaiety of the mess-table—the comfortless solitude of a French prison—the exciting turmoils of active service—the wearisome monotony of garrison duty, I have alike partaken of, and experienced. A career of this kind, with a temperament ever ready to go with the humour of those about him will always be sure of its meed of adventure. Such has mine been; and with no greater pretension than to chronicle a few of the scenes in which I have borne a part, and revive the memory of the other actors in them—some, alas! Now no more—I have ventured upon these “Confessions.”

If I have not here selected that portion of my life which most abounded in striking events and incidents most worthy of recording, my excuse is simply, because being my first appearance upon the boards, I preferred accustoming myself to the look of the house, while performing the “Cock,” to coming before the audience in the more difficult part of Hamlet.

As there are unhappily impracticable people in the world, who, as Curran expressed it, are never content to know “who killed the gauger, if you can’t inform them who wore his corduroys”—to all such I would, in deep humility, say, that with my “Confessions” they have nothing to do—I have neither story nor moral—my only pretension to the one, is the detail of a passion which marked some years of my life; my only attempt at the other, the effort to show how prolific in hair-breadth ’scapes may a man’s career become, who, with a warm imagination and easy temper, believes too much, and rarely can feign a part without forgetting that he is acting. Having said thus much, I must once more bespeak the indulgence never withheld from a true penitent, and at once begin my “Confessions.”

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL IN CORK—CIVIC FESTIVITIES—PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

It was on a splendid morning in the autumn of the year 181_ that the Howard transport, with four hundred of his Majesty’s 4_th Regt., dropped anchor in the beautiful harbour of



Cove; the sea shone under the purple light of the rising sun with a rich rosy hue, beautifully in contrast with the different tints of the foliage of the deep woods already tinged with the brown of autumn. Spike Island lay “sleeping upon its broad shadow,” and the large ensign

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which crowns the battery was wrapped around the flag-staff, there not being even air enough to stir it. It was still so early, that but few persons were abroad; and as we leaned over the bulwarks, and looked now, for the first time for eight long years, upon British ground, many an eye filled, and many a heaving breast told how full of recollections that short moment was, and how different our feelings from the gay buoyancy with which we had sailed from that same harbour for the Peninsula; many of our best and bravest had we left behind us, and more than one native to the land we were approaching had found his last rest in the soil of the stranger. It was, then, with a mingled sense of pain and pleasure, we gazed upon that peaceful little village, whose white cottages lay dotted along the edge of the harbour. The moody silence our thoughts had shed over us was soon broken: the preparations for disembarking had begun, and I recollect well to this hour how, shaking off the load that oppressed my heart, I descended the gangway, humming poor Wolfe's well-known song—

“Why, soldiers, why
Should we be melancholy, boys?”

And to this elasticity of spirits—whether the result of my profession, or the gift of God—as Dogberry has it—I know not—I owe the greater portion of the happiness I have enjoyed in a life, whose changes and vicissitudes have equalled most men's.

Drawn up in a line along the shore, I could scarce refrain from a smile at our appearance. Four weeks on board a transport will certainly not contribute much to the “personnel” of any unfortunate therein confined; but when, in addition to this, you take into account that we had not received new clothes for three years—if I except caps for our grenadiers, originally intended for a Scotch regiment, but found to be all too small for the long-headed generation. Many a patch of brown and grey, variegated the faded scarlet, “of our uniform,” and scarcely a pair of knees in the entire regiment did not confess their obligations to a blanket. But with all this, we shewed a stout, weather-beaten front, that, disposed as the passer-by might feel to laugh at our expense, very little caution would teach him it was fully as safe to indulge it in his sleeve.

The bells from every steeple and tower rung gaily out a peal of welcome as we marched into “that beautiful city called Cork,” our band playing “Garryowen”—for we had been originally raised in Ireland, and still among our officers maintained a strong majority from that land of punch, priests, and potatoes—the tattered flag of the regiment proudly waving over our heads, and not a man amongst us whose warm heart did not bound behind a Waterloo medal. Well—well! I am now—alas, that I should say it—somewhat in the “sear and yellow;” and I confess, after the experience of some moments of high, triumphant feeling, that I never before felt within me, the same animating, spirit-filling glow of delight, as rose within my heart that day, as I marched at the head of my company down George's-street.

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We were soon settled in barracks; and then began a series of entertainments on the side of the civic dignities of Cork, which soon led most of us to believe that we had only escaped shot and shell to fall less gloriously beneath champagne and claret. I do not believe there is a coroner in the island who would have pronounced but the one verdict over the regiment—"Killed by the mayor and corporation," had we so fallen.

First of all, we were dined by the citizens of Cork—and, to do them justice, a harder drinking set of gentlemen no city need boast; then we were feasted by the corporation; then by the sheriffs; then came the mayor, solus; then an address, with a cold collation, that left eight of us on the sick-list for a fortnight; but the climax of all was a grand entertainment given in the mansion-house, and to which upwards of two thousand were invited. It was a species of fancy ball, beginning by a dejeuner at three o'clock in the afternoon, and ending—I never yet met the man who could tell when it ended; as for myself, my finale partook a little of the adventurous, and I may as well relate it.

After waltzing for about an hour with one of the prettiest girls I ever set eyes upon, and getting a tender squeeze of the hand, as I restored her to a most affable-looking old lady in a blue turban and a red velvet gown who smiled most benignly on me, and called me "Meejor," I retired to recruit for a new attack, to a small table, where three of ours were quaffing "ponche a la Romaine," with a crowd of Corkagians about them, eagerly inquiring after some heroes of their own city, whose deeds of arms they were surprised did not obtain special mention from "the Duke." I soon ingratiated myself into this well-occupied clique, and dosed them with glory to their hearts' content. I resolved at once to enter into their humour; and as the "ponche" mounted up to my brain I gradually found my acquaintanceship extend to every family and connexion in the country.

"Did ye know Phil Beamish of the 3rd, sir?" said a tall, red-faced, red-whiskered, well-looking gentleman, who bore no slight resemblance to Feargus O'Connor.

"Phil Beamish!" said I. "Indeed I did, sir, and do still; and there is not a man in the British army I am prouder of knowing." Here, by the way, I may mention that I never heard the name till that moment.

"You don't say so, sir?" said Feargus—for so I must call him, for shortness sake. "Has he any chance of the company yet, sir?"

"Company!" said I, in astonishment. "He obtained his majority three months since. You cannot possibly have heard from lately, or you would have known that?"

"That's true, sir. I never heard since he quitted the 3rd to go to Versailles, I think they call it, for his health. But how did he get the step, sir?"



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“Why, as to the company, that was remarkable enough!” said I, quaffing off a tumbler of champagne, to assist my invention. “You know it was about four o’clock in the afternoon of the 18th that Napoleon ordered Grouchy to advance with the first and second brigade of the Old Guard and two regiments of chasseurs, and attack the position occupied by Picton and the regiments under his command. Well, sir, on they came, masked by the smoke of a terrific discharge of artillery, stationed on a small eminence to our left, and which did tremendous execution among our poor fellows—on they came, Sir; and as the smoke cleared partially away we got a glimpse of them, and a more dangerous looking set I should not desire to see: grizzle-bearded, hard-featured, bronzed fellows, about five-and-thirty or forty years of age; their beauty not a whit improved by the red glare thrown upon their faces and along the whole line by each flash of the long twenty-fours that were playing away to the right. Just at this moment Picton rode down the line with his staff, and stopping within a few paces of me, said, ‘They’re coming up; steady, boys; steady now: we shall have something to do soon.’ And then, turning sharply round, he looked in the direction of the French battery, that was thundering away again in full force, ‘Ah, that must be silenced,’ said he, ‘Where’s Beamish?’—“Says Picton!” interrupted Feargus, his eyes starting from their sockets, and his mouth growing wider every moment, as he listed with the most intense interest. “Yes,” said I, slowly; and then, with all the provoking nonchalance of an Italian improvisatore, who always halts at the most exciting point of his narrative, I begged a listener near me to fill my glass from the iced punch beside him. Not a sound was heard as I lifted the bumper to my lips; all were breathless in their wound-up anxiety to hear of their countryman who had been selected by Picton—for what, too, they knew not yet, and, indeed, at this instant I did not know myself, and nearly laughed outright, for the two of our men who had remained at the table had so well employed their interval of ease as to become very pleasantly drunk, and were listening to my confounded story with all the gravity and seriousness in the world.

“‘Where’s Beamish?’ said Picton. ‘Here, sir,’ said Phil stepping out from the line and touching his cap to the general, who, taking him apart for a few minutes, spoke to him with great animation. We did not know what he said; but before five minutes were over, there was Phil with three companies of light-bobs drawn up at our left; their muskets at the charge, they set off at a round trot down the little steep which closed our flank. We had not much time to follow their movements, for our own amusement began soon; but I well remember, after repelling the French attack, and standing in square against two heavy charges of cuirassiers, the first thing I saw where the French battery had stood, was Phil Beamish and about a handful of brave fellows, all that remained from the skirmish. He captured two of the enemy’s field-pieces, and was ‘Captain Beamish’ on the day after.”



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“Long life to him,” said at least a dozen voices behind and about me, while a general clinking of decanters and smacking of lips betokened that Phil’s health with all the honours was being celebrated. For myself, I was really so engrossed by my narrative, and so excited by the “ponche,” that I saw or heard very little of what was passing around, and have only a kind of dim recollection of being seized by the hand by “Feargus,” who was Beamish’s brother, and who, in the fullness of his heart, would have hugged me to his breast, if I had not opportunely been so overpowered as to fall senseless under the table.

When I first returned to consciousness, I found myself lying exactly where I had fallen. Around me lay heaps of slain—the two of “ours” amongst the number. One of them—I remember he was the adjutant—held in his hand a wax candle (three to the pound). Whether he had himself seized it in the enthusiasm of my narrative of flood and field, or it had been put there by another, I know not, but he certainly cut a droll figure. The room we were in was a small one off the great saloon, and through the half open folding-door I could clearly perceive that the festivities were still continued. The crash of fiddles and French horns, and the tramp of feet, which had lost much of their elasticity since the entertainments began, rang through my ears, mingled with the sounds “down the middle,” “hands across,” “here’s your partner, Captain.” What hour of the night or morning it then was, I could not guess; but certainly the vigor of the party seemed little abated, if I might judge from the specimens before me, and the testimony of a short plethoric gentleman, who stood wiping his bald head, after conducting his partner down twenty-eight couple, and who, turning to his friend, said, “Oh, the distance is nothing, but it is the pace that kills.”

The first evidence I shewed of any return to reason, was a strong anxiety to be at my quarters; but how to get there I knew not. The faint glimmering of sense I possessed told me that “to stand was to fall,” and I was ashamed to go on all-fours, which prudence suggested.

At this moment I remembered I had brought with me my cane, which, from a perhaps pardonable vanity, I was fond of parading. It was a present from the officers of my regiment—many of them, alas, since dead—and had a most splendid gold head, with a stag at the top—the arms of the regiment. This I would not have lost for any consideration I can mention; and this now was gone! I looked around me on every side; I groped beneath the table; I turned the sleeping sots who lay about in no very gentle fashion; but, alas, it was gone. I sprang to my feet and only then remembered how unfit I was to follow up the search, as tables, chairs, lights, and people seemed all rocking and waving before me. However, I succeeded in making my way, through one room into another, sometimes guiding my steps along the walls; and once, as I recollect,



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seeking the diagonal of a room, I bisected a quadrille with such ill-directed speed, as to run foul of a Cork dandy and his partner who were just performing the “en avant:” but though I saw them lie tumbled in the dust by the shock of my encounter—for I had upset them—I still held on the even tenor of my way. In fact, I had feeling for but one loss; and, still in pursuit of my cane, I reached the hall-door. Now, be it known that the architecture of the Cork Mansion House has but one fault, but that fault is a grand one, and a strong evidence of how unsuited English architects are to provide buildings for a people whose tastes and habits they but imperfectly understand—be it known, then, that the descent from the hall-door to the street was by a flight of twelve stone steps. How I should ever get down these was now my difficulty. If Falstaff deplored “eight yards of uneven ground as being three score and ten miles a foot,” with equal truth did I feel that these twelve awful steps were worse to me than would be M’Gillicuddy Reeks in the day-light, and with a head clear from champagne.

While I yet hesitated, the problem resolved itself; for, gazing down upon the bright gravel, brilliantly lighted by the surrounding lamps, I lost my balance, and came tumbling and rolling from top to bottom, where I fell upon a large mass of some soft substance, to which, in all probability, I owe my life. In a few seconds I recovered my senses, and what was my surprise to find that the downy cushion beneath, snored most audibly! I moved a little to one side, and then discovered that in reality it was nothing less than an alderman of Cork, who, from his position, I concluded had shared the same fate with myself; there he lay, “like a warrior taking his rest,” but not with his “martial cloak around him,” but a much more comfortable and far more costly robe—a scarlet gown of office—with huge velvet cuffs and a great cape of the same material. True courage consists in presence of mind; and here mine came to my aid at once: recollecting the loss I had just sustained, and perceiving that all was still about me, with that right Peninsular maxim, that reprisals are fair in an enemy’s camp, I proceeded to strip the slain; and with some little difficulty—partly, indeed, owing to my unsteadiness on my legs—I succeeded in denuding the worthy alderman, who gave no other sign of life during the operation than an abortive effort to “hip, hip, hurra,” in which I left him, having put on the spoil, and set out on my way to the barrack with as much dignity of manner as I could assume in honour of my costume. And here I may mention (en parenthese) that a more comfortable morning gown no man ever possessed, and in its wide luxuriant folds I revel, while I write these lines.



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When I awoke on the following day I had considerable difficulty in tracing the events of the past evening. The great scarlet cloak, however, unravelled much of the mystery, and gradually the whole of my career became clear before me, with the single exception of the episode of Phil Beamish, about which my memory was subsequently refreshed—but I anticipate. Only five appeared that day at mess; and, Lord! What spectres they were!—yellow as guineas; they called for soda water without ceasing, and scarcely spoke a word to each other. It was plain that the corporation of Cork was committing more havoc among us than Corunna or Waterloo, and that if we did not change our quarters, there would be quick promotion in the corps for such as were “seasoned gentlemen.” After a day or two we met again together, and then what adventures were told—each man had his own story to narrate; and from the occurrences detailed, one would have supposed years had been passing, instead of the short hours of an evening party. Mine were indeed among the least remarkable; but I confess that the air of vraisemblance produced by my production of the aldermanic gown gave me the palm above all competitors.

Such was our life in Cork—dining, drinking, dancing, riding steeple chases, pigeon shooting, and tandem driving—filling up any little interval that was found to exist between a late breakfast, and the time to dress for dinner; and here I hope I shall not be accused of a tendency to boasting, while I add, that among all ranks and degrees of men, and women too, there never was a regiment more highly in estimation than the 4th. We felt the full value of all the attentions we were receiving; and we endeavoured, as best we might, to repay them. We got up Garrison Balls and Garrison Plays, and usually performed one or twice a week during the winter. Here I shone conspicuously; in the morning I was employed painting scenery and arranging the properties; as it grew later, I regulated the lamps, and looked after the foot-lights, mediating occasionally between angry litigants, whose jealousies abounded to the full as much, in private theatricals, as in the regular corps dramatique. Then, I was also leader in the orchestra; and had scarcely to speak the prologues. Such are the cares of greatness: to do myself justice, I did not dislike them; though, to be sure, my taste for the drama did cost me a little dear, as will be seen in the sequel.

We were then in the full career of popularity. Our balls pronounced the very pleasantest; our plays far superior to any regular corps that had ever honoured Cork with their talents; when an event occurred which threw a gloom over all our proceedings, and finally put a stop to every project for amusement, we had so completely given ourselves up to. This was no less than the removal of our Lieutenant-Colonel. After thirty years of active service in the regiment he then commanded, his age and infirmities, increased

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by some severe wounds, demanded ease and repose; he retired from us, bearing along with him the love and regard of every man in the regiment. To the old officers he was endeared by long companionship, and undeviating friendship; to the young, he was in every respect as a father, assisting by his advice, and guiding by his counsel; while to the men, the best estimate of his worth appeared in the fact, that corporeal punishment was unknown in the corps. Such was the man we lost; and it may well be supposed, that his successor, who, or whatever he might be, came under circumstances of no common difficulty amongst us; but, when I tell, that our new Lieutenant-Colonel was in every respect his opposite, it may be believed how little cordiality he met with.

Lieutenant-Colonel Carden—for so I shall call him, although not his real name—had not been a month at quarters, when he proved himself a regular martinet; everlasting drills, continual reports, fatigue parties, and ball practice, and heaven knows what besides, superseded our former morning's occupation; and, at the end of the time I have mentioned, we, who had fought our way from Albuera to Waterloo, under some of the severest generals of division, were pronounced a most disorderly and ill-disciplined regiment, by a Colonel, who had never seen a shot fired but at a review in Hounslow, or a sham-battle in the Fifteen Acres. The winter was now drawing to a close—already some little touch of spring was appearing; as our last play for the season was announced, every effort to close with some little additional effort was made; and each performer in the expected piece was nerving himself for an effort beyond his wont. The Colonel had most unequivocally condemned these plays; but that mattered not; they came not within his jurisdiction; and we took no notice of his displeasure, further than sending him tickets, which were as immediately returned as received. From being the chief offender, I had become particularly obnoxious; and he had upon more than one occasion expressed his desire for an opportunity to visit me with his vengeance; but being aware of his kind intentions towards me, I took particular care to let no such opportunity occur.

On the morning in question, then, I had scarcely left my quarters, when one of my brother officers informed me that the Colonel had made a great uproar, that one of the bills of the play had been put up on his door—which, with his avowed dislike to such representations, he considered as intended to insult him: he added, too, that the Colonel attributed it to me. In this, however, he was wrong—and, to this hour, I never knew who did it. I had little time, and still less inclination, to meditate upon the Colonel's wrath—the theatre had all my thoughts; and indeed it was a day of no common exertion, for our amusements were to conclude with a grand supper on the stage, to which all the elite of Cork were invited. Wherever I went through the city—and many were my peregrinations—the great placard of the play stared me in the face; and every gate and shuttered window in Cork, proclaimed, "*The part of Othello, by Mr. Lorrequer.*"



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As evening drew near, my cares and occupations were redoubled. My Iago I had fears for—'tis true he was an admirable Lord Grizzle in Tom Thumb—but then—then I had to paint the whole company, and bear all their abuse besides, for not making some of the most ill-looking wretches, perfect Apollos; but, last of all, I was sent for, at a quarter to seven, to lace Desdemona's stays. Start not, gentle reader—my fair Desdemona—she “who might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks”—was no other than the senior lieutenant of the regiment, and who was a great a votary of the jolly god as honest Cassio himself. But I must hasten on—I cannot delay to recount our successes in detail. Let it suffice to say, that, by universal consent, I was preferred to Kean; and the only fault the most critical observer could find to the representative of Desdemona, was a rather unlady-like fondness for snuff. But, whatever little demerits our acting might have displayed, were speedily forgotten in a champagne supper. There I took the head of the table; and, in the costume of the noble Moor, toasted, made speeches, returned thanks, and sung songs, till I might have exclaimed with Othello himself, “Chaos was come again;”—and I believe I owe my ever reaching the barrack that night to the kind offices of Desdemona, who carried me the greater part of the way on her back.

The first waking thoughts of him who has indulged over-night, was not among the most blissful of existence, and certainly the pleasure is not increased by the consciousness that he is called on to the discharge of duties to which a fevered pulse and throbbing temples are but ill-suited. My sleep was suddenly broken in upon the morning after the play, but a “row-dow-dow” beat beneath my window. I jumped hastily from my bed, and looked out, and there, to my horror, perceived the regiment under arms. It was one of our confounded colonel's morning drills; and there he stood himself with the poor adjutant, who had been up all night, shivering beside him. Some two or three of the officers had descended; and the drum was now summoning the others as it beat round the barrack-square. I saw there was not a moment to lose, and proceeded to dress with all despatch; but, to my misery, I discovered every where nothing but theatrical robes and decorations—there lay a splendid turban, here a pair of buskins—a spangled jacket glittered on one table, and a jewelled scimitar on the other. At last I detected my “regimental small-clothes,” &c. Most ignominiously thrust into a corner, in my ardour for my Moorish robes the preceding evening.



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I dressed myself with the speed of lightning; but as I proceeded in my occupation—guess my annoyance to find that the toilet-table and glass, ay, and even the basin-stand, had been removed to the dressing-room of the theatre; and my servant, I suppose, following his master's example, was too tipsy to remember to bring them back; so that I was unable to procure the luxury of cold water—for now not a moment more remained—the drum had ceased, and the men had all fallen in. Hastily drawing on my coat, I put on my shako, and buckling on my belt as dandy-like as might be, hurried down the stairs to the barrack-yard. By the time I got down, the men were all drawn up in line along the square; while the adjutant was proceeding to examine their accoutrements, &c. as he passed down. The colonel and the officers were standing in a group, but no conversing. The anger of the commanding officer appeared still to continue, and there was a dead silence maintained on both sides. To reach the spot where they stood, I had to pass along part of the line. In doing so, how shall I convey my amazement at the faces that met me—a general titter ran along the entire rank, which not even their fears for consequences seemed able to repress—for an effort, on the part of many, to stifle the laugh, only ended in a still louder burst of merriment. I looked to the far side of the yard for an explanation, but there was nothing there to account for it. I now crossed over to where the officers were standing, determining in my own mind to investigate the occurrence thoroughly, when free from the presence of the colonel, to whom any representation of ill conduct always brought a punishment far exceeding the merits of the case.

Scarcely had I formed this resolve, when I reached the group of officers; but the moment I came near, one general roar of laughter saluted me,—the like of which I never before heard—I looked down at my costume, expecting to discover that, in my hurry to dress, I had put on some of the garments of Othello—No: all was perfectly correct. I waited for a moment, till the first burst of their merriment over, I should obtain a clue to the jest. But their mirth appeared to increase. Indeed poor G——, the senior major, one of the gravest men in Europe, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks; and such was the effect upon me, that I was induced to laugh too—as men will sometimes, from the infectious nature of that strange emotion; but, no sooner did I do this, than their fun knew no bounds, and some almost screamed aloud, in the excess of their merriment; just at this instant the Colonel, who had been examining some of the men, approached our group, advancing with an air of evident displeasure, as the shouts of loud laughter continued. As he came up, I turned hastily round, and touching my cap, wished him good morning. Never shall I forget the look he gave me. If a glance could have annihilated any man, his would have finished me. For a moment his face became purple with rage, his eye was almost hid beneath his bent brow, and he absolutely shook with passion.



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“Go, Sir,” said he at length, as soon as he was able to find utterance for his words; “Go, sir, to your quarters; and before you leave them, a court-martial shall decide, if such continued insult to your commanding officer, warrants your name being in the Army List.”

