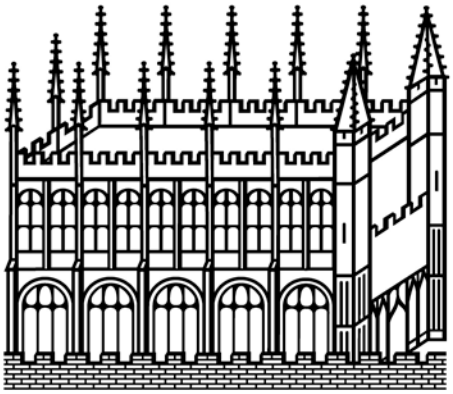

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THE POPULAR IDOL

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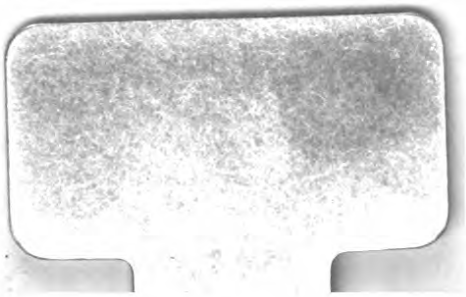

THE POPULAR IDOL.

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VOL. I.

THE POPULAR IDOL.

A Novel.

BY

WILLIAM MACKAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY & SON,
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TO

MY SISTER NELL.

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THE POPULAR IDOL.

CHAPTER I.

A NATURAL LEADER.

BALLYMAREEN is a little town in the County Cork.

From the top of a low line of cliffs it looks out into the Atlantic. Viewed from the sea, this cliff line seems to promise no descent from the village above to the water below, while the white foam, surging at its base, holds out but small hope of safe land-

ing to the passing boat. Those, however, who live in the town know that along the side of the cliff is a zigzag path, down which women and children may safely wander, and that beneath them is a sandy creek where the smaller fishing-boats are drawn up high and dry above the farthest deposit of crackling seaweed.

A primitive but substantial jetty—over which at high tide the waves wash, and which is at all times covered with spray and dangerously incased in a green slime—shoots out into the sea, affording a safe and comfortable resting-place to herring-smacks and equally pretentious craft. Two or three of these tough and battered vessels always lie by the side of the jetty secured by ropes, fore and aft, to huge rusting rings. Their owners inhabit the cottages that stand in a white row up on the edge of the cliff.

Each of these cottages has a little garden

in front, where in sandy soil sea-kail luxuriates, and where the indispensable potato and the abundant cabbage are cultivated with success. In one corner of the greater number of these gardens is a pig-stye, devoted to the use of the family swine—an animal that from constant scampering about the creek and indiscriminate indulgence in the refuse thrown up by the waves, presents the appearance and emulates the fleetness of a greyhound. In front of the cottages, nets lie drying. The eye rests upon a broken oar, a boy manufacturing floats, an old tarpaulin lying on the crisp salt grass. The boy sings as he works, for the music of the waves sounds in his ear, and the rustle of the wind in the dry stalks, and the echo of voices from the jetty. He inhales the invigorating odour of the sea-breeze, and looks out on the still eternal langour of the sea, the silent motion of the sail-boats, the luggers tacking about under

brown canvas, the noiseless progress of an ocean steamer on the horizon, the sparkle of the sunlight on the water. No wonder that as he works he sings, or that his face beams as he turns to where his mother scrubs the cottage-floor, to where his sisters ply their needles in the shade, or to where a toddler of some three years' experience of this naughty world crows encouragingly to the domestic pig that inserts its snout into the three-legged pot, devouring a meal destined for daintier stomachs.

Inland, beyond this line of white-washed cottages, is the town proper, with its court-house, its haberdasheries, its hucksteries, its High Street, its newspaper-office, its tiny fish-market, and its constabulary barracks. Here, indeed, the traveller will find all the institutions supposed to indicate an advanced civilisation—save one only. Ballymareen has no railway station within its borders.

The throbbing thunder of the train has never disturbed its slumbers, and to no scream wilder than that of the sea-gull has it ever returned an echo. One enterprising railway company completed a line as far as Dunmannock, which is ten miles east of Ballymareen. That company has never paid anything in the shape of a dividend to its shareholders, and it is improbable, therefore, that its operations will be speedily extended to any more westerly point.

Thus it happens that Dunmannock, a most insignificant little village, has gained a sort of accidental celebrity as being the gate through which the rest of Europe must needs pass to go into Ballymareen. From it a coach conveys the voyager along the road which the railway company feared to appropriate. The coach office at Dunmannock is a little public-house covered with moss-grown thatch, and viewing the street through

windows not bigger than port-holes. On the door-post is pasted a yellow bill, announcing to all those whom it may concern that the Royal Mail leaves for Ballymareen at three o'clock precisely every day—Sundays excepted.

At three o'clock precisely on the day on which this story opens, a little group stood in front of this yellow bill and its delusive legend, waiting for the vehicle destined to convey them and Her Majesty's mails ten miles nearer to the setting-sun. The group consisted chiefly of natives. It was market-day in Dunmannock, and commercial enterprise had induced these Ballymareenites to wander so far from their dwelling-places. There were old fishermen, hard-handed and brown-faced, and one or two young agriculturalists in knee-breeches and blue stockings, accompanied by bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked colleens arrayed in the cleanest of

cotton gowns, and with long hooded cloaks depending from their shoulders.

In the midst of this group of natives stood a young man, who though in the group was not of it. He was dressed in a tweed travelling suit, and straps passing over his shoulders held courier-bags and race-glasses and a knapsack. On the pathway, in front of him, reposed a portmanteau, a hat-box and a gun-case. To each of these articles was affixed a label bearing the inscription—"Euston Square to Westland Row," and "Dublin to Cork," so that it required no wizard to discover that the young man had come all the way from London to Dunmannock, and that he had passed through the Irish metropolis and the city of Cork *en route.* The Ballymareenites glancing at him and his impedimenta knew that he was a Saxon, but saw also that he was a "gintleman" and respected him accordingly

The Saxon evinced considerable impatience at the delay in the coming of the coach. He took out his watch repeatedly; looked up and down the road with rather an ill-tempered expression on his handsome face, and at last rushed into the hostelry where he had booked his seat, inquiring in a somewhat angry tone of the clerk who presided there, at what hour the Ballymareen Mail was likely to start.

"Sure thin as soon as the bastes is ready," was the intelligent rejoinder.

Having suggested that the answer, though no doubt true in a general way, was by no means sufficient chronologically, the inquirer was informed—

"The bastes 'ill be ready in tin minutes or quarther of an hour at the fardest, but they can't start widout Misther Murphy."

"And who is Mr. Murphy?" asked the gentleman from London.

"Is it who's Misther Murphy you're axin? You don't mane to say you niver heerd tell av Misther Murphy? Och! begorrah, I niver heerd the likes av that—niver"—saying which the youth surveyed the traveller with an expression of pity and contempt, and walked away shaking his head and mumbling to himself the lowest opinion of all "furriners."

Baffled in this direction, the traveller rejoined the little crowd at the inn-door, and in five minutes had the satisfaction of seeing the coach drive up. To call the vehicle a coach is to be guilty of a convenient inaccuracy. It was one of those long outside cars "ingenious" to the Irish soil. It was drawn by a pair of boney greys, with very little beauty but with evident powers of endurance. The luggage of the impatient

tourist was stowed away in the well. This operation, however, was not the signal for starting.

"What's the delay now?" he asked of the driver.

"We're waitin' for Misther Murphy, yer 'onor."

"And who *is* Mr. Murphy?"

"Misther Murphy, Sor! Is id who *is* he?—why sure he's—faix he's Misther Murphy—the great Misther Murphy of Ballymareen, Sor. Why now its meself thought everybody knew Misther Murphy—God bless him!"