“What the devil can all this mean?” I said, in a half-whisper, turning to the others. But there they stood, their handkerchiefs to their mouths, and evidently choking with suppressed laughter.

“May I beg, Colonel C____,” said I---

“To your quarters, sir,” roared the little man, in the voice of a lion. And with a haughty wave of his hand, prevented all further attempt on my part to seek explanation.

“They’re all mad, every man of them,” I muttered, as I betook myself slowly back to my rooms, amid the same evidences of mirth my first appearance had excited—which even the Colonel’s presence, feared as he was, could not entirely subdue.

With the air of a martyr I trod heavily up the stairs, and entered my quarters, meditating within myself, awful schemes for vengeance, on the now open tyranny of my Colonel; upon whom, I too, in my honest rectitude of heart, vowed to have “a court-martial.” I threw myself upon a chair, and endeavoured to recollect what circumstance of the past evening could have possibly suggested all the mirth in which both officers and men seemed to participate equally; but nothing could I remember, capable of solving the mystery,—surely the cruel wrongs of the manly Othello were no laughter-moving subject.

I rang the bell hastily for my servant. The door opened.

“Stubbes,” said I, “are you aware”——

I had only got so far in my question, when my servant, one of the most discreet of men, put on a broad grin, and turned away towards the door to hide his face.

“What the devil does this mean?” said I, stamping with passion; “he is as bad as the rest. Stubbes,” and this I spoke with the most grave and severe tone, “what is the meaning of the insolence?”

“Oh, sir,” said the man; “Oh, sir, surely you did not appear on parade with that face?” and then he burst into a fit of the most uncontrollable laughter.

Like lightning a horrid doubt shot across my mind. I sprung over to the dressing-glass, which had been replaced, and oh: horror of horrors! There I stood as black as the king



of Ashantee. The cursed dye which I had put on for Othello, I had never washed off,—and there with a huge bear-skin shako, and a pair of black, bushy whiskers, shone my huge, black, and polished visage, glowering at itself in the looking-glass.



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My first impulse, after amazement had a little subsided, was to laugh immoderately; in this I was joined by Stubbes, who, feeling that his mirth was participated in, gave full vent to his risibility. And, indeed, as I stood before the glass, grinning from ear to ear, I felt very little surprise that my joining in the laughter of my brother officers, a short time before, had caused an increase of their merriment. I threw myself upon a sofa, and absolutely laughed till my sides ached, when, the door opening, the adjutant made his appearance. He looked for a moment at me, then at Stubbes, and then burst out himself, as loud as either of us. When he had at length recovered himself, he wiped his face with his handkerchief, and said, with a tone of much gravity:—

“But, my dear Lorrequer, this will be a serious—a devilish serious affair. You know what kind of man Colonel C___ is; and you are aware, too, you are not one of his prime favourites. He is firmly convinced that you intended to insult him, and nothing will convince him to the contrary. We told him how it must have occurred, but he will listen to no explanation.”

I thought for one second before I replied, my mind, with the practised rapidity of an old campaigner, took in all the pros and cons of the case; I saw at a glance, it were better to brave the anger of the Colonel, come in what shape it might, than be the laughing-stock of the mess for life, and with a face of the greatest gravity and self-possession, said,

“Well, adjutant, the Colonel is right. It was no mistake! You know I sent him tickets yesterday for the theatre. Well, he returned them; this did not annoy me, but on one account, I had made a wager with Alderman Gullable, that the Colonel should see me in Othello—what was to be done? Don’t you see, now, there was only one course, and I took it, old boy, and have won my bet!”

“And lost your commission for a dozen of champagne, I suppose,” said the adjutant.

“Never mind, my dear fellow,” I replied; “I shall get out of this scrape, as I have done many others.”

“But what do you intend doing?”

“Oh, as to that,” said I, “I shall, of course, wait on the Colonel immediately; pretend to him that it was a mere blunder, from the inattention of my servant—hand over Stubbes to the powers that punish, (here the poor fellow winced a little,) and make my peace as well as I can. But, adjutant, mind,” said I, “and give the real version to all our fellows, and tell them to make it public as much as they please.”



“Never fear,” said he, as he left the room still laughing, “they shall all know the true story; but I wish with all my heart you were well out of it.”

I now lost no time in making my toilet, and presented myself at the Colonel’s quarters. It is no pleasure for me to recount these passages in my life, in which I have had to hear the “proud man’s contumely.” I shall therefore merely observe, that after a very long interview, the Colonel accepted my apologies, and we parted.



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Before a week elapsed, the story had gone far and near; every dinner-table in Cork had laughed at it. As for me, I attained immortal honour for my tact and courage. Poor Gullable readily agreed to favour the story, and gave us a dinner as the lost wager, and the Colonel was so unmercifully quizzed on the subject, and such broad allusions to his being humbugged were given in the Cork papers, that he was obliged to negotiate a change of quarters with another regiment, to get out of the continual jesting, and in less than a month we marched to Limerick, to relieve, as it was reported, the 9th, ordered for foreign service, but, in reality, only to relieve Lieut.-Colonel C____, quizzed beyond endurance.

However, if the Colonel had seemed to forgive, he did not forget, for the very second week after our arrival in Limerick, I received one morning at my breakfast-table, the following brief note from our adjutant:—

“My Dear Lorrequer—The Colonel has received orders to despatch two companies to some remote part of the county Clare; as you have ‘done the state some service,’ you are selected for the beautiful town of Kilrush, where, to use the eulogistic language of the geography books, ‘there is a good harbour, and a market plentifully supplied with fish.’ I have just heard of the kind intention in store for you, and lose no time in letting you know.

“God give you a good deliverance from the ‘garcons lances,’ as the Moniteur calls the Whiteboys, and believe me ever your’s, Charles Curzon.”

I had scarcely twice read over the adjutant’s epistle, when I received an official notification from the Colonel, directing me to proceed to Kilrush, then and there to afford all aid and assistance in suppressing illicit distillation, when called on for that purpose; and other similar duties too agreeable to recapitulate. Alas! Alas! Othello’s occupation: was indeed gone! The next morning at sun-rise saw me on my march, with what appearance of gaiety I could muster, but in reality very much chopfallen at my banishment, and invoking sundry things upon the devoted head of the Colonel, which he would by no means consider as “blessings.”

How short-sighted are we mortals, whether enjoying all the pump and state of royalty, or marching like myself at the head of a company of his Majesty’s 4_{th}.

Little, indeed, did I anticipate that the Siberia to which I fancied I was condemned should turn out the happiest quarters my fate ever threw me into. But this, including as it does, one of the most important events of my life, I reserve for another chapter.—

“What is that place called, Sergeant?”—“Bunratty Castle, sir,”

“Where do we breakfast?”—“At Clare Island, sir.”



“March away, boys!”

CHAPTER II.

DETACHMENT DUTY—THE BURTON ARMS—CALLONBY.

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For a week after my arrival at Kilrush, my life was one of the most dreary monotony. The rain, which had begun to fall as I left Limerick, continued to descend in torrents, and I found myself a close prisoner in the sanded parlour of “mine inn.” At no time would such “durance vile” have been agreeable; but now, when I contrasted it with all I had left behind at head quarters, it was absolutely maddening. The pleasant lounge in the morning, the social mess, and the agreeable evening party, were all exchanged for a short promenade of fourteen feet in one direction, and twelve in the other, such being the accurate measurement of my “salle a manger.” A chicken, with legs as blue as a Highlander’s in winter, for my dinner; and the hours that all Christian mankind were devoting to pleasant intercourse, and agreeable chit-chat, spent in beating that dead-march to time, “the Devil’s Tattoo,” upon my ricketty table, and forming, between whiles, sundry valorous resolutions to reform my life, and “eschew sack and loose company.”

My front-window looked out upon a long, straggling, ill-paved street, with its due proportion of mud-heaps, and duck pools; the houses on either side were, for the most part, dingy-looking edifices, with half-doors, and such pretension to being shops as a quart of meal, or salt, displayed in the window, confers; or sometimes two tobacco-pipes, placed “saltier-wise,” would appear the only vendible article in the establishment. A more wretched, gloomy-looking picture of woe-begone poverty, I never beheld.

If I turned for consolation to the back of the house, my eyes fell upon the dirty yard of a dirty inn; the half-thatched cow-shed, where two famished animals mourned their hard fate,—“chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy;” the chaise, the yellow post-chaise, once the pride and glory of the establishment, now stood reduced from its wheels, and ignominiously degraded to a hen-house; on the grass-grown roof a cock had taken his stand, with an air of protective patronage to the feathered inhabitants beneath:

“To what base uses must we come at last.”

That chaise, which once had conveyed the blooming bride, all blushes and tenderness, and the happy groom, on their honeymoon visit to Ballybunion and its romantic caves, or to the gigantic cliffs and sea-girt shores of Moher—or with more steady pace and becoming gravity had borne along the “going judge of assize,”—was now become a lying-in hospital for fowl, and a nursery for chickens. Fallen as I was myself from my high estate, it afforded me a species of malicious satisfaction to contemplate these sad reverses of fortune; and I verily believe—for on such slight foundation our greatest resolves are built—that if the rain had continued a week longer, I should have become a misanthropist for life. I made many inquiries from my landlady as to the society of the place, but the answers I received only led to greater despondence. My



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predecessor here, it seemed, had been an officer of a veteran battalion, with a wife, and that amount of children which is algebraically expressed by an X (meaning an unknown quantity). He, good man, in his two years' sojourn here, had been much more solicitous about his own affairs, than making acquaintance with his neighbours; and at last, the few persons who had been in the habit of calling on "the officer," gave up the practice; and as there were no young ladies to refresh Pa's memory on the matter, they soon forgot completely that such a person existed—and to this happy oblivion I, Harry Lorrequer, succeeded, and was thus left without benefit of clergy to the tender mercies of Mrs. Healy of the Burton arms.

As during the inundation which deluged the whole country around I was unable to stir from the house, I enjoyed abundant opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of my hostess, and it is but fair that my reader, who has journeyed so far with me, should have an introduction.

Mrs. Healy, the sole proprietor of the "Burton Arms," was of some five and fifty—"or by'r lady," three score years, of a rubicund and hale complexion; and though her short neck and corpulent figure might have set her down as "doubly hazardous," she looked a good life for many years to come. In height and breadth she most nearly resembled a sugar-hogshead, whose rolling, pitching motion, when trundled along on edge, she emulated in her gait. To the ungainliness of her figure her mode of dressing not a little contributed. She usually wore a thick linsey-wolsey gown, with enormous pockets on either side, and, like Nora Creina's, it certainly inflicted no undue restrictions upon her charms, but left

"Every beauty free,
To sink or swell as heaven pleases."

Her feet—ye gods! Such feet—were apparelled in listing slippers, over which the upholstery of her ancles descended, and completely relieved the mind of the spectator as to the superincumbent weight being disproportioned to the support; I remember well my first impression on seeing those feet and ancles reposing upon a straw footstool, while she took her afternoon dose, and I wondered within myself if elephants were liable to the gout. There are few countenances in the world, that if wishing to convey an idea of, we cannot refer to some well-known standard; and thus nothing is more common than to hear comparisons with "Vulcan—Venus—Nicodemus," and the like; but in the present case, I am totally at a loss for any thing resembling the face of the worth Mrs. Healy, except it be, perhaps, that most ancient and sour visage we used to see upon old circular iron rappers formerly—they make none of them now—the only difference being, that Mrs. Healy's nose had no ring through it; I am almost tempted to add, "more's the pity."



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Such was she in “the flesh;” would that I could say, she was more fascinating in the “spirit!” but alas, truth, from which I never may depart in these “my confessions,” constrains me to acknowledge the reverse. Most persons in this miserable world of ours, have some prevailing, predominating characteristic, which usually gives the tone and colour to all their thoughts and actions, forming what we denominate temperament; this we see actuating them, now more, now less; but rarely, however, is this great spring of action without its moments of repose. Not so with her of whom I have been speaking. She had but one passion—but, like Aaron’s rod, it had a most consuming tendency—and that was to scold, and abuse, all whom hard fate had brought within the unfortunate limits of her tyranny. The English language, comprehensive as it is, afforded not epithets strong enough for her wrath, and she sought among the more classic beauties of her native Irish, such additional ones as served her need, and with this holy alliance of tongues, she had been for years long, the dread and terror of the entire village.

“The dawning of morn, the day-light sinking,” ay, and even the “night’s dull hours,” it was said, too, found her labouring in her congenial occupation; and while thus she continued to “scold and grow fat,” her inn, once a popular and frequented one, became gradually less and less frequented, and the dragon of the Rhine-fells did not more effectually lay waste the territory about him, than did the evil influence of her tongue spread desolation and ruin around her. Her inn, at the time of my visit, had not been troubled with even a passing traveller for many months; and, indeed, if I had any, even the least foreknowledge of the character of my hostess, its privacy should have still remained uninvaded for some time longer.

I had not been many hours installed, when I got a specimen of her powers; and before the first week was over, so constant and unremitting were her labours in this way, that I have upon the occasion of a slight lull in the storm, occasioned by her falling asleep, actually left my room to inquire if anything had gone wrong, in the same way as the miller is said to awake, if the mill stops. I trust I have said enough, to move the reader’s pity and compassion for my situation—one more miserable it is difficult to conceive. It may be thought that much might be done by management, and that a slight exercise of the favourite Whig plan of conciliation, might avail. Nothing of the kind. She was proof against all such arts; and what was still worse, there was no subject, no possible circumstance, no matter, past, present, or to come, that she could not wind by her diabolical ingenuity, into some cause of offence; and then came the quick transition to instant punishment. Thus, my apparently harmless inquiry as to the society of the neighbourhood, suggested to her—a wish on my part to make acquaintance—therefore to dine out—therefore not to dine at home—consequently to escape paying half-a-crown and devouring a chicken—therefore to defraud her, and behave, as she would herself observe, “like a beggarly scullion, with his four shillings a day, setting up for a gentleman,” &c.



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By a quiet and Job-like endurance of all manner of taunting suspicions, and unmerited sarcasms, to which I daily became more reconciled, I absolutely rose into something like favour; and before the first month of my banishment expired, had got the length of an invitation to tea, in her own snuggerly—an honour never known to be bestowed on any before, with the exception of Father Malachi Brennan, her ghostly adviser; and even he, it is said, never ventured on such an approximation to intimacy, until he was, in Kilrush phrase, “half screwed,” thereby meaning more than half tipsy. From time to time thus, I learned from my hostess such particulars of the country and its inhabitants as I was desirous of hearing; and among other matters, she gave me an account of the great landed proprietor himself, Lord Callonby, who was daily expected at his seat, within some miles of Kilrush, at the same time assuring me that I need not be looking so “pleased and curling out my whiskers;” “that they’d never take the trouble of asking even the name of me.” This, though neither very courteous, nor altogether flattering to listen to, was no more than I had already learned from some brother officers who knew this quarter, and who informed me that the Earl of Callonby, though only visiting his Irish estates every three or four years, never took the slightest notice of any of the military in his neighbourhood; nor, indeed did he mix with the country gentry, confining himself to his own family, or the guests, who usually accompanied him from England, and remained during his few weeks’ stay. My impression of his lordship was therefore not calculated to cheer my solitude by any prospect of his rendering ti lighter.

The Earl’s family consisted of her ladyship, an only son, nearly of age, and two daughters; the eldest, Lady Jane, had the reputation of being extremely beautiful; and I remembered when she came out in London, only the year before, hearing nothing but praises of the grace and elegance of her manner, united to the most classic beauty of her face and figure. The second daughter was some years younger, and said to be also very handsome; but as yet she had not been brought into society. Of the son, Lord Kilkee, I only heard that he had been a very gay fellow at Oxford, where he was much liked, and although not particularly studious, had given evidence of talent.

Such were the few particulars I obtained of my neighbours, and thus little did I know of those who were so soon to exercise a most important influence upon my future life.

After some weeks’ close confinement, which, judging from my feelings alone, I should have counted as many years, I eagerly seized the opportunity of the first glimpse of sunshine to make a short excursion along the coast; I started early in the morning, and after a long stroll along the bold headlands of Kilkee, was returning late in the evening to my lodgings. My path lay across a wild, bleak moor, dotted with low clumps of furze, and not presenting on any side the least trace of habitation. In wading through the tangled bushes, my dog “Mouche” started a hare; and after a run “sharp, short, and decisive,” killed it at the bottom of a little glen some hundred yards off.



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I was just patting my dog, and examining the prize, when I heard a crackling among the low bushes near me; and on looking up, perceived, about twenty paces distant, a short, thick-set man, whose fustian jacket and leathern gaiters at once pronounced him the gamekeeper; he stood leaning upon his gun, quietly awaiting, as it seemed, for any movement on my part, before he interfered. With one glance I detected how matters stood, and immediately adopting my usual policy of “taking the bull by the horns,” called out, in a tone of very sufficient authority,

“I say, my man, are you his lordship’s gamekeeper?”

Taking off his hat, the man approached me, and very respectfully informed me that he was.

“Well then,” said I, “present this hare to his lordship with my respects; here is my card, and say I shall be most happy to wait on him in the morning, and explain the circumstance.”

The man took the card, and seemed for some moments undecided how to act; he seemed to think that probably he might be ill-treating a friend of his lordship’s if he refused; and on the other hand might be merely “jockeyed” by some bold-faced poacher. Meanwhile I whistled my dog close up, and humming an air, with great appearance of indifference, stepped out homeward. By this piece of presence of mind I saved poor “Mouche;” for I saw at a glance, that, with true gamekeeper’s law, he had been destined to death the moment he had committed the offence.

The following morning, as I sat at breakfast, meditating upon the events of the preceding day, and not exactly determined how to act, whether to write to his lordship explaining how the matter occurred, or call personally, a loud rattling on the pavement drew me to the window. As the house stood at the end of a street, I could not see in the direction the noise came; but as I listened, a very handsome tandem turned the corner of the narrow street, and came along towards the hotel at a long, sling trot; the horses were dark chestnuts, well matched, and shewing a deal of blood. The carriage was a dark drab, with black wheels; the harness all of the same colour. The whole turn-out—and I was an amateur of that sort of thing—was perfect; the driver, for I come to him last, as he was the last I looked at, was a fashionable looking young fellow, plainly, but knowingly, dressed, and evidently handling the “ribbon,” like an experienced whip.

After bringing his nags up to the inndoor in very pretty style, he gave the reins to his servant, and got down. Before I was well aware of it, the door of my room opened, and the gentleman entered with a certain easy air of good breeding, and saying,

“Mr. Lorrequer, I presume—” introduced himself as Lord Kilkee.

I immediately opened the conversation by an apology for my dog's misconduct on the day before, and assured his lordship that I knew the value of a hare in a hunting country, and was really sorry for the circumstance.



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“Then I must say,” replied his lordship, “Mr. Lorrequer is the only person who regrets the matter; for had it not been for this, it is more than probable we should never have known we were so near neighbours; in fact, nothing could equal our amazement at hearing were playing the ‘Solitaire’ down here. You must have found it dreadfully heavy, ‘ad have thought us downright savages.’ But then I must explain to you, that my father has made some ‘rule absolute’ about visiting when down here. And though I know you’ll not consider it a compliment, yet I can assure you there is not another man I know of he would pay attention to, but yourself. He made two efforts to get here this morning, but the gout ‘would not be denied,’ and so he deputed a most inferior ‘diplomate;’ and now will you let me return with some character from my first mission, and inform my friends that you will dine with us to-day at seven—a mere family party; but make your arrangements to stop all night and to-morrow: we shall find some work for my friend there on the hearth; what do you call him, Mr. Lorrequer?”

“‘Mouche’—come here, ‘Mouche.’”

“Ah ‘Mouche,’ come here, my fine fellow—a splendid dog, indeed; very tall for a thorough-bred; and now you’ll not forget, seven, ‘temps militaire,’ and so, sans adieu.”

And with these words his lordship shook me heartily by the hand; and before two minutes had elapsed, had wrapped his box-coat once more across him, and was round the corner.

I looked for a few moments on the again silent street, and was almost tempted to believe I was in a dream, so rapidly had the preceding moments passed over; and so surprised was I to find that the proud Earl of Callonby, who never did the “civil thing” any where, should think proper to pay attention to a poor sub in a marching regiment, whose only claim on his acquaintance was the suspicion of poaching on his manor. I repeated over and over all his lordship’s most polite speeches, trying to solve the mystery of them; but in vain: a thousand explanations occurred, but none of them I felt at all satisfactory; that there was some mystery somewhere, I had no doubt; for I remarked all through that Lord Kilkee laid some stress upon my identity, and even seemed surprised at my being in such banishment. “Oh,” thought I at last, “his lordship is about to get up private theatricals, and has seen my Captain Absolute, or perhaps my Hamlet”—I could not say “Othello” even to myself—“and is anxious to get ‘such unrivalled talent’ even ‘for one night only.’”

After many guesses this seemed the nearest I could think of; and by the time I had finished my dressing for dinner, it was quite clear to me I had solved all the secret of his lordship’s attentions.

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The road to “Callonby” was beautiful beyond any thing I had ever seen in Ireland. For upwards of two miles it led along the margin of the lofty cliffs of Moher, now jutting out into bold promontories, and again retreating, and forming small bays and mimic harbours, into which the heavy swell of the broad Atlantic was rolling its deep blue tide. The evening was perfectly calm, and at a little distance from the shore the surface of the sea was without a ripple. The only sound breaking the solemn stillness of the hour, was the heavy plash of the waves, as in minute peals they rolled in upon the pebbly beach, and brought back with them at each retreat, some of the larger and smoother stones, whose noise, as they fell back into old ocean’s bed, mingled with the din of the breaking surf. In one of the many little bays I passed, lay three or four fishing smacks. The sails were drying, and flapped lazily against the mast. I could see the figures of the men as they passed backwards and forwards upon the decks, and although the height was nearly eight hundred feet, could hear their voices quite distinctly. Upon the golden strand, which was still marked with a deeper tint, where the tide had washed, stood a little white cottage of some fisherman—at least, so the net before the door bespoke it. Around it, stood some children, whose merry voices and laughing tones sometimes reached me where I was standing. I could not but think, as I looked down from my lofty eyrie, upon that little group of boats, and that lone hut, how much of the “world” to the humble dweller beneath, lay in that secluded and narrow bay. There, the deep sea, where their days were passed in “storm or sunshine,”—there, the humble home, where at night they rested, and around whose hearth lay all their cares and all their joys. How far, how very far removed from the busy haunts of men, and all the struggles and contentions of the ambitious world; and yet, how short-sighted to suppose that even they had not their griefs and sorrows, and that their humble lot was devoid of the inheritance of those woes, which all are heirs to.