Puzzled beyond measure, the traveller became resigned and taciturn. Some minutes elapsed. The natives did not appear to regard the delay at all in the light of an inconvenience. They chatted and cut jokes and smoked short clay pipes, and appeared perfectly contented and agreeable. At last

an intimation from one of their number caused all eyes to be directed down the street, and a volley of exclamations indicative of intense delight burst forth.

"Here he is!" cried one.

"Sure he wouldn't keep us longer nor he could help," said another.

"Throth its a foin man he is entoirely, and a rale gintleman," ejaculated a third.

"Arrah what would we do widout him, at all, at all?" ventured a fourth.

The object that called forth this noble outburst of popular enthusiasm was some distance off, and approached the admiring throng at a leisurely pace.

He was a big man and brandished a ponderous oak stick. He swayed his head to and fro, as if keeping time to some tune which he was whistling softly to himself. His thin grey hair was neatly arranged.

His countenance was suspiciously florid, and his eyes bloodshot. His apparel, though gentlemanly in cut and good in texture, was advanced in years, and as it would be ridiculous to imagine that the wearer had increased in stature since the original purchase of his clothes, the fact of their appearing too small for him must be attributed to their having shrunk under the influence of an atmosphere proverbially moist. The sleeves of the coat were bright from long service, and one incontestible darn appeared on the left shoulder. His hat had been kept lustrous at the expense of the nap, which was beginning to disappear from the edges. His trousers, although an inch too short, were strapped beneath his shoes. The dark blue scarf which encircled his neck and covered his manly bosom was somewhat faded, but among its folds nestled a tremendous emerald.

"Well, boys, an' how are ye?" he asked, as he sauntered up to the group. While making the inquiry, he lifted his hat and waved his stick airily. Then arose another chorus.

"Well, thank yer 'onor, an' its delighted to see yer 'onor we are."

"I hope, Sor, ye haven't hurried on *our* account."

"Sure its twinty years younger yer 'onor gets ivery day av yer life."

Thus hyperbolical but complimentary waxed the crowd. The object of all this exaggerated adulation then proceeded to put a number of questions to individual members of the circle, as:—

"Well, Pat, ye divil, have ye got that lase yet?"

Or, "How's the childre, Biddy darlin'?"

Or, "Bad luck t'ye Barney Mulligan, why haven't ye sent me them chickins?"

It was now nearly four o'clock. Everybody seemed inclined to ignore the legend on the yellow bill—except the gentleman from London. He allowed impatience to overcome courtesy, and walking up to Mr. Murphy—for Mr. Murphy it undoubtedly was—suggested that as the latter seemed to be sole cause of the delay in starting, it might be well if he would give the signal to mount.

Murphy, pretending to observe the stranger for the first time, lifted his hat with great dignity, and smiling in a deprecatory sort of way, said,

"Sir, in this country the wish of the stranger is ever the law of the native."

"Hear how foin he talks to the gintleman," whispered Biddy to Barney, and as the whisper went round it was emphasised by winks and nods innumerable.

"Now thin, boys!" exclaimed Mr.

Murphy, with sudden indignation, "what are ye all standin' about like so many sheep for. Mount ye divils!"

Thus apostrophised, the boys mounted, gallantly pulling the weaker vessels after them. Mr. Murphy invited the stranger to take a seat next himself, an invitation which he accepted gratefully. The "boy" who acted as driver and guard cracked his whip, and the "bastes," after an unsuccessful effort or two, struggled forward. The vehicle passed through the main street of the village, and wherever it appeared, Murphy was recognised and greeted with fervent exclamations.

"God be wid ye, Sor!" shouted the ragged beggar near the bridge.

"Long life t'yer 'onor!" cried a cottager leaning out of his window.

"The saints presarve ye!" said the pious little post-mistress, curtseying.

Mr. Murphy acknowledged these salutations with a fine mingling of geniality and dignity, as if to mark that he was pleased to accept graciously that which after all was only his due. The young English traveller, fresh from a city through the streets of which the Prime Minister habitually walks without attracting any considerable amount of public attention, was fairly astonished by what he saw and heard. His astonishment gave way to a not unnatural curiosity to ascertain the nature and extent of Mr. Murphy's public services. The car had now gained the open road, and in order, if possible, to satisfy his inquisitiveness, he opened a conversation with the great man. The great man was affable but mysterious. He pointed out the various objects of interest along the road, "the sates of the eencient nobilitee," the round tower—"foinest specimen in the wurrld," the various crops that stretched

beyond the hedge-rows, on all these subjects he dilated eloquently; but questions relating to himself he invariably avoided by addressing an observation to some other occupant of the car.

Though thus reserved as to his own history, Mr. Murphy made attempts to explore the private life of his new acquaintance and with fair success. Occupation, destination, political and religious faith, literary tastes and family history were points which he attacked with persevering ingenuity. In vain did the cautious Saxon erect out-works of reticence before each theme. They were speedily demolished, and Murphy revelled at will among the historical annals of an humble individual. He ascertained that the gentleman was by profession an artist, that he was about to pay a visit to an uncle named McTavish, who resided near Ballymareen and that he intended remaining in Ireland

for some months. At all these pieces of intelligence Murphy exhibited the greatest delight and surprise. Having satisfied his curiosity, he changed the subject.

"Well, an' d'ye tell me now, Misther Edgehill, that this is yer furst visit to ould Oirland?"

Edgehill assented, regretting the loss of time that such an admission betrayed.

"Well now, don't ye think its a foin counthry?" he went on, pointing to a high brick wall, surmounted by the umbrageous foliage of chestnut trees which completely shut out the view—if view there was.

"A splendid country," replied Edgehill, whose good temper was restored.

"An' what d'ye think of th' inhabitants now?"

"With so favourable a specimen to judge from, my opinion might be too flattering," said the artist bowing.

Murphy drew himself up, averted his head, and with his hand motioned the flatterer off. His actions all spoke. It was as much as to say, "your estimate of me is just, but my native modesty prevents my acknowledging it in words."

Observing that he had succeeded in pleasing the Celt, the Saxon again ventured to make an inquiry.

"The people about here seem to respect you very much, Mr. Murphy?" he said.

"The Oirish pisantry always look up to their natural layders," replied Murphy, vaguely.

"You are a natural leader, then?"

"The insinuation is flatthering, Sir. But bedad I can't deny it. I *am* a natural layder. The counthry has rallied round my familee for noin hundhred years, and I may say that during that payriod we have niver bethrayed the confidence reposed in us."

"Your influence with the people is greater than that of the large landed proprietors, I suppose?"

This suggestion appeared to nettle the natural leader. He looked a little angrily at his companion, and was evidently on the point of asking, "Who the divil told you I *wasn't* a large landed proprietor?" but glancing at his wardrobe his resentment vanished, and drawing himself proudly up, he said,

"Sir, in this counthry the possessor of a long line of ancestors is always held in greater esteem than the mere holder of acres. Our people know that by industhry any man may acquire the latter, while all the money in the wurrld cannot buy the former."

"I agree with you entirely."

"No doubt you do, Sir. No doubt you do. Because you're a young man of sinse

and information, and have travelled, bedad. You'll see the fact eximplified before ye lave the counthry. Why there's Fitzjurld —pr'aps ye know 'um ?"

Edgehill gave a nod that might have meant either assent or denial.

"Well at any rate your uncle knows 'um. He's a great frind of your uncle's. Fitzjurld's the largest proprietor in the province, an' has a daughther who has been endowed by nature wid a person worthy of Impayrial discint ; but the familee, the familee," and Murphy turned up his nose and shook his head in utter contempt of these wealthy contemporaries, "they're mere mushroom squatters on the lands of *my* forefawthers."

"Pray at what period did the Fitzgeralds settle in Ireland ?" asked Edgehill.