I turned reluctantly, from the sea-shore to enter the gate of the park, and my path in a few moments was as completely screened from all prospect of the sea, as though it had lain miles inland. An avenue of tall and ancient lime trees, so dense in their shadows as nearly to conceal the road beneath, led for above a mile through a beautiful lawn, whose surface, gently undulating, and studded with young clumps, was dotted over with sheep. At length, descending by a very steep road, I reached a beautiful little stream, over which a rustic bridge was thrown. As I looked down upon the rippling stream beneath, on the surface of which the dusky evening flies were dipping, I made a resolve, if I prospered in his lordship’s good graces, to devote a day to the “angle” there, before I left the country. It was now growing late, and remember Lord Kilkee’s intimation



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of “sharp seven,” I threw my reins over my cob, “Sir Roger’s” neck, (for I had hitherto been walking,) and cantered up the steep hill before me. When I reached the top, I found myself upon a broad table land, encircled by old and well-grown timber, and at a distance, most tastefully half concealed by ornamental planting, I could catch some glimpse of Callonby. Before, however, I had time to look about me, I heard the tramp of horses’ feet behind, and in another moment two ladies dashed up the steep behind, and came towards me, at a smart gallop, followed by a groom, who, neither himself nor his horse, seemed to relish the pace of his fair mistresses. I moved off the road into the grass to permit them to pass; but no sooner had they got abreast of me, than Sir Roger, anxious for a fair start, flung up both heels at once, pricked up his ears, and with a plunge that very nearly threw me from the saddle, set off at top speed. My first thought was for the ladies beside me, and, to my utter horror, I now saw them coming along in full gallop; their horses had got off the road, and were, to my thinking, become quite unmanageable. I endeavoured to pull up, but all in vain. Sir Roger had got the bit between his teeth, a favourite trick of his, and I was perfectly powerless to hold him by this time, they being mounted on thoroughbreds, got a full neck before me, and the pace was not tremendous, on we all came, each horse at his utmost stretch; they were evidently gaining from the better stride of their cattle, and will it be believed, or shall I venture to acknowledge it in these my confessions, that I, who a moment before, would have given my best chance of promotion, to be able to pull in my horse, would now have “pledged my dukedom” to be able to give Sir Roger one cut of the whip unobserved. I leave it to the wise to decipher the rationale, but such is the fact. It was complete steeple-chasing, and my blood was up.

On we came, and I now perceived that about two hundred yards before me stood an iron gate and piers, without any hedge or wall on either side; before I could conjecture the meaning of so strange a thing in the midst of a large lawn, I saw the foremost horse, now two or three lengths before the other, still in advance of me, take two or three short strides, and fly about eight feet over a sunk fence—the second followed in the same style, the riders sitting as steadily as in the gallop. It was now my turn, and I confess, as I neared the dyke, I heartily wished myself well over it, for the very possibility of a “mistake” was maddening. Sir Roger came on at a slapping pace, and when within two yards of the brink, rose to it, and cleared it like a deer. By the time I had accomplished this feat, not the less to my satisfaction, that both ladies had turned in the saddles to watch me, they were already far in advance; they held on still at the same pace, round a small copse which concealed them an instant from my view, and which, when I passed, I perceived that they had just reached the hall door, and were dismounting.



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On the steps stood a tall, elderly-looking, gentleman-like person, who I rightly conjectured was his lordship. I heard him laughing heartily as I came up. I at last succeeded in getting Sir Roger to a canter, and when about twenty yards from where the group were standing, sprung off, and hastened up to make my apologies as I best might, for my unfortunate runaway. I was fortunately spared this awkwardness of an explanation, for his lordship, approaching me with his hand extended, said—

“Mr. Lorrequer is most welcome at Callonby. I cannot be mistaken, I am sure—I have the pleasure of addressing the nephew of my old friend, Sir Guy Lorrequer of Elton. I am indeed most happy to see you, and not the less so, that you are safe and sound, which, five minutes since, I assure you I had my fears for—”

Before I could assure his lordship that my fears were all for my competitors in the race—for such in reality they were—he introduced me to the two ladies, who were still standing beside him—Lady Jane Callonby; Mr. Lorrequer; Lady Catherine.”

“Which of you, young ladies, may I ask, planned this escapade, for I see by your looks, it was no accident?”

“I think, papa,” said Lady Jane, “you must question Mr. Lorrequer on that head; he certainly started first.”

“I confess, indeed,” said I, “such was the case.”

“Well, you must confess, too, you were distanced,” said Lady Jane, at the same time, most terribly provoked, to be quizzed on such a matter; that I, a steeple-chase horseman of the first water, should be twitted by a couple of young ladies, on the score of a most manly exercise. “But come,” said his lordship, “the first bell has rung long since, and I am longing to ask Mr. Lorrequer all about my old college friend of forty years ago. So, ladies, hasten your toilet, I beseech you.”

With these words, his lordship, taking my arm, led me into the drawing-room, where we had not been many minutes till we were joined by her ladyship, a tall stately handsome woman, of a certain age; resolutely bent upon being both young and beautiful, in spite of time and wrinkles; her reception of me, though not possessing the frankness of his lordship, was still very polite, and intended to be even gracious. I now found by the reiterated inquiries for my old uncle, Sir Guy, that he it was, and not Hamlet, to whom I owed my present notice, and I must include it among my confessions, that it was about the first advantage I ever derived from the relationship. After half an hour’s agreeable chatting, the ladies entered, and then I had time to remark the extreme beauty of their appearance; they were both wonderfully like, and except that Lady Jane was taller and more womanly, it would have been almost impossible to discriminate between them.



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Lady Jane Callonby was then about twenty years of age, rather above the middle size, and slightly disposed towards embonpoint; her eye was of the deepest and most liquid blue, and rendered apparently darker, by long lashes of the blackest jet—for such was the colour of her hair; her nose slightly, but slightly, deviated from the straightness of the Greek, and her upper lip was faultless, as were her mouth and chin; the whole lower part of the face, from the perfect “chiselling,” and from the character of her head, had certainly a great air of hauteur, but the extreme melting softness of her eyes took from this, and when she spoke, there was a quiet earnestness in her mild and musical voice, that disarmed you at once of connecting the idea of self with the speaker; the word “fascinating,” more than any other I know of, conveys the effect of her appearance, and to produce it, she had more than any other woman I ever met, that wonderful gift, the “l’art de plaire.”

I was roused from my perhaps too earnest, because unconscious gaze, at the lovely figure before me, by his Lordship saying, “Mr. Lorrequer, her Ladyship is waiting for you.” I accordingly bowed, and, offering my arm, led her into the dinner-room. And here I draw rein for the present, reserving for my next chapter—My Adventure at Callonby.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE AT CALLONBY—LOVE-MAKING—MISS O’DOWD’S ADVENTURE.

My first evening at Callonby passed off as nearly all first evenings do every where. His lordship was most agreeable, talked much of my uncle, Sir Guy, whose fag he had been at Eton half a century before, promised me some capital shooting in his preserves, discussed the state of politics; and, as the second decanter of port “waned apace,” grew wondrous confidential, and told me of his intention to start his son for the county at the next general election, such being the object which had now conferred the honour of his presence on his Irish estates.

Her ladyship was most condescendingly civil, vouchsafed much tender commiseration for my “exile,” as she termed my quarters in Kilrush; wondered how I could possibly exist in a marching regiment, (who had never been in the cavalry in my life!) Spoke quite feelingly on my kindness in joining their stupid family party, for they were living, to use her own phrase, “like hermits;” and wound up all by a playful assurance that as she perceived, from all my answers, that I was bent on preserving a strict incognito, she would tell no tales about me on her return to “Town.” Now, it may readily be believed, that all this, and many more of her ladyship’s allusions, were a “Chaldee manuscript” to me; that she knew certain facts of my family and relations, was certain; but that she had interwoven in the humble web of my history, a very pretty embroidery of fiction was equally so; and while she thus ran on, with innumerable allusions to Lady Marys and Lord



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Johns, who she pretended to suppose were dying to hear from me, I could not help muttering to myself with good Christopher Sly, "And all this be true—then Lord be thanked for my good amends;" for up to that moment I was an ungrateful man for all this high and noble solicitude. One dark doubt shot for an instant across my brain. Maybe her ladyship had "registered a vow" never to syllable a name unchronicled by Debrett, or was actually only mystifying me for mere amusement. A minute's consideration dispelled this fear; for I found myself treated "en Seigneur" by the whole family. As for the daughters of the house, nothing could possibly be more engaging than their manner. The eldest, Lady Jane, was pleased from my near relationship to her father's oldest friend to receive me, "from the first," on the most friendly footing; while, with the younger, Lady Catherine, from her being less 'maniere' than her sister, my progress was even greater; and thus, before we separated for the night, I contrived to "take up my position" in such a fashion, as to be already looked upon as one of the family party, to which object, Lord and indeed Lady Callonby seemed most willing to contribute, and made me promise to spend the entire of the following day at Callonby, and as many of the succeeding ones as my military duties would permit.

As his lordship was wishing me "good night" at the door of the drawing-room, he said, in a half whisper,

"We were ignorant yesterday, Mr. Lorrequer, how soon we should have had the pleasure of seeing you here; and you are therefore condemned to a small room off the library, it being the only one we can insure you as being well aired. I must therefore apprise you that you are not to be shocked at finding yourself surrounded by every member of my family, hung up in frames around you. But as the room is usually my own snuggerly, I have resigned it without any alteration whatever."

The apartment for which his lordship had so strongly apologized, stood in very pleasing contrast to my late one in Kilrush. The soft Persian carpet, on which one's feet sank to the very ankles; the brightly polished dogs, upon which a blazing wood fire burned; the well upholstered fauteuils which seemed to invite sleep without the trouble of lying down for it; and last of all, the ample and luxurious bed, upon whose rich purple hangings the ruddy glare of the fire threw a most mellow light, was all a pleasing exchange for the "garniture" of the "Hotel Healy."

"Certes, Harry Lorrequer," said I, as I threw myself upon a small ottoman before the fire in all the slippered case, and abandon of a man who has changed a dress-coat for a morning-gown; "Certes, thou art destined for great things; even here, where fate had seemed 'to do its worst' to thee, a little paradise opens, and what, to ordinary mortals had proved but a 'flat, stale, and most unprofitable' quarter, presents to thee all the accumulated delight

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of a hospitable mansion, a kind, almost friendly, host, a condescending Madame Mere, and daughters too! Ah ye Gods! But what is this;" and here, for the first time, lifting up my eyes, I perceived a beautiful water-colour drawing in the style of "Chalon," which was placed above the chimney-piece. I rose at once, and taking a candle, proceeded to examine it more minutely. It was a portrait of Lady Jane, a full-length too, and wonderfully like; there was more complexion, and perhaps more roundness in the figure than her present appearance would justify; but if any thing was gained in brilliancy, it was certainly lost in point of expression; and I infinitely preferred her pale, but beautifully fair countenance, to the rosy cheek of the picture; the figure was faultless; the same easy grace, the result of perfect symmetry and refinement together, which only one in a thousand of even handsome girls possess, was pourtrayed to the life. The more I looked, the more I felt charmed with it. Never had I seen any thing so truly characteristic as this sketch, for it was scarcely more. It was after nearly an hour's quiet contemplation, that I began to remember the lateness of the night; an hour, in which my thoughts had rambled from the lovely object before me, to wonder at the situation in which I found myself placed; for there was so much of "empressement" towards me, in the manner of every member of the family, coupled with certain mistakes as to my habits and acquaintances, as left me perfectly unable to unravel the mystery which so evidently surrounded me. "Perhaps," thought I, "Sir Guy has written in my behalf to his lordship. Oh, he would never do any thing half so civil. Well, to be sure, I shall astonish them at head quarters; they'll not believe this. I wonder if Lady Jane saw my 'Hamlet;' for they landed in Cork from Bristol about that time. She is indeed a most beautiful girl. I wish I were a marquis, if it were only for her sake. Well, my Lord Callonby, you may be a very wise man in the House of Lords; but, I would just ask, is it exactly prudent to introduce into your family on terms of such perfect intimacy, a young, fascinating, well-looking fellow, of four-and-twenty, albeit only a subaltern, with two such daughters as you have? Peut etre! One thing is certain—I have no cause of complaint; and so, good night, Lady Jane"—and with those words I fell asleep, to dream of the deepest blue eyes, and the most melting tones that ever reduced a poor lieutenant in a marching regiment to curse his fate, that he could not call the Commander of the Forces his father.



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When I descended to the breakfast-room, I found the whole family assembled in a group around Lord Kilkee, who had just returned from a distant part of the county, where he had been canvassing the electors, and spouting patriotism the day before. He was giving an account of his progress with much spirit and humour as I entered, but, on seeing me, immediately came forward, and shook hands with me like an old acquaintance. By Lord Callonby and the ladies I was welcomed also with much courtesy and kindness, and some slight badinage passed upon my sleeping, in what Lord Kilkee called the "Picture Gallery," which, for all I knew to the contrary, contained but one fair portrait. I am not a believer in Mesmer; but certainly there must have been some influence at work—very like what we hear of "magnetism"—for before the breakfast was concluded, there seemed at once to spring up a perfect understanding between this family and myself, which made me feel as much 'chez moi', as I had ever done in my life; and from that hour I may date an intimacy which every succeeding day but served to increase.

After breakfast Lord Callonby consigned me to the guidance of his son, and we sallied forth to deal destruction amongst the pheasants, with which the preserves were stocked; and here I may observe, 'en passant', that with the single exception of fox-hunting, which was ever a passion with me, I never could understand that inveterate pursuit of game to which some men devote themselves—thus, grouse-shooting, and its attendant pleasures, of stumping over a boggy mountain from day-light till dark, never had much attraction for me; and, as to the delights of widgeon and wild-duck shooting, when purchased by sitting up all night in a barrel, with your eye to the bung, I'll none of it—no, no! Give me shooting or angling merely as a divertimento, a pleasant interlude between breakfast and luncheon-time, when, consigning your Manton to a corner, and the game keeper "to the dogs," you once more humanize your costume to take a canter with the daughters of the house; or, if the day look loweringly, a match of billiards with the men.

I have ever found that the happiest portions of existence are the most difficult to chronicle. We may—nay, we must, impart our miseries and annoyances to our many "dear friends," whose forte is sympathy or consolation—and all men are eloquent on the subject of their woes; not so with their joys: some have a miser-like pleasure in hoarding them up for their own private gratification; others—and they are prudent—feel that the narrative is scarcely agreeable even to their best friends; and a few, of whom I confess myself one, are content to be happy without knowing why, and to have pleasant souvenirs, without being able to explain them.



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Such must be my apology for not more minutely entering upon an account of my life at Callonby. A fortnight had now seen me 'enforce', the daily companion of two beautiful girls in all their walks and rides, through a romantic, unfrequented country, seeing but little of the other members of the family; the gentlemen being entirely occupied by their election tactics, and Lady Callonby being a late riser, seldom appeared before the dinner hour. There was not a cliff upon the bold and rocky coast we did not climb, not a cave upon the pebbly beach unvisited; sometimes my fair companions would bring a volume of Metastasio down to the little river where I used to angle; and the "gentle craft" was often abandoned for the heart-thrilling verses of that delightful poet. Yes, many years have passed over, and these scenes are still as fresh in my memory as though they had been of yesterday. In my memory, I say, as for thee

"Qui sa si te
Ti sovrerai di me."

At the end of three weeks the house became full of company, from the garret to the cellar. Country gentlemen and their wives and daughters came pouring in, on every species of conveyance known since the flood; family coaches, which, but for their yellow panels, might have been mistaken for hearses, and high barouches, the "entree" to which was accomplished by a step-ladder, followed each other in what appeared a never-ending succession; and here I may note an instance of the anomalous character of the conveyances, from an incident to which I was a witness at the time.

Among the visitors on the second day came a maiden lady from the neighbourhood of Ennistimon, Miss Elizabeth O'Dowd, the last of a very old and highly respectable family in the county, and whose extensive property, thickly studded with freeholders, was a strong reason for her being paid every attention in Lord Callonby's power to bestow; Miss Betty O'Dowd—for so she was generally styled—was the very personification of an old maid; stiff as a ramrod, and so rigid in observance of the proprieties of female conduct, that in the estimation of the Clare gentry, Diana was a hoyden compared to her.

Miss Betty lived, as I have said, near Ennistimon, and the road from thence to Callonby at the time I speak of—it was before Mr. Nimmo—was a like the bed of a mountain torrent as a respectable highway; there were holes that would have made a grave for any maiden lady within fifty miles; and rocks thickly scattered, enough to prove fatal to the strongest wheels that ever issued from "Hutton's." Miss O'Dowd knew this well; she had upon one occasion been upset in travelling it—and a slate-coloured silk dress bore the dye of every species of mud and mire to be found there, for many a year after, to remind her of her misfortune, and keep open the wound of her sorrow. When, therefore, the invitation to Callonby arrived, a grave council of war was summoned, to deliberate upon the mode of transit, for the honour could not be declined, "coute



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qui coute." The chariot was out of the question; Nicholas declared it would never reach the "Moraan Beg," as the first precipice was called; the inside car was long since pronounced unfit for hazardous enterprise; and the only resource left, was what is called in Hibernian parlance, a "low-backed car," that is, a car without any back whatever; it being neither more nor less than the common agricultural conveyance of the country, upon which, a feather bed being laid, the farmers' wives and daughters are generally conveyed to fairs, wakes, and stations, &c. Putting her dignity, if not in her pocket, at least wherever it could be most easily accommodated, Miss O'Dowd placed her fair self, in all the plenitude of her charms and the grandeur of a "bran new green silk," a "little off the grass, and on the bottle," (I love to be particular,) upon this humble voiture, and set out on her way, if not "rejoicing," at least consoled by Nicholas, that "It 'id be black dark when they reached the house, and the devil a one 'id be the wiser than if she came in a coach and four." Nicholas was right; it was perfectly dark on their arrival at Callonby, and Miss O'Dowd having dismounted, and shook her plumage, a little crumpled by her half-recumbent position for eight miles, appeared in the drawing-room, to receive the most courteous attentions from Lady Callonby, and from his lordship the most flattering speeches for her kindness in risking herself and bringing her horses on such a dreadful road, and assured her of his getting a presentment the very next assizes to repair it; "For we intend, Miss O'Dowd," said he, "to be most troublesome neighbours to you in future."

The evening passed off most happily. Miss O'Dowd was delighted with her hosts, whose character she resolved to maintain in spite of their reputation for pride and haughtiness. Lady Jane sang an Irish melody for her, Lady Callonby gave her slips of a rose geranium she got from the Princess Augusta, and Lord Kilkee won her heart by the performance of that most graceful step 'yclept "cover the buckle" in an Irish jig. But, alas! how short-lived is human bliss, for while this estimable lady revelled in the full enjoyment of the hour, the sword of Damocles hung suspended above her head; in plain English, she had, on arriving at Callonby, to prevent any unnecessary scrutiny into the nature of her conveyance, ordered Nicholas to be at the door punctually at eleven; and then to take an opportunity of quietly slipping open the drawing-room door, and giving her an intimation of it, that she might take her leave at once. Nicholas was up to time, and having disposed the conveyance under the shadow of the porch, made his way to the door of the drawing-room unseen and unobserved. He opened it gently and noiselessly, merely sufficient to take a survey of the apartment, in which, from the glare of the lights, and the busy hum of voices, he was so bewildered that it was some minutes before he recognized his mistress. At last he perceived her; she was seated at a card-table, playing whist with Lord Callonby for her partner. Who the other players were, he knew not. A proud man was Nicholas, as he saw his mistress thus placed, actually sitting, as he afterwards expressed it, "forenint the Lord," but his thoughts were bent on other matters, and it was no time to indulge his vauntings.



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He strove for some time patiently, to catch her eye, for she was so situated as to permit of this, but without success. He then made a slight attempt to attract her attention by beckoning with his finger; all in vain. "Oh murther," said he, "what is this for? I'll have to spake afther all."

"Four by honours," said his lordship, "and the odd trick. Another double, I believe, Miss O'Dowd."

Miss O'Dowd nodded a graceful assent, while a sharp-looking old dowager at the side of the table called out, "a rubber of four on, my Lord;" and now began an explanation from the whole party at once. Nicholas saw this was his time, and thought that in the melee, his hint might reach his mistress unobserved by the remainder of the company. He accordingly protruded his head into the room, and placing his finger upon the side of his nose, and shutting one eye knowingly, with an air of great secrecy, whispered out, "Miss Betty—Miss Betty, alanah!" For some minutes the hum of the voices drowned his admonitions—but as, by degrees waxing warmer in the cause, he called out more loudly,—every eye was turned to the spot from whence these extraordinary sounds proceeded; and certainly the appearance of Nicholas at the moment was well calculated to astonish the "elegans" of a drawing room. With his one eye fixed eagerly in the direction of his mistress, his red scratch wig pushed back off his forehead, in the eagerness of his endeavour to be heard, there he stood, perfectly unmindful of all around, save Miss O'Dowd herself. It may well be believed, that such an apparition could not be witnessed with gravity, and, accordingly a general titter ran through the room, the whist party still contending about odd tricks and honours, being the only persons insensible to the mirth around them—"Miss Betty, arrah, Miss Betty," said Nicholas with a sigh that converted the subdued laughter of the guests into a perfect burst of mirth.

"Eh," said his lordship, turning round; "what is this? We are losing something excellent, I fear."

At this moment, he caught a glimpse of Nicholas, and, throwing himself back in this chair, laughed immoderately. It was now Miss Betty's turn; she was about to rise from the table, when the well-known accents of Nicholas fell upon her ear. She fell back in her seat—there he was: the messenger of the foul fiend himself would have been more welcome at that moment. Her blood rushed to her face and temples; her hands tingled; she closed her eyes, and when she opened them, there stood the accursed Nicholas glowering at her still.

"Man—man!" said she at length; "what do you mean, what do you want here?"

Poor Nicholas, little guessing that the question was intended to throw a doubt upon her acquaintance with him, and conceiving that the hour for the announcement had come, hesitated for an instant how he should designate the conveyance. He could not call it a



coach! It certainly was not a buggy—neither was it a jaunting car—what should he say—he looked earnestly, and even imploringly at his mistress, as if to convey some sense of his difficulty, and then, as it were, catching a sudden inspiration, winked once more—as he said:—



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“Miss Betty—the—the—the—,” and here he looked indescribably droll; “the thing, you know, is at the door.”

All his Lordship’s politeness was too little for the occasion, and Miss O’Dowd’s tenantry were lost to the Callonby interest for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

Botanical studies—the natural system preferable to the LINNEAN.

“The carriage is at the door, my lord,” said a servant, entering the luncheon-room where we were all assembled.

“Now then, Mr. Lorrequer,” said Lord Callonby, “allons, take another glass of wine, and let us away. I expect you to make a most brilliant speech, remember!”

His lordship here alluded to our intention of visiting a remote barony, where a meeting of the freeholders was that day to be held, and at which I was pledged for a “neat and appropriate” oration in abuse of the corn laws and the holy alliance.