"At what payriod? Sure historically

considhered its only the day before yesther-day—they came in wid Strongbow."

The artist succeeded in repressing a smile and Murphy went on.

"But the pisantry know that their familee is of racent date, an' signs by! I've tin toimes their infloonce, though my esteets are by no manes as extinsive as—as they were at an urlier payriod of the familee hist'hry."

The car had now arrived at the top of the hill down which the road winds to Ballymareen. The white houses towards the sea glittered in the sun, and the blue Atlantic, stretching away till it was lost in a hot mist, sparkled under its rays. Shading his eyes with his left hand and pointing with his right to the little town lying ahead, Murphy excitedly called upon Edgehill to gaze.

"Now, Sir, you behold me native town.

That city was built by me forefawthers before London was thought of, an' I dare say before Romulus and Raymus founded Rome."

Without calling in question the historical accuracy of this statement, Edgehill observed that Ballymareen had scarcely kept pace with the two rival cities—to which Murphy replied grandly.

"Sir, commercial prosperity is never the standard of internal happiness. Affloonce an' contintment are by no manes synonymous turrems. Caysar, Sir, the Roman Imperor, when passing through that very village, remarked to one of my ancistors who happened to be prisint, 'Murphy, ye divil,' says he, 'I'd rather be chief man in Ballymareen than play second fiddle at Rome.' I need scarcely inforrum ye, Sir, that at that payriod Rome was misthress of the wurrld. But I *may* mention wid

pardonable proide, that what Caysar vainly longed for, I possiss."

Edgehill had a dim idea that his companion must be chaffing him. He searched his face for some twinkle of the eye, some half-concealed smile lurking about the corners of the mouth, but detecting no such signs of merriment he bowed gravely. The car, meanwhile, had entered Ballymareen, and suddenly drew up before a modest hotel in the High Street. A crowd of loungers recognising Murphy, gave him a cheer. Suddenly shaking hands with Edgehill, he expressed many hopes for a renewal of their "frin'ship bedad," and jumping from his seat, dived into a crowd of his admirers and was lost to view.

His bewildered acquaintance having got his luggage from the well of the mail-car, stretched his cramped limbs and began to look about him. His fellow-travellers de-

parted. Each one, as he or she passed, looked up at the stranger. His original fretfulness and taciturnity had displeased them, but his subsequent familiarity with the natural leader had inspired them with the greatest possible respect. The departing boys touched their caubeens, and the colleens "ducked" with the most exquisite natural civility. Edgehill smiled and waved his hand. His nature had begun to thaw under these kindly Hibernian influences.

A white-headed servant in the McTavish livery approached Edgehill, and having satisfied himself as to his identity, conducted him across the road to where his uncle's brougham lay in wait. Ensconced therein, his luggage on the top, the artist was driven with all reasonable haste to his uncle's residence—The Lodge.

CHAPTER II.

A SCOTCH SETTLER.

TEN years before the opening of this story, Ballymareen was thrown into a state of very unusual excitement by certain rumours respecting an encumbered estate near the town. These rumours were various and inaccurate. An Indian nabob whose wealth was so incalculable that people were afraid to guess at the sum, had purchased it. That was one rumour. An English manufacturing company had bought it and was

about to establish factories at which every unemployed person in Ballymareen would receive wages at the rate of two pounds a week and upwards. That was another rumour. Before many days had passed these rumours became crystalised into newspaper paragraphs, and the leader of public opinion in those parts announced in distinct terms that the real purchaser was Mr. McTavish, the great Ulster mill-owner, and that his awowed object was to introduce the cultivation of flax into the province of Munster.

Actuated by a high sense of public duty the editor of the local organ, inspired by its proprietor, Mr. Murphy, then at the zenith of his popularity, wrote a series of scathing articles against the contemplated innovation. Thousands of reasons were adduced to show that flax would demoralise the people and ruin the country, that the crowding together

in the mills would be detrimental to health, and that the steeping of the fibre in the neighbouring streams would cause a most disagreeable odour and destroy the fishing. In a word, the Ulster mill-owner was held up to public execration as a being whose interests were opposed to those of the agriculturalists, and whose presence in the Southern province would be baneful in the extreme.