“I beg pardon, my lord,” said her ladyship in a most languishing tone; “but Mr. Lorrequer is pre-engaged; he has for the last week been promising and deterring his visit to the new conservatory with me; where he is to find out four or five of the Swiss shrubs that Collins cannot make out—and which I am dying to know all about.”

“Mr. Lorrequer is a false man then,” said Lady Catherine, “for he said at breakfast, that we should devote this afternoon to the chalk caves—as the tide will be so far out, we can see them all perfectly.”

“And I,” said Lord Kilkee, “must put in my plea, that the aforesaid Mr. Lorrequer is booked for a coursing match—’Mouche versus Jessie.’—Guilty or not guilty?”

Lady Jane alone of all said not a word.

“Guilty on every count of the indictment,” said I; “I throw myself on the mercy of the court.”

“Let his sentence then be banishment,” said Lady Catherine with affected anger, “and let him go with papa.”

“I rather think,” said Lord Kilkee, “the better plan is to let him visit the conservatory, for I’d wager a fifty he finds it more difficult to invent botany, than canvass freeholders; eh?”



“I am sure,” said Lady Jane, for the first time breaking silence, “that mamma is infinitely flattered by the proposal that Mr. Lorrequer’s company is to be conferred upon her for his sins.”

“I am not to be affronted, nor quizzed out of my chaperon; here, Mr. Lorrequer,” said Lady Callonby rising, “get Smith’s book there, and let me have your arm; and now, young ladies, come along, and learn something, if you can.”

“An admirable proviso,” said Lord Kilkee, laughing; “if his botany be only as authentic as the autographs he gave Mrs. MacDermot, and all of which he wrote himself, in my dressing-room, in half an hour. Napoleon was the only difficult one in the number.”

Most fortunately this unfair disclosure did not reach her ladyship’s ears, as she was busily engaged putting on her bonnet, and I was yet unassailed in reputation to her.



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“Good bye, then,” said Lord Callonby; “we meet at seven;” and in a few moments the little party were scattered to their several destinations.

“How very hot you have this place, Collins,” said Lady Callonby as we entered the conservatory.

“Only seventy-five, my lady, and the Magnolias require heat.”

I here dropped a little behind, as if to examine a plant, and in a half-whisper said to Lady Jane—

“How came it that you alone, Lady Jane, should forget I had made another appointment? I thought you wished to make a sketch of Craigmoran Abbey—did you forget that we were to ride there to-day?”

Before she could reply, Lady Callonby called out—“Oh, here it is, Mr. Lorrequer. Is this a heath? that is the question.”

Here her ladyship pointed to a little scrubby thing, that looked very like a birch rod. I proceeded to examine it most minutely, while Collins waited with all the intense anxiety of a man whose character depended on the sentence.

“Collins will have it a jungermania,” said she.

“And Collins is right,” said I, not trusting myself with the pronunciation of the awful word her ladyship uttered.

Collins looked ridiculously happy.

“Now that is so delightful,” said Lady Callonby, as she stopped to look for another puzzle.

“What a wretch it is,” said Lady Catherine, covering her face with a handkerchief.

“What a beautiful little flower,” said Lady Jane, lifting up the bell of a “lobelia splendens.”

“You know, of course,” said I, “what they call that flower in France—L’amour tendre.”

“Indeed!”

“True, I assure you; may I present you with this sprig of it,” cutting off a small twig, and presenting it at the same instant unseen by the others.



She hesitated for an instant, and then extending her fair and taper hand took it. I dared not look at her as she did so, but a proud swelling triumph at my heart nearly choked me.

“Now Collins,” said Lady Callonby, “I cannot find the Alpen tree I brought home from the Grundenwald.”

Collins hurried forward to her ladyship’s side.

Lady Catherine was also called to assist in the search.

I was alone with Lady Jane.

“Now or never,” thought I; I hesitated—I stammered—my voice faltered. She saw my agitation; she participated in, and increased it. At last I summoned up courage to touch her hand; she gently withdrew it—but so gently, it was not a repulse.

“If Lady Jane,” said I at length, “if the devoted—”

“Holloa, there,” said a deep voice without; “is Mr. Lorrequer there?”

It was Lord Kilkee, returned from his coursing match. None but he who has felt such an interruption, can feel for me. I shame to say that his brotherhood to her, for whom I would have perilled my life, restrained me not from something very like a hearty commendation of him to the powers that burn—



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“Down, dogs, there—down,” continued he, and in a moment after entered the conservatory flushed and heated with the chase.

“Mouche is the winner—two to one—and so, Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds.”

Would to heaven that I had lost the wager, had it only taken a little longer to decide it! I of course appeared overjoyed at my dog’s success, and listened with great pretence of interest to the narrative of the “run;” the more so, because that though perhaps more my friend than the older members of the family, Lord Kilkee evidently liked less than them, my growing intimacy with his sister; and I was anxious to blind him on the present occasion, when, but for his recent excitement, very little penetration would have enabled him to detect that something unusual had taken place.

It was now so nearly dark, that her ladyship’s further search for the alpine treasure became impossible, and so we turned our steps towards the garden, where we continued to walk till joined by Lord Callonby. And now began a most active discussion upon agriculture, rents, tithes, and toryism, in which the ladies took but little part; and I had the mortification to perceive that Lady Jane was excessively ‘ennuyee’, and seized the first opportunity to leave the party and return to the house; while her sister gave me from time to time certain knowing glances, as if intimating that my knowledge of farming and political economy was pretty much on a par with my proficiency in botany.

One has discovered me at least, thought I; but the bell had rung to dress for dinner, and I hastened to my room to think over future plans, and once more wonder at the singular position into which fate and the “rules of the service” had thrown me.

CHAPTER V.

PUZZLED—EXPLANATION—MAKES BAD WORSE—THE DEED

“Any letters?” said her ladyship to a servant, as she crossed the hall,”

“Only one, my lady—for Mr. Lorrequer, I believe.”

“For me!” thought I; “how is this?” My letters had been hitherto always left in Kilrush. Why was this forwarded here? I hurried to the drawing-room, where I found a double letter awaiting me. The writing was Curzon’s and contained the words “to be forwarded with haste” on the direction. I opened and read as follows:—

“Dear Lorrequer,—Have you any recollection, among your numerous ‘escapades’ at Cork, of having grievously insulted a certain Mr. Giles Beamish, in thought, word, or deed? If you have, I say, let me know with all convenient despatch, whether the offence be one admitting of apology—for if not, the Lord have mercy on your soul—a more



wrothy gentleman than the aforesaid, it having rarely been my evil fortune to foregather with. He called here yesterday to inquire your address, and at my suggestion wrote a note, which I now enclose. I write in great haste, and am ever yours faithfully, C. Curzon.



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“N.B.—I have not seen his note, so explain all and every thing.”

The inclosed letter ran thus:

“Sir,—It can scarcely have escaped your memory, though now nearly two months since, that at the Mayor’s ‘dejeune’ in Cork, you were pleased to make merry at my expense, and expose me and my family for your amusement. This is to demand an immediate apology, or that satisfaction which, as an officer, you will not refuse your most obedient servant, Giles Beamish, Swinburne’s Hotel.”

“Giles Beamish! Giles Beamish!” said I, repeating the name in every variety of emphasis, hoping to obtain some clue to the writer. Had I been appointed the umpire between Dr. Wall and his reviewers, in the late controversy about “phonetic signs,” I could not have been more completely puzzled than by the contents of this note. “Make merry at his expense!” a great offence truly—I suppose I have laughed at better men than ever he was; and I can only say of such innocent amusement, as Falstaff did of sack and sugar, if such be a sin, “then heaven help the wicked.” But I wish I knew who he is, or what he alludes to, provided he is not mad, which I begin to think not improbable. By the bye, my Lord, do you know any such person in the south as a Mr. Beamish—Giles Beamish?”

“To be sure,” said Lord Callonby, looking up from his newspaper, “there are several of the name of the highest respectability. One is an alderman of Cork—a very rich man, too—but I don’t remember his Christian name.”

“An alderman, did you say?”

“Yes. Alderman Beamish is very well known. I have seen him frequently—a short florid, little man.”

“Oh, it must be him,” said I, musingly, “it must have been this worthy alderman, from whose worshipful person I tore the robe of office on the night of the fete. But what does he mean by ‘my exposing him and his family?’ Why, zounds, his wife and children were not with him on the pavement. Oh, I see it; it is the mansion-house school of eloquence; did not Sir William Curtis apologise for not appearing at court, from having lost an eye, which he designated as an awful ‘domestic calamity.’”

It being now settled to my satisfaction, that Mr. Beamish and the great uncloaked were “convertible terms,” I set about making the ‘amende’ in the most handsome manner possible. I wrote to the alderman a most pacific epistle, regretting that my departure from Cork deprived me of making reparation before, and expressing a most anxious hope that “he caught no cold,” and a fervent wish that “he would live many years to grace and ornament the dignity of which his becoming costume was the emblem.” This I enclosed in a note to Curzon, telling him how the matter occurred, and requesting that



he would send it by his servant, together with the scarlet vestment which he would find in my dressing-room. Having folded and sealed this despatch, I turned to give Lord Callonby an account



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of the business, and showed him Beamish's note, at which he was greatly amused: and, indeed, it furnished food for mirth for the whole party during the evening. The next morning I set out with Lord Callonby on the long-threatened canvassing expedition—with the details of which I need not burden my "Confessions." Suffice it to say, that when Lord Kilkee was advocating Toryism in the west, I, his accredited ambassador, was devoting to the infernal gods the prelacy, the peerage, and the pension list—a mode of canvass well worthy of imitation in these troublesome times; for, not to speak of the great prospect of success from having friends on both sides of the question, the principal can always divest himself of any unpleasant consequences as regards inconsistency, by throing the blame on this friend, "who went too far," as the appropriate phrase is.

Nothing could be more successful than our mission. Lord Callonby was delighted beyond bounds with the prospect, and so completely carried away by high spirits, and so perfectly assured that much of it was owing to my exertions, that on the second morning of our tour—for we proceeded through the county for three days—he came laughing into my dressing-room, with a newspaper in his hand.

"Here, Lorrequer," said he, "here's news for you. You certainly must read this," and he handed me a copy of the "Clare Herald," with an account of our meeting the evening before.

After glancing my eye rapidly over the routine usual in such cases—Humph, ha—nearly two hundred people—most respectable farmers—room appropriately decorated—"Callonby Arms"—"after the usual loyal toasts, the chairman rose"—Well, no matter. Ah! here it is: "Mr. Lorrequer here addressed the meeting with a flow of eloquence it has rarely, if ever, been our privilege to hear equalled. He began by"—humph—

"Ah," said his lordship, impatiently, "you will never find it out—look here—'Mr. Lorrequer, whom we have mentioned as having made the highly exciting speech, to be found in our first page, is, we understand, the son of Sir Guy Lorrequer, of Elton, in Shropshire—one of the wealthiest baronets in England. If rumour speak truly, there is a very near prospect of an alliance between this talented and promising young gentleman, and the beautiful and accomplished daughter of a certain noble earl, with whom he has been for some time domesticated."

"Eh, what think you? Son of Sir Guy Lorrequer. I always thought my old friend a bachelor, but you see the 'Clare Herald' knows better. Not to speak of the last piece of intelligence, it is very good, is it not?"

"Capital, indeed," said I, trying to laugh, and at the same time blushing confoundedly, and looking as ridiculously as need be.



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It now struck me forcibly that there was something extremely odd in his lordship's mention of this paragraph, particularly when coupled with his and Lady Callonby's manner to me for the last two months. They knew enough of my family, evidently, to be aware of my station and prospects—or rather my want of both—and yet, in the face of this, they not only encouraged me to prolong a most delightful visit, but by a thousand daily and dangerous opportunities, absolutely threw me in the way of one of the loveliest of her sex, seemingly without fear on their parts. “Eh bien,” thought I, with my old philosophy, “Time, that ‘pregnant old gentleman,’ will disclose all, and so ‘laisse, aller.’”

My reveries on my good and evil fortune were suddenly interrupted by a letter which reached me that evening, having been forwarded from Callonby by a special messenger. “What! Another epistle from Curzon,” said I, as my eye caught the address, and wondering not a little what pressing emergency had called forth the words on the cover—“to be forwarded with haste.” I eagerly broke the seal and read the following:

“My Dear Harry,—I received yours on the 11th, and immediately despatched your note and the raiment to Mr. Beamish. He was from home at the time, but at eight o'clock I was sent for from the mess to see two gentlemen on most pressing business. I hurried to my quarters, and there found the aforesaid Mr. B. accompanied by a friend, whom he introduced as Dr. De Courcy Finucane, of the North Cork Militia—as warlike looking a gentleman, of his inches, some five feet three, as you would wish to see. The moment I appeared, both rose, and commenced a narrative, for such I judge it to be, but so energetically and so completely together, that I could only bow politely, and at last request that one, or the other, would inform me of the object of their visit. Here began the tug of war, the Doctor saying, ‘Arrah, now Giles’—Mr. Beamish interrupting by ‘Whisht, I tell ye—now, can’t you let me! Ye see, Mr. Curzoin’—for so they both agreed to designate me. At last, completely worn out, I said, ‘Perhaps you have not received my friend’s note?’ At this Mr. Beamish reddened to the eyes, and with the greatest volubility poured forth a flood of indignant eloquence, that I thought it necessary to check; but in this I failed, for after informing me pretty clearly, that he knew nothing of your story of the alderman, or his cloak, added, that he firmly believed your pretended reparation was only a renewed insult, and that—but in a word, he used such language, that I was compelled to take him short; and the finale is, that I agreed you should meet him, though still ignorant of what he calls the ‘original offence.’—But heaven knows, his conduct here last night demands a reprimand, and I hope you may give it; and if you shoot him, we may worm out the secret from his executors. Nothing could exceed the politeness of the parties on my consenting to this arrangement. Dr. Finucane proposed Carrigaholt, as the rendezvous, about 12 miles, I believe, from Kilrush, and Tuesday evening at six as the time, which will be the very earliest moment we can arrive there. So, pray be up to time, and believe me yours, C. Curzon, Saturday Evening.”

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It was late on Monday evening when this letter reached me, and there was no time to be lost, as I was then about 40 Irish miles from the place mentioned by Curzon; so after briefly acquainting Lord Callonby that I was called off by duty, I hurried to my room to pack my clothes, and again read over this extraordinary epistle.

I confess it did appear something droll, how completely Curzon seemed to imbibe the passion for fighting from these “blood-thirsty Irishmen.” For by his own showing he was utterly ignorant of my ever having offended this Mr. Beamish, of whom I recollected nothing whatever. Yet when the gentleman waxes wrothy, rather than inconvenience him, or perhaps anxious to get back to the mess, he coolly says, “Oh, my friend shall meet you,” and then his pleasant jest, “find out the cause of quarrel from his executors!”

Truly, thought I, there is no equanimity like his who acts as your second in a duel. The gentlemanlike urbanity with which he waits on the opposite friend—the conciliating tone with which he proffers implacable enmity—the killing kindness with which he refuses all accommodation—the Talleyrand air of his short notes, dated from the “Travellers,” or “Brookes,” with the words 3 o’clock or 5 o’clock on the cover, all indicative of the friendly precipitancy of the negotiation. Then, when all is settled, the social style with which he asks you to take a “cutlet” with him at the “Clarendon,” not to go home—are only to be equalled by the admirable tact on the ground—the studiously elegant salute to the adverse party, half a la Napoleon, and half Beau Brummell—the politely offered snuff-box—the coquetting raillery about 10 paces or 12—are certainly the beau ideal of the stoicism which preludes sending your friend out of the world like a gentleman.

How very often is the face of external nature at variance with the thoughts and actions —“the sayings and doings” we may be most intent upon at the moment. How many a gay and brilliant bridal party has wended its way to St. George’s, Hanover-square, amid a downpour of rain, one would suppose sufficient to quench the torch of Hymen, though it burned as brightly as Capt. Drummond’s oxygen light; and on the other hand, how frequently are the bluest azure of heaven and the most balmy airs shed upon the heart bursting with affliction, or the head bowed with grief; and without any desire to impugn, as a much high authority has done, the moral character of the moon, how many a scene of blood and rapine has its mild radiance illumined. Such reflections as these came thronging to my mind, as on the afternoon of Tuesday I neared the little village of our rendezvous.



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The scene which in all its peaceful beauty lay before me, was truly a bitter contrast to the occasion that led me thither. I stood upon a little peninsula which separates the Shannon from the wide Atlantic. On one side the placid river flowed on its course, between fields of waving corn, or rich pasturage—the beautiful island of Scattery, with its picturesque ruins reflected in the unrippled tide—the cheerful voices of the reapers, and the merry laugh of the children were mingled with the seaman's cry of the sailors, who were "heaving short" on their anchor, to take the evening tide. The village, which consisted of merely a few small cabins, was still from its situation a pleasing object in the picture, and the blue smoke that rose in slender columns from the humble dwellings, took from the scene its character of loneliness, and suggested feelings of home and homely enjoyments, which human habitations, however, lowly, never fail to do.

"At any other time," thought I, "and how I could have enjoyed all this, but now—and, ha, I find it is already past five o'clock, and if I am rightly informed I am still above a mile from 'Carrigaholt,' where we were to meet."

I had dismissed my conveyance when nearing the village, to avoid observation, and now took a foot-path over the hills. Before I had proceeded half a mile, the scene changed completely. I found myself traversing a small glen, grown over with a low oak scrub, and not presenting, on any side, the slightest trace of habitation. I saw that the ground had been selected by an adept. The glen, which grew narrow as I advanced, suddenly disclosed to my view a glimpse of the Atlantic, upon which the declining sun was pouring a flood of purple glory. I had scarcely turned from the contemplation of this beautiful object, when a long low whistle attracted my attention. I looked in the direction from whence it proceeded, and discovered at some distance from me three figures standing beside the ruin of an old Abbey, which I now for the first time perceived.

If I had entertained any doubt as to who they were, it had been speedily resolved, for I now saw one of the party waving his hat to me, whom, I soon recognized to be Curzon; he came forward to meet me, and, in the few hundred yards that intervened before our reaching the others, told me as much as he knew of the opposite party; which, after all, was but little. Mr. Beamish, my adversary, he described as a morose, fire-eating southern, that evidently longed for an "affair" with a military man, then considered a circumstance of some eclat in the south; his second, the doctor, on the contrary, was by far "the best of the cut-throats," a most amusing little personage, full of his own importance, and profuse in his legends of his own doings in love and war, and evidently disposed to take the pleasing side of every occurrence in life; they both agreed in but one point—a firm and fixed resolve to give no explanation of the quarrel with me. "So then," said I, as Curzon hurried over the preceding account, "you absolutely know nothing whatever of the reason for which I am about to give this man a meeting."



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“No more than you,” said Curzon, with imperturbable gravity; “but one thing I am certain of—had I not at once promised him such, he would have posted you in Limerick the next morning; and as you know our mess rule in the 4th, I thought it best—”

“Oh, certainly, quite right; but now are you quite certain I am the man who offended him? For I solemnly assure you, I have not the most remote recollection of having ever heard of him.”

“That point,” said Curzon, “there can be no doubt of, for he not only designated you as Mr. Harry Lorrequer, but the gentleman that made all Cork laugh so heartily, by his representation of Othello.”

“Stop!” said I, “say not a word more; I’m his man.”

By this time we had reached the ruins, and turning a corner came in full contact with the enemy; they had been resting themselves on a tombstone as we approached.

“Allow me,” said Curzon, stepping a little in advance of me; “allow me to introduce my friend Mr. Lorrequer, Dr. Finicane,—Dr. Finicane, Mr. Lorrequer.”

“Finucane, if quite agreeable to you; Finucane,” said the little gentleman, as he lifted his hat straight off his head, and replaced it most accurately, by way of salute. “Mr. Lorrequer, it is with sincere pleasure I make your acquaintance.” Here Mr. Beamish bowed stiffly, in return to my salutation, and at the instant a kind of vague sensation crossed my mind, that those red whiskers, and that fiery face were not seen for the first time; but the thumbscrews of the holy office would have been powerless to refresh my memory as to when.

“Captain,” said the doctor, “may I request the favour of your company this way, one minute;” they both walked aside; the only words which reached me as I moved off, to permit their conference, being an assurance on the part of the doctor, “that it was a sweet spot he picked out, for, by having them placed north and south, neither need have a patch of sky behind him.” Very few minutes sufficed for preliminaries, and they both advanced, smirking and smiling, as if they had just arranged a new plan for the amelioration of the poor, or the benefit of the manufacturing classes, instead of making preparations for sending a gentleman out of the world.

“Then if I understand you, captain,” said the doctor, “you step the distance, and I give the word.”

“Exactly,” said Curzon.

After a joking allusion to my friend’s length of limb, at which we all laughed heartily, we were placed, Curzon and the doctor standing and breaking the line between us; the pistols were then put into our hands, the doctor saying—“Now, gentlemen, I’ll just retire



six paces, and turn round, which will be quite time enough to prepare, and at the word 'fire,' ye'll blaze away; mind now." With a knowing wink, the doctor delivered this direction, and immediately moved off; the word "fire" followed, and both pistols went off together. My hat was struck near the top, and, as the smoke cleared away, I perceived that my ball had taken effect upon my adversary; he was wounded a little below the knee and appeared to steady himself with the greatest difficulty. "You friend is hit," said Curzon, to the doctor, who now came forward with another pistol. "You friend is hit."



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“So I perceive,” said he, placing his finger on the spot; “but it is no harm in life; so we proceed, if you please.”

“You don’t mean to demand another shot?” said Curzon.

“Faith, do I,” said the doctor coolly.

“Then,” said Curzon, “I must tell you most unequivocally, I refuse, and shall now withdraw my friend; and had it not been for a regulation peculiar to our regiment, but never intended to include cases of this nature, we had not been here now; for up to this hour my principal and myself are in utter ignorance of any cause of offence ever having been offered by him to Mr. Beamish.”

“Giles, do you hear this?” said the doctor.

But Giles did not hear it, for the rapid loss of blood from his wound had so weakened him, that he had fainted, and now lay peaceably on the grass. Etiquette was now at an end, and we all ran forward to assist the wounded man; for some minutes he lay apparently quite senseless, and when he at last rallied and looked wildly about him, it appeared to be with difficulty that he recalled any recollection of the place, and the people around him; for a few seconds he fixed his eyes steadily upon the doctor, and with a lip pale and bloodless, and a voice quivering from weakness, said,

“Fin! Didn’t I tell ye, that pistol always threw high—oh!” and this he said with a sigh that nearly overpowered him, “Oh, Fin, if you had only given me the saw-handled one, that I *am used to*; but it is no good talking now.”

In my inmost heart I was grateful to the little doctor for his mistake, for I plainly perceived what “the saw-handled one he was used to” might have done for me, and could not help muttering to myself with good Sir Andrew—“If I had known he was so cunning of fence, I’d have seen him damned before that I fought with him.”

Our first duty was now to remove the wounded man to the high road, about which both he himself and his second seemed disposed to make some difficulty; they spoke together for a few moments in a low tone of voice, and then the doctor addressed us—“We feel, gentlemen, this is not a time for any concealment; but the truth is, we have need of great circumspection here, for I must inform you, we are both of us bound over in heavy recognizances to keep the peace.”

“Bound over to keep the peace!” said Curzon and myself together.

“Nothing less; and although there is nobody hereabout would tell, yet if the affair got into the papers by any means, why there are some people in Cork would like to press my friend there, for he is a very neat shot when he has the saw-handle,” and here the doctor winked.



We had little time permitted us, to think upon the oddity of meeting a man in such circumstances, for we were now obliged to contribute our aid in conveying him to the road, where some means might be procured for his transfer to Kilrush, or some other town in the neighbourhood, for he was by this time totally unable to walk.

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After half an hour's toiling, we at last did reach the highway, by which time I had ample opportunity, short as the space was, to see something of the character of our two opponents. It appeared the doctor exercised the most absolute control over his large friend, dictating and commanding in a tone which the other never ventured to resist; for a moment or two Mr. Beamish expressed a great desire to be conveyed by night to Kilrush, where he might find means to cross the Shannon into Kerry; this, however, the doctor opposed strenuously, from the risque of publicity; and finally settled that we should all go in a body to his friend, Father Malachi Brennan's house, only two miles off, where the sick man would have the most tender care, and what the doctor considered equally indispensable, we ourselves a most excellent supper, and a hearty welcome.

"You know Father Malachi, of course, Mr. Lorrequer?"

"I am ashamed to say I do not."

"Not know Malachi Brennan and live in Clare! Well, well, that is strange; sure he is the priest of this country for twelve miles in every direction of you, and a better man, and a pleasanter, there does not live in the diocese; though I'm his cousin that says it."

After professing all the possible pleasure it would afford my friend and myself to make the acquaintance of Father Malachi, we proceeded to place Mr. Beamish in a car that was passing at the time, and started for the residence of the good priest. The whole of the way thither I was occupied but by one thought, a burning anxiety to know the cause of our quarrel, and I longed for the moment when I might get the doctor apart from his friend, to make the inquiry.

"There—look down to your left, where you see the lights shining so brightly, that is Father Malachi's house; as sure as my name is De Courcy Finucane, there's fun going on there this night."

"Why, there certainly does seem a great illumination in the valley there," said I.

"May I never," said the doctor, "if it isn't a station—"

"A station!—pray may I ask—"

"You need not ask a word on the subject; for, if I am a true prophet, you'll know what it means before morning."

A little more chatting together, brought us to a narrow road, flanked on either side by high hedges of hawthorn, and, in a few minutes more, we stood before the priest's residence, a long, white-washed, thatched house, having great appearance of comfort and convenience. Arrived here, the doctor seemed at once to take on him the arrangement of the whole party; for, after raising the latch and entering the house, he returned to us in a few minutes, and said,



“Wait a while now; we’ll not go in to Father Malachi, ’till we’ve put Giles to bed.”

We, accordingly, lifted him from off the car, and assisted him into the house, and following Finucane down a narrow passage, at last reached a most comfortable little chamber, with a neat bed; here we placed him, while the doctor gave some directions to a bare-headed, red-legged hussey, without shoes or stockings, and himself proceeded to examine the wound, which was a more serious one than it at first appeared.



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After half an hour thus occupied, during which time, roars of merriment and hearty peals of laughter burst upon us every time the door opened, from a distant part of the house, where his reverence was entertaining his friends, and which, as often as they were heard by the doctor seemed to produce in him sensations not unlike those that afflicted the “wedding guest” in the “Ancient Mariner,” when he heard the “loud bassoon,” and as certainly imparted an equally longing desire to be a partaker in the mirth. We arranged every thing satisfactorily for Mr. Beamish’s comfort, and with a large basin of vinegar and water, to keep his knee cool, and a strong tumbler of hot punch, to keep his heart warm—homeopathic medicine is not half so new as Dr. Hahneman would make us believe—we left Mr. Beamish to his own meditations, and doubtless regrets that he did not get “the saw-handled one, he was used to,” while we proceeded to make our bows to Father Malachi Brennan.

But, as I have no intention to treat the good priest with ingratitude, I shall not present him to my readers at the tail of a chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

*The priest’s supper—father Malachi and the coadjutor
—major Jones and the Abbe*

At the conclusion of our last chapter we left our quondam antagonist, Mr. Beamish, stretched at full length upon a bed practising homeopathy by administering hot punch to her fever, while we followed our chaperon, Doctor Finucane, into the presence of the Reverend Father Brennan.

The company into which we now, without any ceremony on our parts, introduced ourselves, consisted of from five and twenty to thirty persons, seated around a large oak table, plentifully provided with materials for drinking, and cups, goblets, and glasses of every shape and form. The moment we entered, the doctor stepped forward, and, touching Father Malachi on the shoulder,—for so I rightly guessed him to be, —presented himself to his relative, by whom he was welcomed with every demonstration of joy. While their recognitions were exchanged, and while the doctor explained the reasons of our visit, I was enabled, undisturbed and unnoticed, to take a brief survey of the party.

Father Malachi Brennan, P.P. of Carrigaholt, was what I had often pictured to myself as the beau ideal of his caste; his figure was short, fleshy, and enormously muscular, and displayed proportions which wanted but height to constitute a perfect Hercules; his legs so thick in the calf, so taper in the ankle, looked like nothing I know, except perhaps, the metal balustrades of Carlisle—bridge; his face was large and rosy, and the general expression, a mixture of unbounded good humour and inexhaustible drollery, to which the restless activity of his black and arched eye—brows greatly contributed; and his



mouth, were it not for a character of sensuality and voluptuousness about the nether lip, had been actually handsome; his head was bald, except a narrow circle close above the ears, which was marked by a ring of curly dark hair, sadly insufficient however, to conceal a development behind, that, if there be truth in phrenology, bodes but little happiness to the disciples of Miss Martineau.



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Add to these external signs a voice rich, fluent, and racy, with the mellow “doric” of his country, and you have some faint resemblance of one “every inch a priest.” The very antipodes to the ‘bonhomie’ of this figure, confronted him as croupier at the foot of the table. This, as I afterwards learned, was no less a person than Mister Donovan, the coadjutor or “curate;” he was a tall, spare, ungainly looking man of about five and thirty, with a pale, ascetic countenance, the only readable expression of which vibrated between low suspicion and intense vulgarity: over his low, projecting forehead hung down a mass of straight red hair; indeed—for nature is not a politician—it almost approached an orange hue. This was cut close to the head all around, and displayed in their full proportions a pair of enormous ears, which stood out in “relief,” like turrets from a watch-tower, and with pretty much the same object; his skin was of that peculiar colour and texture, to which, not all “the water in great Neptune’s ocean” could impart a look of cleanliness, while his very voice, hard, harsh, and inflexible, was unprepossessing and unpleasant. And yet, strange as it may seem, he, too, was a correct type of his order; the only difference being, that Father Malachi was an older coinage, with the impress of Donay or St. Omers, whereas Mister Donovan was the shining metal, fresh stamped from the mint of Maynooth.

While thus occupied in my surveillance of the scene before me, I was roused by the priest saying—

“Ah, Fin, my darling, you needn’t deny it; you’re at the old game as sure as my name is Malachi, and ye’ll never be easy nor quiet till ye’re sent beyond the sea, or maybe have a record of your virtues on half a ton of marble in the church—yard, yonder.”

“Upon my honour, upon the sacred honour of a De Courcy—.”

“Well, well, never mind it now; ye see ye’re just keeping your friends cooling themselves there in the corner—introduce me at once.”

“Mr. Lorrequer, I’m sure—.”

“My name is Curzon,” said the adjutant, bowing.

“A mighty pretty name, though a little profane; well, Mr. Curse-on,” for so he pronounced it, “ye’re as welcome as the flowers in May; and it’s mighty proud I am to see ye here.

“Mr. Lorrequer, allow me to shake your hand—I’ve heard of ye before.”

There seemed nothing very strange in that; for go where I would through this country, I seemed as generally known as ever was Brummell in Bond-street.

“Fin tells me,” continued Father Malachi, “that ye’d rather not be known down here, in regard of a reason,” and here he winked. “Make yourselves quite easy; the king’s writ was never but once in these parts; and the ‘original and true copy’ went back to Limerick



in the stomach of the server; they made him eat it, Mr. Lorrequer; but it's as well to be cautious, for there are a good number here. A little dinner, a little quarterly dinner we have among us, Mr. Curseon, to be social together, and raise a 'thrifle' for the Irish college at Rome, where we have a probationer or two, ourselves.



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“As good as a station, and more drink,” whispered Fin into my ear. “And now,” continued the priest, “ye must just permit me to re-christen ye both, and the contribution will not be the less for what I’m going to do; and I’m certain you’ll not be worse for the change Mr. Curseon—though ’tis only for a few hours, ye’ll have a dacent name.”

As I could see no possible objection to this proposal, nor did Curzon either, our only desire being to maintain the secrecy necessary for our antagonist’s safety, we at once assented; when Father Malachi took me by the hand, but with such a total change in his whole air and deportment that I was completely puzzled by it; he led me forward to the company with a good deal of the ceremonious reverence I have often admired in Sir Charles Vernon, when conducting some full—blown dowager through the mazes of a castle minuet. The desire to laugh outright was almost irresistible, as the Rev. Father stood at arm’s length from me, still holding my hand, and bowing to the company pretty much in the style of a manager introducing a blushing debutante to an audience. A moment more, and I must have inevitably given way to a burst of laughter, when what was my horror to hear the priest present me to the company as their “excellent, worthy, generous, and patriotic young landlord, Lord Kilkee. Cheer every mother’s son of ye; cheer I say;” and certainly precept was never more strenuously backed by example, for he huzzaed till I thought he would burst a blood—vessel; may I add, I almost wished it, such was the insufferable annoyance, the chagrin, this announcement gave me; and I waited with eager impatience for the din and clamour to subside, to disclaim every syllable of the priest’s announcement, and take the consequences of my baptismal epithet, cost what it might. To this I was impelled by many and important reasons. Situated as I was with respect to the Callonby family, my assumption of their name at such a moment might get abroad, and the consequences to me, be inevitable ruin; and independent of my natural repugnance to such sailing under false colours, I saw Curzon laughing almost to suffocation at my wretched predicament, and (so strong within me was the dread of ridicule) I thought, “what a pretty narrative he is concocting for the mess this minute.” I rose to reply; and whether Father Malachi, with his intuitive quickness, guessed my purpose or not, I cannot say, but he certainly resolved to out-manuever me, and he succeeded: while with one hand he motioned to the party to keep silence, with the other he took hold of Curzon, but with no peculiar or very measured respect, and introduced him as Mr. MacNeesh, the new Scotch steward and improver—a character at that time whose popularity might compete with a tithe proctor or an exciseman. So completely did this tactique turn the tables upon the poor adjutant, who the moment before was exulting over me, that I utterly forgot my own woes, and sat down convulsed with mirth at his situation—an emotion certainly not lessened as I saw Curzon passed from one to the other at table, “like a pauper to his parish,” till he found an asylum at the very foot, in juxta with the engaging Mister Donovan. A propinquity, if I might judge from their countenances, uncoveted by either party.



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While this was performing, Doctor Finucane was making his recognitions with several of the company, to whom he had been long known during his visits to the neighbourhood. I now resumed my place on the right of the Father, abandoning for the present all intention of disclaiming my rank, and the campaign was opened. The priest now exerted himself to the utmost to recall conversation with the original channels, and if possible to draw off attention from me, which he still feared, might, perhaps, elicit some unlucky announcement on my part. Failing in his endeavours to bring matters to their former footing, he turned the whole brunt of his attentions to the worthy doctor, who sat on his left.

“How goes on the law,” said he, “Fin? Any new proofs, as they call them, forthcoming?”

What Fin replied, I could not hear, but the allusion to the “suit” was explained by Father Malachi informing us that the only impediment between his cousin and the title of Kinsale lay in the unfortunate fact, that his grandmother, “rest her sowl,” was not a man.

Doctor Finucane winced a little under the manner in which this was spoken: but returned the fire by asking if the bishop was down lately in that quarter? The evasive way in which “the Father” replied having stimulated my curiosity as to the reason, little entreaty was necessary to persuade the doctor to relate the following anecdote, which was not relished the less by his superior, that it told somewhat heavily on Mr. Donovan.

“It is about four years ago,” said the doctor, “since the Bishop, Dr. Plunkett, took it into his head that he’d make a general inspection, ‘a reconnoissance,’ as we’d call it, Mr. Lor—that is, my lord! Through the whole diocese, and leave no part far nor near without poking his nose in it and seeing how matters were doing. He heard very queer stories about his reverence here, and so down he came one morning in the month of July, riding upon an old grey hack, looking just for all the world like any other elderly gentleman in very rusty black. When he got near the village he picked up a little boy to show him the short cut across the fields to the house here; and as his lordship was a ‘sharp man and a shrewd,’ he kept his eye on every thing as he went along, remarking this, and noting down that.

“‘Are ye regular in yer duties, my son?’ said he to the gossoon.

“‘I never miss a Sunday,’ said the gossoon; ‘for it’s always walking his reverence’s horse I am the whole time av prayers.’

“His lordship said no more for a little while, when he muttered between his teeth, ‘Ah, it’s just slander—nothing but slander and lying tongues.’ This soliloquy was caused by his remarking that on every gate he passed, or from every cabin, two or three urchins would come out half naked, but all with the finest heads of red hair he ever saw in his life.



“How is it, my son,’ said he, at length; ‘they tell very strange stories about Father Malachi, and I see so many of these children with red hair. Eh—now Father Malachi’s a dark man.’



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“True for ye,’ said the boy; ’true for ye, Father Malachi’s dark; but the coadjutor!—the coadjutor’s as red as a fox.”

When the laugh this story caused had a little subsided, Father Malachi called out, “Mickey Oulahan! Mickey, I say, hand his lordship over ’the groceries”’—thus he designated a square decanter, containing about two quarts of whiskey, and a bowl heaped high with sugar—“a dacent boy is Mickey, my lord, and I’m happy to be the means of making him known to you.” I bowed with condescension, while Mr. Oulahan’s eyes sparkled like diamonds at the recognition.

“He has only two years of the lease to run, and a ‘long charge,’ (anglice, a large family,) continued the priest.

“I’ll not forget him, you may depend upon it,” said I.

“Do you hear that,” said Father Malachi, casting a glance of triumph round the table, while a general buzz of commendation on priest and patron went round, with many such phrases as, “Och thin, it’s his riv’rance can do it,” “na bocklish,” “and why not,” &c. &c. As for me, I have already “confessed” to my crying sin, a fatal, irresistible inclination to follow the humour of the moment wherever it led me; and now I found myself as active a partizan in quizzing Mickey Oulahan, as though I was not myself a party included in the jest. I was thus fairly launched into my inveterate habit, and nothing could arrest my progress.

One by one the different individuals round the table were presented to me, and made known their various wants, with an implicit confidence in my power of relieving them, which I with equal readiness ministered to. I lowered the rent of every man at table. I made a general jail delivery, an act of grace, (I blush to say,) which seemed to be peculiarly interesting to the present company. I abolished all arrears—made a new line of road through an impassable bog, and over an inaccessible mountain—and conducted water to a mill, which (I learned in the morning) was always worked by wind. The decanter had scarcely completed its third circuit of the board, when I bid fair to be most popular specimen of the peerage that ever visited the “far west.” In the midst of my career of universal benevolence, I was interrupted by Father Malachi, whom I found on his legs, pronouncing a glowing eulogium on his cousin’s late regiment, the famous North Cork.

“That was the corps!” said he. “Bid them do a thing, and they’d never leave off; and so, when they got orders to retire from Wexford, it’s little they cared for the comforts of baggage, like many another regiment, for they threw away every thing but their canteens, and never stopped till they ran to Ross, fifteen miles farther than the enemy followed them. And when they were all in bed the same night, fatigued and tired with their exertions, as ye may suppose, a drummer’s boy called out in his sleep—’here they



are—they're coming'—they all jumped up and set off in their shirts, and got two miles out of town before they discovered it was a false alarm.”



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Peal after peal of laughter followed the priest's encomium on the doctor's regiment; and, indeed, he himself joined most heartily in the mirth, as he might well afford to do, seeing that a braver or better corps than the North Cork, Ireland did not possess.

"Well," said Fin, "it's easy to see ye never can forget what they did at Maynooth."

Father Malachi disclaimed all personal feeling on the subject; and I was at last gratified by the following narrative, which I regret deeply I am not enabled to give in the doctor's own verbiage; but writing as I do from memory, (in most instances,) I can only convey the substance:

It was towards the latter end of the year '98—the year of the troubles—that the North Cork was ordered, "for their sins" I believe, to march from their snug quarters in Fermoy, and take up a position in the town of Maynooth—a very considerable reverse of fortune to a set of gentlemen extremely addicted to dining out, and living at large upon a very pleasant neighbourhood. Fermoy abounded in gentry; Maynooth at that, time had few, if any, excepting his Grace of Leinster, and he lived very privately, and saw no company. Maynooth was stupid and dull—there were neither belles nor balls; Fermoy (to use the doctor's well remembered words) had "great feeding," and "very genteel young ladies, that carried their handkerchiefs in bags, and danced with the officers."

They had not been many weeks in their new quarters, when they began to pine over their altered fortunes, and it was with a sense of delight, which a few months before would have been incomprehensible to them, they discovered, that one of their officers had a brother, a young priest in the college: he introduced him to some of his confreres, and the natural result followed. A visiting acquaintance began between the regiment and such of the members of the college as had liberty to leave the precincts: who, as time ripened the acquaintance into intimacy, very naturally preferred the cuisine of the North Cork to the meagre fare of "the refectory." At last seldom a day went by, without one or two of their reverences finding themselves guests at the mess. The North Corkians were of a most hospitable turn, and the fathers were determined the virtue should not rust for want of being exercised; they would just drop in to say a word to "Captain O'Flaherty about leave to shoot in the demesne," as Carton was styled; or, they had a "frank from the Duke for the Colonel," or some other equally pressing reason; and they would contrive to be caught in the middle of a very droll story just as the "roast beef" was playing. Very little entreaty then sufficed—a short apology for the "dereglements" of dress, and a few minutes more found them seated at table without further ceremony on either side.



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Among the favourite guests from the college, two were peculiarly held in estimation—the Professor of the Humanities, Father Luke Mooney; and the Abbe D'Array, “the Lecturer on Moral Philosophy, and Belles Lettres;” and certain it is, pleasanter fellows, or more gifted with the “convivial bump, there never existed. He of the Humanities was a droll dog—a member of the Curran club, the “monks of the screw,” told an excellent story, and sang the “Cruiskeen Lawn” better than did any before or since him;—the moral philosopher, though of a different genre, was also a most agreeable companion, an Irishman transplanted in his youth to St. Omers, and who had grafted upon his native humour a considerable share of French smartness and repartee—such were the two, who ruled supreme in all the festive arrangements of this jovial regiment, and were at last as regular at table, as the adjutant and the paymaster, and so might they have continued, had not prosperity, that in its blighting influence upon the heart, spares neither priests nor laymen, and is equally severe upon mice (see Aesop’s fable) and moral philosophers, actually deprived them, for the “nonce” of reason, and tempted them to their ruin. You naturally ask, what did they do? Did they venture upon allusions to the retreat upon Ross? Nothing of the kind. Did they, in that vanity which wine inspires, refer by word, act, or inuendo, to the well-known order of their Colonel when reviewing his regiment in “the Phoenix,” to “advance two steps backwards, and dress by the gutter.” Far be it from them: though indeed either of these had been esteemed light in the balance compared with their real crime. “Then, what was their failing—come, tell it, and burn ye?” They actually, “horresco referens,” quizzed the Major coram the whole mess!—Now, Major John Jones had only lately exchanged into the North Cork from the “Darry Ragement,” as he called it. He was a red—hot orangeman, a deputy—grand something, and vice-chairman of the “Prentice Boys” beside. He broke his leg when a school—boy, by a fall incurred in tying an orange handkerchief around King William’s August neck in College-green, on one 12th of July, and three several times had closed the gates of Derry with his own loyal hands, on the famed anniversary; in a word, he was one, that if his church had enjoined penance as an expiation for sin, would have looked upon a trip to Jerusalem on his bare knees, as a very light punishment for the crime on his conscience, that he sat at table with two buck priests from Maynooth, and carved for them, like the rest of the company!

Poor Major Jones, however, had no such solace, and the canker-worm eat daily deeper and deeper into his pining heart. During the three or four weeks of their intimacy with his regiment, his martyrdom was awful. His figure wasted, and his colour became a deeper tinge of orange, and all around averred that there would soon be a “move up” in the corps, for the major had evidently “got



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his notice to quit" this world, and its pomps and vanities. He felt "that he was dying," to use Haines Bayley's beautiful and apposite words, and meditated an exchange, but that, from circumstances, was out of the question. At last, subdued by grief, and probably his spirit having chafed itself smooth by such constant attrition, he became, to all seeming, calmer; but it was only the calm of a broken and weary heart. Such was Major Jones at the time, when, "suadente diabolo," it seemed meet to Fathers Mooney and D'Array to make him the butt of their raillery. At first, he could not believe it; the thing was incredible—impossible; but when he looked around the table, when he heard the roars of laughter, long, loud, and vociferous; when he heard his name bandied from one to the other across the table, with some vile jest tacked to it "like a tin kettle to a dog's tail," he awoke to the full measure of his misery—the cup was full. Fate had done her worst, and he might have exclaimed with Lear, "spit, fire-spout, rain," there was nothing in store for him of further misfortune.

A drum-head court-martial—a hint "to sell out"—ay, a sentence of "dismissed the service," had been mortal calamities, and, like a man, he would have borne them; but that he, Major John Jones, D.G.S. C.P.B., &c. &c, who had drank the "pious, glorious, and immortal," sitting astride of "the great gun of Athlone," should come to this! Alas, and alas! He retired that night to his chamber a "sadder if not a wiser man;" he dreamed that the "statue" had given place to the unshapely figure of Leo X., and that "Lundy now stood where Walker stood before." He humped from his bed in a moment of enthusiasm, he vowed his revenge, and he kept his vow.

That day the major was "acting field officer." The various patrols, sentries, picquets, and out-posts, were all under his especial control; and it was remarked that he took peculiar pains in selecting the men for night duty, which, in the prevailing quietness and peace of that time, seemed scarcely warrantable.

Evening drew near, and Major Jones, summoned by the "oft-heard beat," wended his way to the mess. The officers were dropping in, and true as "the needle to the pole," came Father Mooney and the Abbe. They were welcomed with the usual warmth, and strange to say, by none more than the major himself, whose hilarity knew no bounds.