Notwithstanding the eloquent remonstrance of the Ballymareen press, Mr. McTavish did actually put in an appearance. He built a new house on the estate, erected extensive mills, and put several acres under flax-seed. Archibald McTavish was a man of vast wealth. Of Caledonian descent, he was born in Ireland. He had cultivated flax with great success in the neighbourhood of Belfast. Becoming a victim to the idea that the plant might be grown with still greater profit in

the south of Ireland, he sold his mills to a Limited Liability Company by which they are worked at the present moment with great advantage to the directors.

The mission of this enterprising speculator was not, however, altogether commercial. It was a threefold mission—Commercial, Evangelical and Political. Munster, he affirmed, wanted but three things to raise it to a pitch of prosperity equal to that at which Ulster had arrived. The three things were Flax, Presbyterian doctrine, and the Orange institution.

It is sad to have to record the failure of enthusiastic philanthropists. But to tell the truth is always laudable, and the truth is that McTavish—upright as his intentions may have been—failed in the accomplishment of all three of them. The southern soil was unkindly. The quality of the flax grown promised no profit from its manu-

facture. The bigotry of Catholics and Episcopalians prevented the Evangelist from making a single proselyte. And as for the Orange society, it is to be questioned whether there would have been found in the whole country-side one aspirant to the honours of that sublime association, even were Mr. Murphy's organ—the Ballymareen Eagle—less persistent in its attacks on the body, and less satirical in its allusions to its latest propagandist.

Disappointed in the accomplishment of his schemes, the sturdy Scot sold his mills for the price of the building materials, and fell back for diversion upon agricultural pursuits amidst the sneers of the peasantry, instructed by Mr. Murphy and his editor. Indeed were it not that the "Eagle," boasted prematurely of driving the philanthropist from Munster, McTavish would have quitted the ungrateful neigh-

bourhood for ever. But he was a determined man, and refused to be moved by Murphy's invectives. He wasn't the man to be frightened by the penny ribaldry of any newspaper whatsoever. The estate was his, and he would live on it in spite of them.

Twice on every Sabbath throughout the year he assembled his servants and as many of his tenants as could be intimidated by threats of ejectment, in a room set apart for the purpose, where he read to them from the writings of some incomprehensible divine, and compelled them to assist him in chaunting paraphrases of the Psalms of David. Moreover on all Orange field-days—such as the twelfth of July—he had a flag of the loyal colour run up to the top of the pole on the lawn. Every available space about the house was under his immediate superintendance, decorated with orange-lilies;

and inscriptions alluding to the pious, glorious and immortal memory were hung in all the bed-rooms. His old servant McFarlan, who shared the enthusiasm of his chief, ornamented the stable doors with maledictions in chalk—a proceeding which greatly vexed the souls of his subordinates. The master's eccentric display of bunting they could overlook, or affect not to understand. But the meaning of such an expression as—"To Hell with the Pope," chalked on the door of an outhouse was unmistakable, and occasioned a vast amount of suppressed indignation.

Notwithstanding his indulgence in these political and religious exercises, McTavish was a disappointed man, and he looked it. His tenantry hated him, and he knew it. The townspeople, taking their notions from the "Eagle," ridiculed him, and he felt it. But there were causes more remote than those

just recorded which accounted in some measure for his discontent.

Years and years before it had occurred to him to attempt the commercial, political and religious regeneration of Munster, he lived with an only sister whose supporter and protector he was. This young lady had, without his permission, and indeed in spite of his strenuous opposition, fallen in love with an English barrister who was visiting Ireland and had extended his tour to the north, with a view of investigating the Giants' Causeway and other natural curiosities, which, as everybody knows, abound in that part of the world. To the travelling barrister—Edgehill by name—McTavish had two strong objections. In the first place he belonged to a different sect of the Protestant Church, being an Episcopalian. In the second place, his position at the bar was not an elevated one, his income

being derived more from newspaper-writing than from strictly legal pursuits. However, the young people loved each other, and Edgehill regarding McTavish as the guardian of the lady, confessed his affection and pressed his suit. The brother, in a few rude but decisive phrases, informed the lover that it was quite impossible, that his sister was too young, that he had made other arrangements for her, and that he requested Edgehill never to mention the matter again. The result may be easily guessed; Edgehill ran away with the object of his affections and married her. Then McTavish swore a great oath that he would never see nor speak to his sister again. That oath he most religiously kept. He instructed his solicitor to write to Mrs. Edgehill, enclosing the money—a few hundreds—to which she was entitled under her father's will, and desiring her on no pretence to communicate with him.

A cold stern nature like that of McTavish can always justify its actions on the ground of religious duty. He swaddled his conscience in texts of scripture, and because he became entirely miserable, argued that he had been eminently just.

Edgehill and his wife survived the wrath of their relative, took up their abode in a London suburb, and managed to extract some little enjoyment out of life on £300 a year. Mrs. Edgehill who was a gentle and loving creature, and whose greatest idea of misery was to have anybody very angry with her, wrote several letters to her implacable brother. These tender effusions were all returned.

An interval of silence ensued, but when her boy was born she composed and sent off a most sisterly little missive, which was not returned, it is true, but to which there was sent no reply. Then Mrs. Edge-

hill's pride came to the rescue. Besides, she had her baby to think of, and so didn't trouble her brother with any further communications.

Years slipped away, and with the years all hope of a reconciliation. Baby grew to be a big boy with a predilection for art. The husband died. The boy grew still bigger, an Academy student, then a full-blown artist with a studio, any amount of enthusiasm for his art, and but a very trifling reward for his labours. A few more years passed; and just when Frank Edgehill was beginning to make a little noise in the Art world his mother died in his arms, with a blessing on her lips and a big sorrow in her heart which all the years had not succeeded in removing. The young artist followed in a sad procession to Kensal Green, and saw the grave closed over her. He took chambers and a studio in Fitzroy Street, worked

assiduously and with marked success. Lived down his grief. Was well hung at the Academy, and loudly praised by the Art critics.

He was sitting in his studio at the end of one season, when a letter was handed to him, directed in a strange writing, and bearing the Ballymareen post-mark. He opened, and read a cold formal invitation to spend a month or so with the writer at his place in the County Cork. The note commenced "Dear Sir," and ended appropriately with "Yours faithfully, Archibald McTavish."

Strange as it may appear, Edgehill determined to accept the invitation. His companions had almost all left town. The exhibitions were closed. The studios empty —their late occupants having betaken themselves to Wales, to Scotland, to Germany, to Jericho. It was not this circumstance

that influenced him. Nor was it an ardent desire to meet a relative of whom he had rarely heard his mother speak.

His eagerness in accepting may be easily explained.

The estate adjoining that of McTavish was the Fitzgerald property. Now the Fitzgeralds were the identical "mushroom squatters" to whom allusion has already been made, and they were the only intimates that McTavish allowed. Fitzgerald was a staunch Protestant, though horribly liberal in some of his opinions, and decidedly opposed to the establishment of Orangeism in his vicinity. He was a Justice of the Peace, moreover, and hated Murphy with great fervour. This was really the bond of sympathy between him and McTavish. Both were objects of the "Eagle's" scorn when that bird indulged in satirical flights—the one because he was a religious fanatic—

the other because he was the most extensive landowner in the county.

During the early part of the summer, Fitzgerald and his daughter had visited London, and while in that gay metropolis had not only seen the works of Edgehill, but had encountered the young painter himself at an "At Home," in Kensington.