How the evening passed, I shall not stop to relate: suffice it to say, that a more brilliant feast of wit and jollification, not even the North Cork ever enjoyed. Father Luke's drollest stories, his very quaintest humour shone forth, and the Abbe sang a new "Chanson a Boire," that Beranger might hav envied.

"What are you about, my dear Father D'Array?" said the Colonel; "you are surely not rising yet; here's a fresh cooper of port just come in; sit down, I entreat."



“I say it with grief, my dear colonel, we must away; the half-hour has just chimed, and we must be within ‘the gates’ before twelve. The truth is, the superior has been making himself very troublesome about our ‘carnal amusements’ as he calls our innocent mirth, and we must therefore be upon our guard.”



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“Well, if it must be so, we shall not risk losing your society altogether, for an hour or so now; so, one bumper to our next meeting—to-morrow, mind, and now, M. D’Abbe, au revoir.”

The worthy fathers finished their glasses, and taking a most affectionate leave of their kind entertainers, sallied forth under the guidance of Major Jones, who insisted upon accompanying them part of the way, as, “from information he had received, the sentries were doubled in some places, and the usual precautions against surprise all taken.” Much as this polite attention surprised the objects of it, his brother officers wondered still more, and no sooner did they perceive the major and his companions issue forth, than they set out in a body to watch where this most novel and unexpected complaisance would terminate.

When the priests reached the door of the barrack-yard, they again turned to utter their thanks to the major, and entreat him once more, “not to come a step farther. There now, major, we know the path well, so just give us the pass, and don’t stay out in the night air.”

“Ah oui, Monsieur Jones,” said the Abbe, “retournez, je vous prie. We are, I must say, chez nous. Ces braves gens, les North Cork know us by this time.”

The major smiled, while he still pressed his services to see them past the picquets, but they were resolved and would not be denied.

“With the word for the night, we want nothing more,” said Father Luke.

“Well, then,” said the major, in the gravest tone, and he was naturally grave, “you shall have your way, but remember to call out loud, for the first sentry is a little deaf, and a very passionate, ill—tempered fellow to boot.”

“Never fear,” said Father Mooney, laughing; “I’ll go bail he’ll hear me.”

“Well—the word for the night is—’Bloody end to the Pope,’—don’t forget, now, ‘Bloody end to the Pope,’” and with these words he banged the door between him and the unfortunate priests; and, as bolt was fastened after bolt, they heard him laughing to himself like a fiend over his vengeance.

“And big bad luck to ye, Major Jones, for the same, every day ye see a paving stone,” was the faint sub-audible ejaculation of Father Luke, when he was recovered enough to speak.

“Sacristi! Que nous sommes attrappes,” said the Abbe, scarcely able to avoid laughing at the situation in which they were placed.



“Well, there’s the quarter chiming now; we’ve no time to lose—Major Jones! Major, darling! Don’t now, ah, don’t! sure ye know we’ll be ruined entirely—there now, just change it, like a dacent fellow—the devil’s luck to him, he’s gone. Well, we can’t stay here in the rain all night, and be expelled in the morning afterwards—so come along.”

They jogged on for a few minutes in silence, till they came to that part of the “Duke’s” demesne wall, where the first sentry was stationed. By this time the officers, headed by the major, had quietly slipped out of the gate, and were following their steps at a convenient distance.



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The fathers had stopped to consult together, what they should do in this trying emergency—when their whisper being overheard, the sentinel called out gruffly, in the genuine dialect of his country, “who goes that?”

“Father Luke Mooney, and the Abbe D’Array,” said the former, in his most bland and insinuating tone of voice, a quality he most eminently possessed.

“Stand and give the countersign.”

“We are coming from the mess, and going home to the college,” said Father Mooney, evading the question, and gradually advancing as he spoke.

“Stand, or I’ll shot ye,” said the North Corkian.

Father Luke halted, while a muttered “Blessed Virgin” announced his state of fear and trepidation.

“D’Array, I say, what are we to do.”

“The countersign,” said the sentry, whose figure they could perceive in the dim distance of about thirty yards.

“Sure ye’ll let us pass, my good lad, and ye’ll have a friend in Father Luke the longest day ye live, and ye might have a worse in time of need; ye understand.”

Whether he did understand or not, he certainly did not heed, for his only reply was the short click of his gun-lock, that bespeaks a preparation to fire.

“There’s no help now,” said Father Luke; “I see he’s a haythen; and bad luck to the major, I say again;” and this in the fulness of his heart he uttered aloud.

“That’s not the countersign,” said the inexorable sentry, striking the butt end of the musket on the ground with a crash that smote terror into the hearts of the priests.

Mumble—mumble—“to the Pope,” said Father Luke, pronouncing the last words distinctly, after the approved practice of a Dublin watchman, on being awoke from his dreams of row and riot by the last toll of the Post-office, and not knowing whether it has struck “twelve” or “three,” sings out the word “o’clock,” in a long sonorous drawl, that wakes every sleeping citizen, and yet tells nothing how “time speeds on his flight.”

“Louder,” said the sentry, in a voice of impatience.

_____ “to the Pope.”



“I don’t hear the first part.”

“Oh then,” said the priest, with a sigh that might have melted the heart of anything but a sentry, “Bloody end to the Pope; and may the saints in heaven forgive me for saying it.”

“Again,” called out the soldier; “and no muttering.”

“Bloody end to the Pope,” cried Father Luke in bitter desperation.

“Bloody end to the Pope,” echoed the Abbe.

“Pass bloody end to the Pope, and good night,” said the sentry, resuming his rounds, while a loud and uproarious peal of laughter behind, told the unlucky priests they were overheard by others, and that the story would be over the whole town in the morning.

Whether it was that the penance for their heresy took long in accomplishing, or that they never could summon courage sufficient to face their persecutor, certain it is, the North Cork saw them no more, nor were they ever observed to pass the precincts of the college, while that regiment occupied Maynooth.



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Major Jones himself, and his confederates, could not have more heartily relished this story, than did the party to whom the doctor heartily related it. Much, if not all the amusement it afforded, however, resulted from his inimitable mode of telling, and the power of mimicry, with which he conveyed the dialogue with the sentry: and this, alas, must be lost to my readers, at least to that portion of them not fortunate enough to possess Doctor Finucane's acquaintance.

"Fin! Fin! your long story has nearly famished me," said the padre, as the laugh subsided; "and there you sit now with the jug at your elbow this half-hour; I never thought you would forget our old friend Martin Hanegan's aunt."

"Here's to her health," said Fin; "and your reverence will get us the chant."

"Agreed," said Father Malachi, finishing a bumper, and after giving a few preparatory hems, he sang the following "singularly wild and beautiful poem," as some one calls Christabel:—

"Here's a health to Martin Hanegan's aunt,
And I'll tell ye the reason why!
She eats bekase she is hungry,
And drinks bekase she is dry.

"And if ever a man,
Stopped the course of a can,
Martin Hanegan's aunt would cry—
'Arrah, fill up your glass,
And let the jug pass;
How d'ye know but what your neighbour's dhry?"

"Come, my lord and gentlemen, da capo, if ye please—Fill up your glass," and the chanson was chorussed with a strength and vigour that would have astonished the Philharmonic.

The mirth and fun now grew "fast and furious;" and Father Malachi, rising with the occasion, flung his reckless drollery and fun on every side, sparing none, from his cousin to the coadjutor. It was not that peculiar period in the evening's enjoyment, when an expert and practical chairman gives up all interference or management, and leaves every thing to take its course; this then was the happy moment selected by Father Malachi to propose the little "contribution." He brought a plate from a side table, and placing it before him, addressed the company in a very brief but sensible speech, detailing the object of the institution he was advocating, and concluding with the following words:—"and now ye'll just give whatever ye like, according to your means in life, and what ye can spare."



The admonition, like the “morale” of an income tax, having the immediate effect of pitting each man against his neighbour, and suggesting to their already excited spirits all the ardour of gambling, without, however, a prospect of gain. The plate was first handed to me in honour of my “rank,” and having deposited upon it a handful of small silver, the priest ran his finger through the coin, and called out:—

“Five pounds! at least; not a farthing less, as I am a sinner. Look, then,—see now; they tell ye, the gentlemen don’t care for the like of ye! but see for yourselves. May I trouble y’r lordship to pass the plate to Mr. Mahony—he’s impatient, I see.”



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Mr. Mahony, about whom I perceived very little of the impatience alluded to, was a grim-looking old Christian, in a rabbit-skin waistcoat, with long flaps, who fumbled in the recesses of his breeches pocket for five minutes, and then drew forth three shillings, which he laid upon the plate, with what I fancied very much resembled a sigh.

“Six and sixpence, is it? or five shillings?—all the same, Mr. Mahony, and I’ll not forget the thrifle you were speaking about this morning any way;” and here he leaned over as interceding with me for him, but in reality to whisper into my ear, “the greatest miser from this to Castlebar.”

“Who’s that put down the half guinea in goold?” (And this time he spoke truth.) “Who’s that, I say?”

“Tim Kennedy, your reverence,” said Tim, stroking his hair down with one hand, and looking proud and modest at the same moment.

“Tim, ye’re a credit to us any day, and I always said so. It’s a gauger he’d like to be, my lord,” said he, turning to me, in a kind of stage whisper. I nodded and muttered something, when he thanked me most profoundly as if his suit had prospered.

“Mickey Oulahan—the lord’s looking at ye, Mickey.” This was said piannisime across the table, and had the effect of increasing Mr. Oulahan’s donation from five shillings to seven—the last two being pitched in very much in the style o a gambler making his final coup, and crying “va banque.” “The Oulahans were always dacent people—dacent people, my lord.”

“Be gorra, the Oulahans was niver dacenter nor the Molowneys, any how,” said a tall athletic young fellow, as he threw down three crown pieces, with an energy that made every coin leap from the plate.

“They’ll do now,” said Father Brennan; “I’ll leave them to themselves;” and truly the eagerness to get the plate and put down the subscription, fully equalled the rapacious anxiety I have witnessed in an old maid at loo, to get possession of a thirty-shilling pool, be the same more or less, which lingered on its way to her, in the hands of many a fair competitor.

“Mr. M’Neesh”—Curzon had hitherto escaped all notice—“Mr. M’Neesh, to your good health,” cried Father Brennan. “It’s many a secret they’ll be getting out o’ye down there about the Scotch husbandry.”

Whatever poor Curzon knew of “drills,” certainly did not extend to them when occupied by turnips. This allusion of the priest’s being caught up by the party at the foot of the table, they commenced a series of inquiries into different Scotch plans of tillage—his brief and unsatisfactory answers to which, they felt sure, were given in order to evade



imparting information. By degrees, as they continued to press him with questions, his replies grew more short, and a general feeling of dislike on both sides was not very long in following.

The father saw this, and determining with his usual tact to repress it, called on the adjutant for a song. Now, whether he had but one in the world, or whether he took this mode of retaliating for the annoyances he had suffered, I know not; but true it is, he finished his tumbler at a draught, and with a voice of no very peculiar sweetness, though abundantly loud, began "The Boyne Water."



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He had just reached the word “battle,” in the second line upon which he was bestowing what he meant to be a shake, when, as if the word suggested it, it seemed the signal for a general engagement. Decanters, glasses, jugs, candlesticks,—aye, and the money-dish, flew right and left—all originally intended, it is true, for the head of the luckless adjutant, but as they now and then missed their aim, and came in contact with the “wrong man,” invariably provoked retaliation, and in a very few minutes the battle became general.

What may have been the doctor’s political sentiments on this occasion, I cannot even guess; but he seemed bent upon performing the part of a “convivial Lord Stanley,” and maintaining a dignified neutrality. With this apparent object, he mounted upon the table, to raise himself, I suppose, above the din and commotion of party clamour, and brandishing a jug of scalding water, bestowed it with perfect impartiality on the combatants on either side. This Whig plan of conciliation, however well intended, seemed not to prosper with either party; and many were the missiles directed at the ill-starred doctor. Meanwhile Father Malachi, whether following the pacific instinct of his order, in seeking an asylum in troublesome times, or equally moved by old habit to gather coin in low places, (much of the money having fallen,) was industriously endeavouring to insert himself beneath the table; in this, with one vigorous push, he at last succeeded, but in so doing lifted it from its legs, and thus destroying poor “Fin’s” gravity, precipitated him, jug and all, into the thickest part of the fray, where he met with that kind reception such a benefactor ever receives at the hands of a grateful public. I meanwhile hurried to rescue poor Curzon, who, having fallen to the ground, was getting a cast of his features taken in pewter, for such seemed the operation a stout farmer was performing on the adjutant’s face with a quart. With considerable difficulty, notwithstanding my supposed “lordship,” I succeeded in freeing him from his present position; and he concluding, probably, that enough had been done for one “sitting,” most willingly permitted me to lead him from the room. I was soon joined by the doctor, who assisted me in getting my poor friend to bed; which being done, he most eagerly entreated me to join the company. This, however, I firmly but mildly declined, very much to his surprise; for as he remarked—“They’ll all be like lambs now, for they don’t believe there’s a whole bone in his body.”

Expressing my deep sense of the Christian-like forbearance of the party, I pleaded fatigue, and bidding him good night, adjourned to my bed-room; and here, although the arrangements fell somewhat short of the luxurious ones appertaining to my late apartment at Callonby, they were most grateful at the moment; and having “addressed myself to slumber,” fell fast asleep, and only awoke late on the following morning to wonder where I was: from any doubts as to which I was speedily relieved by the entrance of the priest’s bare-footed “colleen,” to deposit on my table a bottle of soda water, and announce breakfast, with his reverence’s compliments.



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Having made a hasty toilet, I proceeded to the parlour, which, however late events might have impressed upon my memory, I could scarcely recognise. Instead of the long oak table and the wassail bowl, there stood near the fire a small round table, covered with a snow—white cloth, upon which shone in unrivalled brightness a very handsome tea equipage—the hissing kettle on one hob was vis a vis'd by a gridiron with three newly taken trout, frying under the reverential care of Father Malachi himself—a heap of eggs ranged like shot in an ordnance yard, stood in the middled of the table, while a formidable pile of buttered toast browned before the grate—the morning papers were airing upon the hearth—every thing bespoke that attention to comfort and enjoyment one likes to discover in the house where chance may have domesticated him for a day or two.

“Good morning, Mr. Lorrequer. I trust you have rested well,” said Father Malachi as I entered.

“Never better; but where are our friends?”

“I have been visiting and comforting them in their affliction, and I may with truth assert it is not often my fortune to have three as sickly looking guests. That was a most unlucky affair last night, and I must apologise.”

“Don’t say a word, I entreat; I saw how it all occurred, and am quite sure if it had not been for poor Curzon’s ill-timed melody—”

“You are quite right,” said the father interrupting me. “Your friend’s taste for music—bad luck to it—was the *‘teterrima causa belli.’*”

“And the subscription,” said I; “how did it succeed?”

“Oh, the money went in the commotion; and although I have got some seven pounds odd shillings of it, the war was a most expensive one to me. I caught old Mahony very busy under the table during the fray; but let us say no more about it now—draw over your chair. Tea or coffee? there’s the rum if you like it *‘chasse.’*”

I immediately obeyed the injunction, and commenced a vigorous assault upon the trout, caught, as he informed me, “within twenty perches of the house.”

“Your poor friend’s nose is scarcely regimental,” said he, “this morning; and as for Fin, he was never remarkable for beauty, so, though they might cut and hack, they could scarcely disfigure him, as Juvenal says—isn’t it Juvenal?”

“*‘Vacuus viator cantabit ante Latronem;’*

“or in the vernacular:



“The empty traveller may whistle
Before the robber and his pistil’ (pistol).”

“There’s the Chili vinegar—another morsel of the trout?”

“I thank you; what excellent coffee, Father Malachi!”

“A secret I learned at St. Omer’s some thirty years since. Any letters, Bridget?”—to a damsel that entered with a pacquet in her hand.

“A gossoon from Kilrush, y’r reverence, with a bit of a note for the gentleman there.”

“For me!—ah, true enough. Harry Lorrequer, Esq. Kilrush—try Carrigaholt.” So ran the superscription—the first part being in a lady’s handwriting; the latter very like the “rustic paling” of the worthy Mrs. Healy’s style. The seal was a large one, bearing a coronet at top, and the motto in old Norman—French, told me it came from Callonby.



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With what a trembling hand and beating heart I broke it open, and yet feared to read it—so much of my destiny might be in that simple page. For once in my life my sanguine spirit failed me; my mind could take in but one casualty, that Lady Jane had divulged to her family the nature of my attentions, and that in the letter before me lay a cold mandate of dismissal from her presence for ever.

At last I summoned courage to read it; but having scrupled to present to my readers the Reverend Father Brennan at the tail of a chapter, let me not be less punctilious in the introduction of her ladyship's billet.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LADY'S LETTER—PETER AND HIS ACQUAINTANCES—TOO LATE.

Her ladyship's letter ran thus—

“Callonby, Tuesday morning.

“My dear Mr. Lorrequer,—My lord has deputed me to convey to you our adieus, and at the same time to express our very great regret that we should not have seen you before our departure from Ireland. A sudden call of the House, and some unexpected ministerial changes, require Lord Callonby's immediate presence in town; and probably before this reaches you we shall be on the road. Lord Kilkee, who left us yesterday, was much distressed at not having seen you—he desired me to say you shall hear from him from Leamington. Although writing amid all the haste and bustle of departure, I must not forget the principal part of my commission, nor lady-like defer it to a postscript: my lord entreats that you will, if possible, pass a month or two with us in London this season; make any use of his name you think fit at the Horse-Guards, where he has some influence. Knowing as I do, with what kindness you ever accede to the wishes of your friends, I need not say how much gratification this will afford us all; but, sans response, we expect you. Believe me to remain, yours very sincerely,

“Charlotte Callonby.”

“P.S.—We are all quite well, except Lady Jane, who has a slight cold, and has been feverish for the last day or two.”

Words cannot convey any idea of the torrent of contending emotions under which I perused this letter. The suddenness of the departure, without an opportunity of even a moment's leave-taking, completely unmanned me. What would I not have given to be able to see her once more, even for an instant—to say “a good bye”—to watch the feeling with which she parted from me, and augur from it either favourably to my heart's dearest hope, or darkest despair. As I continued to read on, the kindly tone of the remainder reassured me, and when I came to the invitation to London, which plainly



argued a wish on their part to perpetuate the intimacy, I was obliged to read it again and again, before I could convince myself of its reality. There it was, however, most distinctly and legibly impressed in her ladyship's fairest calligraphy; and certainly great as was its consequence to me at the time, it by no means formed the principal part of the communication. The two lines of postscript contained more, far more food for hopes and fears than did all the rest of the epistle.



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Lady Jane was ill then, slightly however—a mere cold; true, but she was feverish. I could not help asking myself what share had I causing that flushed cheek and anxious eye, and pictured to myself, perhaps with more vividness than reality, a thousand little traits of manner, all proofs strong as holy writ to my sanguine mind, that my affection was returned, and that I loved not in vain. Again and again I read over the entire letter; never truly did a nisi prius lawyer con over a new act of parliament with more searching ingenuity, to detect its hidden meaning, than did I to unravel through its plain phraseology the secret intention of the writer towards me.

There is an old and not less true adage, that what we wish we readily believe; and so with me—I found myself an easy convert to my own hopes and desires, and actually ended by persuading myself—no very hard task—that my Lord Callonby had not only witnessed but approved of my attachment to his beautiful daughter, and for reasons probably known to him, but concealed from me, opined that I was a suitable “parti,” and gave all due encouragement to my suit. The hint about using his lordship’s influence at the Horse guards I resolved to benefit by; not, however, in obtaining leave of absence, which I hoped to accomplish more easily, but with his good sanction in pushing my promotion, when I claimed him as my right honorable father-in-law—a point, on the propriety of which, I had now fully satisfied myself. What visions of rising greatness burst upon my mind, as I thought on the prospect that opened before me; but here let me do myself the justice to record, that amid all my pleasure and exultation, my proudest thought, was in the anticipation of possessing one in every way so much my superior—the very consciousness of which imparted a thrill of fear to my heart, that such good fortune was too much even to hope for.

How long I might have luxuriated in such Chateaux en Espagne, heaven knows; thick and thronging fancies came abundantly to my mind, and it was with something of the feeling of the porter in the Arabian Nights, as he surveyed the fragments of his broken ware, hurled down in a moment of glorious dreaminess, that I turned to look at the squat and unaristocratic figure of Father Malachi, as he sat reading his newspaper before the fire. How came I in such company; methinks the Dean of Windsor, or the Bishop of Durham had been a much more seemly associate for one destined as I was for the flood-tide of the world’s favour.

My eye at this instant rested upon the date of the letter, which was that of the preceding morning, and immediately a thought struck me that, as the day was a louring and gloomy one, perhaps they might have deferred their journey, and I at once determined to hasten to Callonby, and, if possible, see them before their departure.

“Father Brennan,” said I, at length, “I have just received a letter which compels me to reach Kilrush as soon as possible. Is there any public conveyance in the village?”



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“You don’t talk of leaving us, surely,” said the priest, “and a haunch of mutton for dinner, and Fin says he’ll be down, and your friend, too, and we’ll have poor Beamish in on a sofa.”

“I am sorry to say my business will not admit of delay, but, if possible, I shall return to thank you for all your kindness, in a day or two —perhaps tomorrow.”

“Oh, then,” said Father Brennan, “if it must be so, why you can have ‘Pether,’ my own pad, and a better you never laid leg over; only give him his own time, and let him keep the ‘canter,’ and he’ll never draw up from morning till night; and now I’ll just go and have him in readiness for you.”

After professing my warm acknowledgments to the good father for his kindness, I hastened to take a hurried farewell of Curzon before going. I found him sitting up in bed taking his breakfast; a large strip of black plaster, extending from the corner of one eye across the nose, and terminating near the mouth, denoted the locale of a goodly wound, while the blue, purple and yellow patches into which his face was partitioned out, left you in doubt whether he now resembled the knave of clubs or a new map of the Ordnance survey; one hand was wrapped up in a bandage, and altogether a more rueful and woe-begone looking figure I have rarely looked upon; and most certainly I am of opinion that the “glorious, pious and immortal memory” would have brought pleasanter recollections to Daniel O’Connell himself, than it would on that morning to the adjutant of his majesty’s 4th.

“Ah, Harry,” said he, as I entered, “what Pandemonium is this we’ve got into? did you ever witness such a business as last night’s?”

“Why truly,” said I, “I know of no one to blame but yourself; surely you must have known what a fracas your infernal song would bring on.”

“I don’t know now whether I knew it or not; but certainly at the moment I should have preferred anything to the confounded cross-examination I was under, and was glad to end it by any coup d’etat. One wretch was persecuting me about green crops, and another about the feeding of bullocks; about either of which I knew as much as a bear does of a ballet.”

“Well, truly, you caused a diversion at some expense to your countenance, for I never beheld anything—”

“Stop there,” said he, “you surely have not seen the doctor—he beats me hollow—they have scarcely left so much hair on his head as would do for an Indian’s scalp lock; and, of a verity, his aspect is awful this morning; he has just been here, and by-the-bye has told me all about your affair with Beamish. It appears that somewhere you met him at dinner, and gave a very flourishing account of a relative of his who you informed him



was not only selected for some very dashing service, but actually the personal friend of Picton; and, after the family having blazed the matter all over Cork, and given a great entertainment in honor of their kinsman, it



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turns out that, on the glorious 19th, he ran away to Brussels faster than even the French to Charleroi; for which act, however, there was no aspersion ever cast upon his courage, that quality being defended at the expense of his honesty; in a word, he was the paymaster of the company, and had what Theodore Hook calls an 'affection of his chest,' that required change of air. Looking only to the running away part of the matter, I unluckily expressed some regret that he did not belong to the North Cork, and I remarked the doctor did not seem to relish the allusion, and as I only now remember, it was his regiment, I suppose I'm in for more mischief."

I had no time to enjoy Curzon's dilemma, and had barely informed him of my intended departure, when a voice from without the room proclaimed that "Pether" was ready, and having commissioned the adjutant to say the "proper" to Mr. Beamish and the doctor, hurried away, and after a hearty shake of the hand from Father Brennan, and a faithful promise to return soon, I mounted and set off.

Peter's pace was of all others the one least likely to disturb the lucubrations of a castle-builder like myself; without any admonition from whip or spur he maintained a steady and constant canter, which, I am free to confess, was more agreeable to sit, than it was graceful to behold; for his head being much lower than his tail, he every moment appeared in the attitude of a diver about to plunge into the water, and more than once I had misgivings that I would consult my safety better if I sat with my face to the tail; however, what will not habit accomplish? before I had gone a mile or two, I was so lost in my own reveries and reflections, that I knew nothing of my mode of progression, and had only thoughts and feelings for the destiny that awaited me; sometimes I would fancy myself seated in the House of Commons, (on the ministerial benches, of course,) while some leading oppositionist was pronouncing a glowing panegyric upon the eloquent and statesmanlike speech of the gallant colonel—myself; then I thought I was making arrangements for setting out for my new appointment, and Sancho Panza never coveted the government of an island more than I did, though only a West Indian one; and, lastly, I saw myself the chosen diplomate on a difficult mission, and was actually engaged in the easy and agreeable occupation of outmaneuvering Talleyrand and Pozzo di Borgo, when Peter suddenly drew up at the door of a small cabin, and convinced me that I was still a mortal man, and a lieutenant in his Majesty's 4th. Before I had time afforded me even to guess at the reason of this sudden halt, an old man emerged from the cabin, which I saw now was a road-side ale-house, and presented Peter with a bucket of meal and water, a species of "viaticum" that he evidently was accustomed to, at this place, whether bestrode by a priest or an ambassador. Before me lay a long straggling street of cabins, irregularly thrown, as if riddled

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over the ground; this I was informed was Kilkee; while my good steed, therefore, was enjoying his potation, I dismounted, to stretch my legs and look about me, and scarcely had I done so when I found half the population of the village assembled round Peter, whose claims to notoriety, I now learned, depended neither upon his owner's fame, nor even my temporary possession of him. Peter, in fact, had been a racer, once—when, the wandering Jew might perhaps have told, had he ever visited Clare—for not the oldest inhabitant knew the date of his triumphs on the turf; though they were undisputed traditions, and never did any man appear bold enough to call them in question: whether it was from his patriarchal character, or that he was the only race-horse ever known in his county I cannot say, but, of a truth, the Grand Lama could scarcely be a greater object of reverence in Thibet, than was Peter in Kilkee.

“Musha, Peter, but it's well y'r looking,” cried one.

“Ah, thin, maybe ye an't fat on the ribs,” cried another.

“An' cockin' his tail like a coult,” said a third.

I am very certain, if I might venture to judge from the faces about, that, had the favourite for the St. Leger, passed through Kilkee at that moment, comparisons very little to his favor had been drawn from the assemblage around me. With some difficulty I was permitted to reach my much admired steed, and with a cheer, which was sustained and caught up by every denizen of the village as I passed through, I rode on my way, not a little amused at my equivocal popularity.

Being desirous to lose no time, I diverged from the straight road which leads to Kilrush, and took a cross bridle-path to Callonby; this, I afterwards discovered was a detour of a mile or two, and it was already sun-set when I reached the entrance to the park. I entered the avenue, and now my impatience became extreme, for although Peter continued to move at the same uniform pace, I could not persuade myself that he was not foundering at every step, and was quite sure we were scarcely advancing; at last I reached the wooden bridge, and ascended the steep slope, the spot where I had first met her, on whom my every thought now rested. I turned the angle of the clump of beech trees from whence the first view of the house is caught—I perceived to my inexpressible delight that gleams of light shone from many of the windows, and could trace their passing from one to the other. I now drew rein, and with a heart relieved from a load of anxiety, pulled up my good steed, and began to think of the position in which a few brief seconds would place me. I reached the small flower-garden, sacred by a thousand endearing recollections. Oh! of how very little account are the many words of passing kindness, and moments of light-hearted pleasure, when spoken or felt, compared to the memory of them when hallowed by time or distance.



“The place, the hour, the sunshine and the shade,” all reminded me of the happy past, and all brought vividly before me every portion of that dream of happiness in which I was so utterly—so completely steeped—every thought of the hopelessness of my passion was lost in the intensity of it, and I did not, in the ardour of my loving, stop to think of its possible success.



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It was strange enough that the extreme impatience, the hurried anxiety, I had felt and suffered from, while riding up the avenue, had now fled entirely, and in its place I felt nothing but a diffident distrust of myself, and a vague sense of awkwardness about intruding thus unexpectedly upon the family, while engaged in all the cares and preparations for a speedy departure. The hall-door lay as usual wide open, the hall itself was strewn and littered with trunks, imperials, and packing-cases, and the hundred *et ceteras* of travelling baggage. I hesitated a moment whether I should not ring, but at last resolved to enter unannounced, and, presuming upon my intimacy, see what effect my sudden appearance would have on Lady Jane, whose feelings towards me would be thus most unequivocally tested. I passed along the wide corridor, entered the music-room—it was still—I walked then to the door of the drawing-room—I paused—I drew a full breath—my hand trembled slightly as I turned the lock—I entered—the room was empty, but the blazing fire upon the hearth, the large arm-chairs drawn around, the scattered books upon the small tables, all told that it had been inhabited a very short time before. Ah! thought I, looking at my watch, they are at dinner, and I began at once to devise a hundred different plans to account for my late absence and present visit. I knew that a few minutes would probably bring them into the drawing-room, and I felt flurried and heated as the time drew near. At last I heard voices without—I started from the examination of a pencil drawing but partly finished, but the artist of which I could not be deceived in—I listened—the sounds drew near—I could not distinguish who were the speakers—the door-lock turned, and I rose to make my well-conned, but half-forgotten speech; and oh, confounded disappointment, Mrs. Herbert, the house-keeper, entered. She started, not expecting to see me, and immediately said,

“Oh! Mr. Lorrequer! then you’ve missed them.”

“Missed them!” said I; “how—when—where?”

“Did you not get a note from my lord?”

“No; when was it written?”

“Oh, dear me, that is so very unfortunate. Why, sir, my lord sent off a servant this morning to Kilrush, in Lord Kilkee’s tilbury, to request you would meet them all in Ennis this evening, where they had intended to stop for to-night; and they waited here till near four o’clock to-day, but when the servant came back with the intelligence that you were from home, and not expected to return soon, they were obliged to set out, and are not going to make any delay now, till they reach London. The last direction, however, my lord gave, was to forward her ladyship’s letter to you as soon as possible.”

What I thought, said, or felt, might be a good subject of confession to Father Malachi, for I fear it may be recorded among my sins, as I doubt not that the agony I suffered vented itself in no measured form of speech or conduct; but I have nothing to confess

here on the subject, being so totally overwhelmed as not to know what I did or said. My first gleam of reason elicited itself by asking,



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“Is there, then, no chance of their stopping in Ennis to-night?” As I put the question my mind reverted to Peter and his eternal canter.

“Oh, dear, no, sir; the horses are ordered to take them, since Tuesday; and they only thought of staying in Ennis, if you came time enough to meet them—and they will be so sorry.”

“Do you think so, Mrs. Herbert? do you, indeed, think so?” said I, in a most insinuating tone.

“I am perfectly sure of it, sir.”

“Oh, Mrs. Herbert, you are too kind to think so; but perhaps—that is —may be, Mrs. Herbert, she said something—”

“Who, sir?”

“Lady Callonby, I mean; did her ladyship leave any message for me about her plants? or did she remember—”

Mrs. Herbert kept looking at me all the time, with her great wide grey eyes, while I kept stammering and blushing like a school-boy.

“No, sir; her ladyship said nothing, sir; but Lady Jane—”

“Yes; well, what of Lady Jane, my dear Mrs. Herbert?”

“Oh, sir! but you look pale; would not you like to have a little wine and water—or perhaps—”

“No, thank you, nothing whatever; I am just a little fatigued—but you were mentioning—”

“Yes, sir; I was saying that Lady Jane was mighty particular about a small plant; she ordered it to be left in her dressing-room, though Collins told her to have some of the handsome ones of the green-house, she would have nothing but this; and if you were only to hear half the directions she gave about keeping it watered, and taking off dead leaves, you’d think her heart was set on it.”

Mrs. Herbert would have had no cause to prescribe for my paleness had she only looked at me this time; fortunately, however, she was engaged, housekeeper-like, in bustling among books, papers, &c. which she had come in for the purpose of arranging and packing up. She being left behind to bring up the rear, and the heavy baggage.

Very few moments’ consideration were sufficient to show me that pursuit was hopeless; whatever might have been Peter’s performance in the reign of “Queen Anne,” he had



now become like the goose so pathetically described by my friend Lover, rather “stiff in his limbs,” and the odds were fearfully against his overtaking four horses, starting fresh every ten miles, not to mention their being some hours in advance already. Having declined all Mrs. Herbert’s many kind offers, anent food and rest, I took a last lingering look at the beautiful pictures, which still held its place in the room lately mine, and hurried from a place so full of recollections; and, notwithstanding the many reasons I had for self-gratulation, every object around and about, filled me with sorrow and regret for hours that had passed—never, never to return.



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It was very late when I reached my old quarters at Kilrush; Mrs. Healy fortunately was in bed asleep—fortunately I say, for had she selected that occasion to vent her indignation for my long absence, I greatly fear that, in my then temper I should have exhibited but little of that Job-like endurance for which I was once esteemed; I entered my little mean-looking parlour, with its three chairs and lame table, and, as I flung myself upon the wretched substitute for a sofa, and thought upon the varied events which a few weeks had brought about; it required the aid of her ladyship's letter, which I opened before me, to assure me I was not dreaming.

The entire of that night I could not sleep; my destiny seemed upon its balance; and, whether the scale inclined to this side or that, good or evil fortune seemed to betide me. How many were my plans and resolutions, and how often abandoned; again to be pondered over, and once more given up. The grey dawn of the morning was already breaking, and found me still doubting and uncertain. At last the die was thrown; I determined at once to apply for leave to my commanding officer, (which he could, if he pleased, give me, without any application to the Horse Guards,) set out for Elton, tell Sir Guy my whole adventure, and endeavour, by a more moving love story than ever graced even the *Minerva Press*, to induce him to make some settlement on me, and use his influence with Lord Callonby in my behalf; this done, set out for London, and then—and then—what then?—then for the *Morning Post*—"Cadeau de nocces"—"happy couple"—"Lord Callonby's seat in Hampshire," &c. &c.

"You wished to be called at five, sir," said Stubber.

"Yes; is it five o'clock?"

"No, sir; but I heard you call out something about 'four horses,' and I thought you might be hurried, so I came a little earlier."

"Quite right, Stubber; let me have my breakfast as soon as possible, and see that chestnut horse I brought here last night, fed."

"And now for it," said I, after writing a hurried note to Curzon, requesting him to take command of my party at Kilrush, till he heard from me, and sending my kindest remembrance to my three friends; I despatched the epistle by my servant on Peter, while I hastened to acquire a place in the mail for Ennis, on the box seat of which let my kind reader suppose me seated, as wrapping my box-coat around me, I lit my cigar and turned my eyes towards Limerick.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONGRATULATIONS—SICK LEAVE—HOW TO PASS THE BOARD.



I had scarcely seated myself to breakfast at Swinburn's hotel in Limerick, when the waiter presented me with a letter. As my first glance at the address showed it to be in Colonel Carden's handwriting, I felt not a little alarmed for the consequences of the rash step I had taken in leaving my detachment; and, while quickly thronging fancies of arrest and courtmartial flitted before me, I summoned resolution at last to break the seal, and read as follows:—



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“My dear Lorrequer,” (“dear Lorrequer!” dear me, thought I; cool certainly, from one I have ever regarded as an open enemy)—“My dear Lorrequer, I have just accidentally heard of your arrival here, and hasten to inform you, that, as it may not be impossible your reasons for so abruptly leaving your detachment are known to me, I shall not visit your breach of discipline very heavily. My old and worthy friend, Lord Callonby, who passed through here yesterday, has so warmly interested himself in your behalf, that I feel disposed to do all in my power to serve you; independently of my desire to do so on your own account. Come over here, then, as soon as possible, and let us talk over your plans together.

“Believe me, most truly yours,
“Henry Carden.

“Barracks, 10 o’clock.”

However mysterious and difficult to unravel, have been some of the circumstances narrated in these “Confessions,” I do not scruple to avow that the preceding letter was to me by far the most inexplicable piece of fortune I had hitherto met with. That Lord Callonby should have converted one whom I believed an implacable foe, into a most obliging friend, was intelligible enough, seeing that his lordship had through life been the patron of the colonel; but why he had so done, and what communications he could possibly have made with regard to me, that Colonel Carden should speak of “my plans” and proffer assistance in them was a perfect riddle; and the only solution, one so ridiculously flattering that I dared not think of it. I read and re-read the note; misplaced the stops; canvassed every expression; did all to detect a meaning different from the obvious one, fearful of a self-deception where so much was at stake. Yet there it stood forth, a plain straightforward proffer of services, for some object evidently known to the writer; and my only conclusion, from all, was this, that “my Lord Callonby was the gem of his order, and had a most remarkable talent for selecting a son-in-law.”

I fell into a deep reverie upon my past life, and the prospects which I now felt were opening before me. Nothing seemed extravagant to hopes so well founded—to expectations so brilliant—and, in my mind’s eye, I beheld myself at one moment leading my young and beautiful bride through the crowded salons of Devonshire House; and, at the next, I was contemplating the excellence and perfection of my stud arrangements at Melton, for I resolved not to give up hunting. While in this pleasurable exercise of my fancy, I was removing from before me some of the breakfast equipage, or, as I then believed it, breaking the trees into better groups upon my lawn, I was once more brought to the world and its dull reality, by the following passage which my eye fell upon in the newspaper before me—“We understand that the 4_{th} are daily expecting the route for Cork, from whence they are to sail, early in the



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ensuing month for Halifax, to relieve the 99th.” While it did not take a moment’s consideration to show me that though the regiment there mentioned was the one I belonged to, I could have no possible interest in the announcement; it never coming into my calculation that I should submit to such expatriation; yet it gave me a salutary warning that there was no time to be lost in making my application for leave, which, once obtained, I should have ample time to manage an exchange into another corps. The wonderful revolution a few days had effected in all my tastes and desires, did not escape me at this moment. But a week or two before and I should have regarded an order for foreign service as anything rather than unpleasant—now the thought was insupportable. Then there would have been some charm to me in the very novelty of the locale, and the indulgence of that vagrant spirit I have ever possessed; for, like Justice Woodcock, “I certainly should have been a vagabond if Providence had not made me a justice of the peace”—now, I could not even contemplate the thing as possible; and would have actually refused the command of a regiment, if the condition of its acceptance were to sail for the colonies.

Besides, I tried—and how ingenious is self-deception—I tried to find arguments in support of my determination totally different from the reasons which governed me. I affected to fear climate, and to dread the effect of the tropics upon my health. It may do very well, thought I, for men totally destitute of better prospects; with neither talent, influence or powerful connexion, to roast their cheeks at Sierra Leone, or suck a sugar-cane at St. Lucia. But that you, Harry Lorrequer, should waste your sweetness upon planters’ daughters—that have only to be known, to have the world at your feet! The thing is absurd, and not to be thought of! Yes, said I half aloud—we read in the army list, that Major A. is appointed to the 50th, and Capt. B. to the 12th; but how much more near the truth would it be, to say—“That His Majesty, in consideration of the distinguished services of the one, has been graciously pleased to appoint him to—a case of blue and collapsed cholera, in India; and also, for the bravery and gallant conduct of the other, in his late affair with the ‘How-dow-dallah Indians,’ has promoted him to the—yellow fever now devastating and desolating Jamaica.” How far my zeal for the service might have carried me on this point, I know not; for I was speedily aroused from my musings by the loud tramp of feet upon the stairs, and the sound of many well-known voices of my brother officers, who were coming to visit me.

“So, Harry, my boy,” said the fat major as he entered; “is it true we are not to have the pleasure of your company to Jamaica this time?”

“He prefers a pale face, it seems, to a black one; and certainly, with thirty thousand in the same scale, the taste is excusable.”

“But, Lorrequer,” said a third, “we heard that you had canvassed the county on the Callonby interest. Why, man, where do you mean to pull up?”



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“As for me,” lisped a large-eyed, white-haired ensign of three months’ standing, “I think it devilish hard, old Carden didn’t send *me* down there, too, for I hear there are two girls in the family. Eh, Lorrequer?”

Having with all that peculiar bashfulness such occasions are sure to elicit, disclaimed the happiness my friends so clearly ascribed to me, I yet pretty plainly let it be understood that the more brilliant they supposed my present prospects to be, the more near were they to estimate them justly. One thing certainly gratified me throughout. All seemed rejoiced at my good fortune, and even the old Scotch paymaster made no more caustic remark than that he “wad na wonder if the chiel’s black whiskers wad get him made governor of Stirling Castle before he’d dee.”

Should any of my most patient listeners to these my humble confessions, wonder either here, or elsewhere, upon what very slight foundations I built these my “Chateaux en Espagne,” I have only one answer—“that from my boyhood I have had a taste for florid architecture, and would rather put up with any inconvenience of ground, than not build at all.”

As it was growing late I hurriedly bade adieu to my friends, and hastened to Colonel Carden’s quarters, where I found him waiting for me, in company with my old friend, Fitzgerald, our regimental surgeon. Our first greetings over, the colonel drew me aside into a window, and said that, from certain expressions Lord Callonby had made use of—certain hints he had dropped—he was perfectly aware of the delicate position in which I stood with respect to his lordship’s family. “In fact, my dear Lorrequer,” he continued, “without wishing in the least to obtrude myself upon your confidence, I must yet be permitted to say, you are the luckiest fellow in Europe, and I most sincerely congratulate you on the prospect before you.”

“But, my dear Colonel, I assure you—”

“Well, well, there—not a word more; don’t blush now. I know there is always a kind of secrecy thought necessary on these occasions, for the sake of other parties; so let us pass to your plans. From what I have collected, you have not yet proposed formally. But, of course you desire a leave. You’ll not quit the army, I trust; no necessity for that; such influence as yours can always appoint you to an unattached commission.”

“Once more let me protest, sir, that though for certain reasons most desirous to obtain a leave of absence, I have not the most remote—”

“That’s right, quite right; I am sincerely gratified to hear you say so, and so will be Lord Callonby; for he likes the service.”

And thus was my last effort at a disclaimer cut short by the loquacious little colonel, who regarded my unfinished sentence as a concurrence with his own opinion.

“Allah il Allah,” thought I, “it is my Lord Callonby’s own plot; and his friend Colonel Cardon aids and abets him.”



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“Now, Lorrequer,” resumed the colonel, “let us proceed. You have, of course, heard that we are ordered abroad; mere newspaper report for the present; nevertheless, it is extremely difficult—almost impossible, without a sick certificate, to obtain a leave sufficiently long for your purpose.”

And here he smirked, and I blushed, *selon les regles*.

“A sick certificate,” said I in some surprise.

“The only thing for you,” said Fitzgerald, taking a long pinch of snuff; “and I grieve to say you have a most villainous look of good health about you.”

“I must acknowledge I have seldom felt better.”

“So much the worse—so much the worse,” said Fitzgerald despondingly. “Is there no family complaint; no respectable heir-loom of infirmity, you can lay claim to from your kindred?”

“None, that I know of, unless a very active performance on the several occasions of breakfast, dinner, and supper, with a tendency towards port, and an inclination to sleep ten in every twenty-four hours, be a sign of sickness; these symptoms I have known many of the family suffer for years, without the slightest alleviation, though, strange as it may appear, they occasionally had medical advice.”

Fitz. took no notice of my sneer at the faculty, but proceeded to strike my chest several times, with his finger tips. “Try a short cough now,” said he. “Ah, that will never do!”

“Do you ever flush. Before dinner I mean?”

“Occasionally, when I meet with a luncheon.”

“I’m fairly puzzled,” said poor Fitz. throwing himself into a chair; “gout is a very good thing; but, then, you see you are only a sub., and it is clearly against the articles of war, to have it before being a field officer at least. Apoplexy is the best I can do for you; and, to say the truth, any one who witnesses your performance at mess, may put faith in the likelihood of it.

“Do you think you could get up a fit for the medical board,” said Fitz., gravely.

“Why, if absolutely indispensable,” said I, “and with good instruction —something this way. Eh, is it not?”

“Nothing of the kind: you are quite wrong.”

“Is there not always a little laughing and crying,” said I.



“Oh, no, no; take the cue from the paymaster any evening after mess, and you’ll make no mistake—very florid about the cheeks; rather a lazy look in one eye, the other closed up entirely; snore a little from time to time, and don’t be too much disposed to talk.”

“And you think I may pass muster in this way.”

“Indeed you may, if old Camie, the inspector, happen to be (what he is not often) in a good humour. But I confess I’d rather you were really ill, for we’ve passed a great number of counterfeits latterly, and we may be all pulled up ere long.”

“Not the less grateful for your kindness,” said I; “but still, I’d rather matters stood as they do.”



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Having, at length, obtained a very formidable statement of my 'case' from the Doctor, and a strong letter from the Colonel, deploring the temporary loss of so promising a young officer, I committed myself and my portmanteau to the inside of his Majesty's mail, and started for Dublin with as light a heart and high spirits, as were consistent with so much delicacy of health, and the directions of my Doctor.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROAD—TRAVELLING ACQUAINTANCES—A PACKET ADVENTURE.

I shall not stop now to narrate the particulars of my visit to the worthies of the medical board; the rather, as some of my "confessions to come" have reference to Dublin, and many of those that dwell therein. I shall therefore content myself here with stating, that without any difficulty I obtained a six months' leave, and having received much advice and more sympathy from many members of that body, took a respectful leave of them, and adjourned to Bilton's where I had ordered dinner, and (as I was advised to live low) a bottle of Sneyd's claret. My hours in Dublin were numbered; at eight o'clock on the evening of my arrival I hastened to the Pidgeon House pier, to take my berth in the packet for Liverpool; and here, gentle reader, let me implore you if you have bowels of compassion, to commiserate the condition of a sorry mortal like myself. In the days of which I now speak, steam packets were not—men knew not then, of the pleasure of going to a comfortable bed in Kingstown harbour, and waking on the morning after in the Clarence dock at Liverpool, with only the addition of a little sharper appetite for breakfast, before they set out on an excursion of forty miles per hour through the air.

In the time I have now to commemorate, the intercourse between the two countries was maintained by two sailing vessels of small tonnage, and still scantier accommodation. Of the one now in question I well recollect the name—she was called the "Alert," and certainly a more unfortunate misnomer could scarcely be conceived. Well, there was no choice; so I took my place upon the crowded deck of the little craft, and in a drizzling shower of chilly rain, and amid more noise, confusion, and bustle, than would prelude the launch of a line-of-battle ship, we "sidled," goose-fashion, from the shore, and began our voyage towards England.

It is not my intention, in the present stage of "my Confessions," to delay on the road towards an event which influenced so powerfully, and so permanently, my after life; yet I cannot refrain from chronicling a slight incident which occurred on board the packet, and which, I have no doubt, may be remembered by some of those who throw their eyes on these pages.



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One of my fellow-passengers was a gentleman holding a high official appointment in the viceregal court, either comptroller of the household, master of the horse, or something else equally magnificent; however, whatever the nature of the situation, one thing is certain—one possessed of more courtly manners, and more polished address, cannot be conceived, to which he added all the attractions of a very handsome person and a most prepossessing countenance. The only thing the most scrupulous critic could possibly detect as faulty in his whole air and bearing, was a certain ultra refinement and fastidiousness, which in a man of acknowledged family and connections was somewhat unaccountable, and certainly unnecessary. The fastidiousness I speak of, extended to everything round and about him; he never eat of the wrong dish, nor spoke to the wrong man in his life, and that very consciousness gave him a kind of horror of chance acquaintances, which made him shrink within himself from persons in every respect his equals. Those who knew Sir Stewart Moore, will know I do not exaggerate in either my praise or censure, and to those who have not had that pleasure, I have only to say, theirs was the loss, and they must take my word for the facts.

The very antithesis to the person just mentioned, was another passenger then on board. She, for even in sex they were different—she was a short, squat, red-faced, vulgar-looking woman, of about fifty, possessed of a most garrulous tendency, and talking indiscriminately with every one about her, careless what reception her addresses met with, and quite indifferent to the many rebuffs she momentarily encountered. To me by what impulse driven Heaven knows this amorphous piece of womanhood seemed determined to attach herself. Whether in the smoky and almost impenetrable recesses of the cabin, or braving the cold and penetrating rain upon deck, it mattered not, she was ever at my side, and not only martyring me by the insufferable annoyance of her vulgar loquacity, but actually, from the appearance of acquaintanceship such constant association gave rise to, frightening any one else from conversing with me, and rendering me, ere many hours, a perfect Paria among the passengers. By not one were we—for, alas, we had become Siamese—so thoroughly dreaded as by the refined baronet I have mentioned; he appeared to shrink from our very approach, and avoided us as though we had the plagues of Egypt about us. I saw this—I felt it deeply, and as deeply and resolutely I vowed to be revenged, and the time was not long distant in affording me the opportunity.

The interesting Mrs. Mulrooney, for such was my fair companion called, was on the present occasion making her debut on what she was pleased to call the “says;” she was proceeding to the Liverpool market as proprietor and supercargo over some legion of swine that occupied the hold of the vessel, and whose mellifluous tones were occasionally heard in all parts of the ship. Having informed me on these, together with some circumstances of her birth and parentage, she proceeded to narrate some of the cautions given by her friends as to her safety when making such a long voyage, and also to detail some of the antiseptics to that dread scourge, sea-sickness, in the fear and terror of which she had come on board, and seemed every hour to be increasing in alarm about.



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“Do you think then sir, that pork is no good agin the sickness? Mickey, that’s my husband, sir, says it’s the only thing in life for it, av it’s toasted.”

“Not the least use, I assure you.”

“Nor sperits and wather?”

“Worse and worse, ma’am.”

“Oh, thin, maybe oaten mail tay would do? it’s a beautiful thing for the stomick, any how.”

“Rank poison on the present occasion, believe me.”

“Oh, then, blessed Mary, what am I to do—what is to become of me?”

“Go down at once to your berth, ma’am; lie still and without speaking till we come in sight of land; or,” and here a bright thought seized me, “if you really feel very ill, call for that man there, with the fur collar on his coat; he can give you the only thing I ever knew of any efficacy; he’s the steward, ma’am, Stewart Moore; but you must be on your guard too as you are a stranger, for he’s a conceited fellow, and has saved a trifle, and sets up for a half gentleman; so don’t be surprised at his manner; though, after all, you may find him very different; some people, I’ve heard, think him extremely civil.”

“And he has a cure, ye say?”

“The only one I ever heard of; it is a little cordial of which you take, I don’t know how much, every ten or fifteen minutes.”

“And the naygur doesn’t let the saycret out, bad manners to him?”

“No, ma’am; he has refused every offer on the subject.’

“May I be so bowld as to ax his name again?”

“Stewart Moore, ma’am. Moore is the name, but people always call him Stewart Moore; just say that in a loud clear voice, and you’ll soon have him.”

With the most profuse protestations of gratitude and promises of pork “a discretion,” if I ever sojourned at Ballinasloe, my fair friend proceeded to follow my advice, and descended to the cabin.

Some hours after, I also betook myself to my rest, from which, however, towards midnight I was awake by the heavy working and pitching of the little vessel, as she laboured in a rough sea. As I looked forth from my narrow crib, a more woe-begone



picture can scarcely be imagined than that before me. Here and there through the gloomy cabin lay the victims of the fell malady, in every stage of suffering, and in every attitude of misery. Their cries and lamentings mingled with the creaking of the bulk-heads and the jarring twang of the dirty lamp, whose irregular swing told plainly how oscillatory was our present motion. I turned from the unpleasant sight, and was about again to address myself to slumber with what success I might, when I started at the sound of a voice in the very berth next to me—whose tones, once heard, there was no forgetting. The words ran as nearly as I can recollect thus:—

“Oh, then, bad luck to ye for pigs, that ever brought me into the like of this. Oh, Lord, there it is again.” And here a slight interruption to eloquence took place, during which I was enabled to reflect upon the author of the complaint, who, I need not say, was Mrs. Mulrooney.



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"I think a little tay would settle my stomach, if I only could get it; but what's the use of talking in this horrid place? They never mind me no more than if I was a pig. Steward, steward—oh, then, it's wishing you well I am for a steward. Steward, I say;" and this she really did say, with an energy of voice and manner that startled more than one sleeper. "Oh, you're coming at last, steward."

"Ma'am," said a little dapper and dirty personage, in a blue jacket, with a greasy napkin negligently thrown over one arm "ex officio," "Ma'am, did you call?"

"Call, is it call? No; but I'm roaring for you this half hour. Come here. Have you any of the cordial dhrops agin the sickness?—you know what I mean."

"Is it brandy, ma'am?"

"No, it isn't brandy;"

"We have got gin, ma'am, and bottled porter—cider, ma'am, if you like."

"Agh, no! sure I want the dhrops agin the sickness."

"Don't know indeed, ma'am."

"Ah, you stupid creature; maybe you're not the real steward. What's your name?"

"Smith, ma'am."

"Ah, I thought so; go away, man, go away."

This injunction, given in a diminuendo cadence, was quickly obeyed, and all was silence for a moment or two. Once more was I dropping asleep, when the same voice as before burst out with—

"Am I to die here like a haythen, and nobody to come near me? Steward, steward, steward Moore, I say,"

"Who calls me?" said a deep sonorous voice from the opposite side of the cabin, while at the same instant a tall green silk nightcap, surmounting a very aristocratic-looking forehead, appeared between the curtains of the opposite berth.

"Steward Moore," said the lady again, with her eyes straining in the direction of the door by which she expected him to enter.

"This is most strange," muttered the baronet, half aloud. "Why, madam, you are calling me!"



“And if I am,” said Mrs. Mulrooney, “and if ye heerd me, have ye no manners to answer your name, eh? Are ye steward Moore?”

“Upon my soul ma’am I thought so last night, when I came on board; but you really have contrived to make me doubt my own identity.”

“And is it there ye’re lying on the broad of yer back, and me as sick as a dog fornent ye?”

“I concede ma’am the fact; the position is a most irksome one on every account.”

“Then why don’t ye come over to me?” and this Mrs. Mulrooney said with a voice of something like tenderness—wishing at all hazards to conciliate so important a functionary.

“Why, really you are the most incomprehensible person I ever met.”



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“I’m what?” said Mrs. Mulrooney, her blood rushing to her face and temples as she spoke—for the same reason as her fair townswoman is reported to have borne with stoical fortitude every harsh epithet of the language, until it occurred to her opponent to tell her that “the divil a bit better she was nor a pronoun;” so Mrs. Mulrooney, taking “omne ignotum pro horribili,” became perfectly beside herself at the unlucky phrase. “I’m what? repate it av ye dare, and I’ll tear yer eyes out? Ye dirty bla—guard, to be lying there at yer ease under the blankets, grinning at me. What’s your thrade—answer me that—av it isn’t to wait on the ladies, eh?”

“Oh, the woman must be mad,” said Sir Stewart.

“The devil a taste mad, my dear—I’m only sick. Now just come over to me, like a decent creature, and give me the dhrop of comfort ye have. Come, avick.”

“Go over to you?”

“Ay, and why not? or if it’s so lazy ye are, why then I’ll thry and cross over to your side.”

These words being accompanied by a certain indication of change of residence on the part of Mrs. Mulrooney, Sir Stewart perceived there was no time to lose, and springing from his berth, he rushed half-dressed through the cabin, and up the companion-ladder, just as Mrs. Mulrooney had protruded a pair of enormous legs from her couch, and hung for a moment pendulous before she dropped upon the floor, and followed him to the deck. A tremendous shout of laughter from the sailors and deck passengers prevented my hearing the dialogue which ensued; nor do I yet know how Mrs. Mulrooney learned her mistake. Certain it is, she no more appeared among the passengers in the cabin, and Sir Stewart’s manner the following morning at breakfast amply satisfied me that I had had my revenge.

CHAPTER X.

*Upset—mind—and
body.*

No sooner in Liverpool, than I hastened to take my place in the earliest conveyance for London. At that time the Umpire Coach was the perfection of fast travelling; and seated behind the box, enveloped in a sufficiency of broad-cloth, I turned my face towards town with as much anxiety and as ardent expectations as most of those about me. All went on in the regular monotonous routine of such matters until we reached Northampton, passing down the steep street of which town, the near wheel-horse stumbled and fell; the coach, after a tremendous roll to one side, toppled over on the other, and with a tremendous crash, and sudden shock, sent all the outsides, myself among the number, flying through the air like sea-gulls. As for me, after describing a very respectable



parabola, my angle of incidence landed me in a bonnet-maker's shop, having passed through a large plate-glass window, and destroyed more leghorns and dunstables than a year's pay would recompense. I have but light recollection of the details of that occasion,



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until I found myself lying in a very spacious bed at the George Inn, having been bled in both arms, and discovering by the multitude of bandages in which I was enveloped, that at least some of my bones were broken by the fall. That such fate had befallen my collar-bone and three of my ribs I soon learned; and was horror-struck at hearing from the surgeon who attended me, that four or five weeks would be the very earliest period I could bear removal with safety. Here then at once was a large deduction from my six months' leave, not to think of the misery that awaited me for such a time, confined to my bed in an inn, without books, friends, or acquaintances. However even this could be remedied by patience, and summoning up all I could command, I "bided my time," but not before I had completed a term of two months' imprisonment, and had become, from actual starvation, something very like a living transparency.

No sooner, however, did I feel myself once more on the road, than my spirits rose, and I felt myself as full of high hope and buoyant expectancy as ever. It was late at night when I arrived in London. I drove to a quiet hotel in the west-end; and the following morning proceeded to Portman-square, bursting with impatience to see my friends the Callonbys, and recount all my adventures—for as I was too ill to write from Northampton, and did not wish to entrust to a stranger the office of communicating with them, I judged that they must be exceedingly uneasy on my account, and pictured to myself the thousand emotions my appearance so indicative of illness would give rise to; and could scarcely avoid running in my impatience to be once more among them. How Lady Jane would meet me, I thought of over again and again; whether the same cautious reserve awaited me, or whether her family's approval would have wrought a change in her reception of me, I burned to ascertain. As my thoughts ran on in this way, I found myself at the door; but was much alarmed to perceive that the closed window-shutters and dismantled look of the house proclaimed them from home. I rung the bell, and soon learned from a servant, whose face I had not seen before, that the family had gone to Paris about a month before, with the intention of spending the winter there. I need not say how grievously this piece of intelligence disappointed me, and for a minute or two I could not collect my thoughts. At last the servant said:

"If you have any thing very particular, sir, that my Lord's lawyer can do, I can give you his address."

"No, thank you—nothing;" at the same time I muttered to myself, "I'll have some occupation for him though ere long. The family were all quite well, didn't you say?"

"Yes sir, perfectly well. My Lord had only a slight cold,"

"Ah—yes—and there address is 'Meurice;' very well."

So saying I turned from the door, and with slower steps than I had come, returned to my hotel.



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My immediate resolve was to set out for Paris; my second was to visit my uncle, Sir Guy Lorrequer, first, and having explained to him the nature of my position, and the advantageous prospects before me, endeavour to induce him to make some settlement on Lady Jane, in the event of my obtaining her family's consent to our marriage. This, from his liking great people much, and laying great stress upon the advantages of connexion, I looked upon as a matter of no great difficulty; so that, although my hopes of happiness were delayed in their fulfilment, I believed they were only about to be the more securely realized. The same day I set out for Elton, and by ten o'clock at night reached my uncle's house. I found the old gentleman looking just as I had left him three years before, complaining a little of gout in the left foot—praising his old specific, port-wine—abusing his servants for robbing him—and drinking the Duke of Wellington's health every night after supper; which meal I had much pleasure in surprising him at on my arrival—not having eaten since my departure from London.

“Well, Harry,” said my uncle, when the servants had left the room, and we drew over the spider table to the fire to discuss our wine with comfort, “what good wind has blown you down to me, my boy? for it's odd enough, five minutes before I heard the wheels on the gravel I was just wishing some good fellow would join me at the grouse—and you see I have had my wish! The old story, I suppose, ‘out of cash.’ Would not come down here for nothing—eh? Come, lad, tell truth; is it not so?”

“Why, not exactly, sir; but I really had rather at present talk about you, than about my own matters, which we can chat over tomorrow. How do you get on, sir, with the Scotch steward?”

“He's a rogue, sir—a cheat—a scoundrel; but it is the same with them all; and your cousin, Harry—your cousin, that I have reared from his infancy to be my heir, (pleasant topic for me!) he cares no more for me than the rest of them, and would never come near me, if it were not that, like yourself, he was hard run for money, and wanted to wheedle me out of a hundred or two.”

“But you forget, sir—I told you I have not come with such an object.”

“We'll see that—we'll see that in the morning,” replied he, with an incredulous shake of the head.

“But Guy, sir—what has Guy done?”

“What has he not done? No sooner did he join that popinjay set of fellows, the ___th hussars, than he turned out, what he calls a four-in-hand drag, which dragged nine hundred pounds out of my pocket—then he has got a yacht at Cowes—a grouse mountain in Scotland—and has actually given Tattersall an unlimited order to purchase the Wreckinton pack of harriers, which he intends to keep for the use of the corps. In a word, there is not an amusement of that villanous regiment, not a flask of champagne

drank at their mess, I don't bear my share in the cost of; all through the kind offices of your worthy cousin, Guy Lorrequer."



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This was an exceedingly pleasant expose for me, to hear of my cousin indulged in every excess of foolish extravagance by his rich uncle, while I, the son of an elder brother who unfortunately called me by his own name, Harry, remained the sub. in a marching regiment, with not three hundred pounds a year above my pay, and whom any extravagance, if such had been proved against me would have deprived of even that small allowance. My uncle however did not notice the chagrin with which I heard his narrative, but continued to detail various instances of wild and reckless expense the future possessor of his ample property had already launched into.

Anxious to say something without well-knowing what, I hinted that probably my good cousin would reform some of these days, and marry.

“Marry,” said my uncle; “yes, that, I believe, is the best thing we can do with him; and I hope now the matter is in good train—so the latest accounts say, at least.”

“Ah, indeed,” said I, endeavouring to take an interest where I really felt none—for my cousin and I had never been very intimate friends, and the differences in our fortunes had not, at least to my thinking, been compensated by any advances which he, under the circumstances, might have made to me.

“Why, Harry, did you not hear of it?” said my uncle.

“No—not a word, sir.”

“Very strange, indeed—a great match, Harry—a very great match, indeed.”

“Some rich banker’s daughter,” thought I. “What will he say when he hears of my fortune?”

“A very fine young woman, too, I understand—quite the belle of London —and a splendid property left by an aunt.”

I was bursting to tell him of my affair, and that he had another nephew, to whom if common justice were rendered, his fortune was as certainly made for life.

“Guy’s business happened this way,” continued my uncle, who was quite engrossed by the thought of his favourite’s success. “The father of the young lady met him in Ireland, or Scotland, or some such place, where he was with his regiment—was greatly struck with his manner and address —found him out to be my nephew—asked him to his house—and, in fact, almost threw this lovely girl at his head before they were two months acquainted.”

“As nearly as possible my own adventure,” thought I, laughing to myself.



“But you have not told me who they are, sir,” said I, dying to have his story finished, and to begin mine.

“I’m coming to that—I’m coming to that. Guy came down here, but did not tell me one word of his having ever met the family, but begged me to give him an introduction to them, as they were in Paris, where he was going on a short leave; and the first thing I heard of the matter was a letter from the papa, demanding from me if Guy was to be my heir, and asking ‘how far his attentions in his family, met with my approval.’”

“Then how did you know sir that they were previously known to each other?”



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“The family lawyer told me, who heard it all talked over.”

“And why, then, did Guy get the letter of introduction from you, when he was already acquainted with them?”

“I am sure I cannot tell, except that you know he always does every thing unlike every one else, and to be sure the letter seems to have excited some amusement. I must show you his answer to my first note to know how all was going on; for I felt very anxious about matters, when I heard from some person who had met them, that Guy was everlastingly in the house, and that Lord Callonby could not live without him.”

“Lord who, sir?” said I in a voice that made the old man upset his glass, and spring from his chair in horror.

“What the devil is the matter with the boy. What makes you so pale?”

“Whose name did you say at that moment, sir,” said I with a slowness of speech that cost me agony.

“Lord Callonby, my old schoolfellow and fag at Eton.”

“And the lady’s name, sir?” said I, in scarcely an audible whisper.

“I’m sure I forget her name; but here’s the letter from Guy, and I think he mentions her name in the postscript.”

I snatched rudely the half-opened letter from the old man, as he was vainly endeavouring to detect the place he wanted, and read as follows:

“My adored Jane is all your fondest wishes for my happiness could picture, and longs to see her dear uncle, as she already calls you on every occasion.” I read no more—my eyes swam—the paper, the candles, every thing before me, was misty and confused; and although I heard my uncle’s voice still going on, I knew nothing of what he said.

For some time my mind could not take in the full extent of the base treachery I had met with, and I sat speechless and stupified. By degrees my faculties became clearer, and with one glance I read the whole business, from my first meeting with them at Kilrush to the present moment. I saw that in their attentions to me, they thought they were winning the heir of Elton, the future proprietor of fifteen thousand per annum. From this tangled web of heartless intrigue I turned my thoughts to Lady Jane herself. How had she betrayed me! for certainly she had not only received, but encouraged my addresses—and so soon, too.—To think that at the very moment when my own precipitate haste to see her had involved me in a nearly fatal accident, she was actually receiving the attentions of another! Oh, it was too, too bad.



But enough—even now I can scarcely dwell upon the memory of that moment, when the hopes and dreams of many a long day and night were destined to be thus rudely blighted. I seized the first opportunity of bidding my uncle good night; and having promised him to reveal all my plans on the morrow, hurried to my room.

My plans! alas, I had none—that one fatal paragraph had scattered them to the winds; and I threw myself upon my bed, wretched and almost heart-broken.



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I have once before in these “Confessions” claimed to myself the privilege, not inconsistent with a full disclosure of the memorabilia of my life, to pass slightly over those passages, the burden of which was unhappy, and whose memory is painful. I must now, therefore, claim the “benefit of this act,” and beg of the reader to let me pass from this sad portion of my history, and for the full expression of my mingled rage, contempt, disappointment, and sorrow, let me beg of him to receive instead, what a learned pope once gave as his apology for not reading a rather polysyllabic word in a Latin letter—“As for this,” said he, looking at the phrase in question, “soit qui’l dit,” so say I. And now —en route.

EBOOK EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

A rather unlady-like fondness for snuff
Amount of children which is algebraically expressed by an X
And some did pray—who never prayed before
Annoyance of her vulgar loquacity
Brought a punishment far exceeding the merits of the case
Chateaux en Espagne
Ending—I never yet met the man who could tell when it ended
Escaped shot and shell to fall less gloriously beneath champagne
Exclaimed with Othello himself, “Chaos was come again;”
Fearful of a self-deception where so much was at stake
Green silk, “a little off the grass, and on the bottle”
Had a most remarkable talent for selecting a son-in-law
Had to hear the “proud man’s contumely”
Has but one fault, but that fault is a grand one
How ingenious is self-deception
If such be a sin, “then heaven help the wicked”
Indifferent to the many rebuffs she momentarily encountered
Memory of them when hallowed by time or distance
No equanimity like his who acts as your second in a duel
Nothing seemed extravagant to hopes so well founded
Now, young ladies, come along, and learn something, if you can
Oh, the distance is nothing, but it is the pace that kills
Opportunely been so overpowered as to fall senseless
Profuse in his legends of his own doings in love and war
Respectable heir-loom of infirmity
Stoicism which preludes sending your friend out of the world
Suppose I have laughed at better men than ever he was
That land of punch, priests, and potatoes
That vanity which wine inspires
That “to stand was to fall,”
The divil a bit better she was nor a pronoun



There are unhappily impracticable people in the world
Time, that 'pregnant old gentleman,' will disclose all
Vagabond if Providence had not made me a justice of the peace
What will not habit accomplish
When you pretended to be pleased, unluckily, I believed you
Whose paraphrase of the book of Job was refused
Wretched, gloomy-looking picture of woe-begone poverty
What we wish we readily believe