The artist had not been long in conversation with his new acquaintances, before he was made aware of the fact that they lived near Ballymareen and were acquainted with Mr. McTavish. He immediately informed them of the relationship that existed between himself and their neighbour—an announcement which caused an equal amount of pleasure and surprise. Pleasure—because a basis of friendship of a kind peculiarly appreciated by strangers in London was at once established. Surprise — because

McTavish had never in their hearing alluded to his nephew's name. Thereupon did Edgehill relate the story of his mother's love—and he dwelt so tenderly on its darker details, that Kate Fitzgerald was surprised into an exclamation of sympathy.

"There were tears in her eyes, by Jove," said Edgehill, in describing the interview, "and she's the sweetest and best girl in the universe."

There can be no doubt as to the nature of Edgehill's sentiments. He danced attendance on her as long as she remained in town—and I, for one, was not surprised when I heard that he had accepted his uncle's invitation to Ballymareen.

Arrived at home, Fitzgerald lost no time in communicating with McTavish, complimenting him on the possession of such an admirable young relative. When next the

worthy man visited them, Kate described to him his nephew's beautiful pictures. Fitzgerald discoursed on the capital prices which those masterpieces fetched, while both father and daughter concealed the fact that they had never heard anything whatever of the family history, or that they were aware of any circumstance that would render a meeting between uncle and nephew an awkward ceremony.

McTavish held peculiar views on art. He was accustomed to look upon it as a Popish institution, and a device probably of Satan himself. He was, however, one of those sapient individuals who regard pecuniary success as a circumstance which sanctions occupations otherwise objectionable. His belief in special providences ran to an extreme. If a man amassed wealth, Heaven blessed the means. If a man came to grief, however honest his intentions, Heaven had

frowned upon that man's undertaking. Edgehill was getting on. Edgehill was no doubt a very different sort of man from the indigent barrister who had run away with his sister. Some desire to see his sister's boy may have been present. Not a new wish at all, possibly—but a wish that had long lain on his cold heart, and which never would have been gratified had not chance thrown the pretext in his way. He regarded the meeting of the Fitzgeralds and his relative as a special providence, and while the belief was strong in him, he penned and posted the invitation.

A young fellow like Edgehill does not waste much time in measuring motives. Artists are given more to studying the outside of the man than the inner nature of him. A youth, too, who has just emerged from the shades of Bohemianism to bask in the sunshine of public favour

is apt to be wonderfully tolerant. He becomes incapable of protracted animosities. His cynicism departs. He begins to think the world not such a bad place after all. The majority of people one meets are more or less disagreeable to be sure—but then they mean well. Even the Hanging Committee is composed of individuals whom one need not absolutely dislike. So the young philosopher pocketed his hereditary hatred, and set off for his uncle's residence —though whether he would have departed with such alacrity, had he not been lured by the prospect of again meeting Kate Fitzgerald, is a question which might be difficult to decide.

The brougham in which we left him sitting at the end of the last chapter, arrived at The Lodge in due course. The grounds which surrounded the house were skirted by a high brick wall, separating the demesne

from the road. It was a gloomy stretch of brickwork, suggesting a conventicle hidden behind its shadows—a suggestion which had never reached the ears of the proprietor, or he would assuredly have demolished the structure, regardless of the inconvenience. A massive green gate, blistered with the sun, stood in the wall. At this portal the vehicle stopped. The gate swung back on its hinges, and the gate-keeper's wife curtsied reverentially as the brougham rolled with a crunching sound up the avenue, along each side of which trees grew thickly, mingling their branches overhead—a long tunnel of foliage in which the air was cool and grateful. At last the house was reached, a substantial brick building with windows opening on to the lawn.

Standing on the steps was a thin, grey-haired man on whose face were deeply-marked lines — and in whose expression

there was a mixture of austerity and sadness. He was dressed in black, and his clothes sat stiffly on him—like the clothes of those caricatures which are exhibited all the year round in the picture shop at the corner of St. James's Street. It needed no second glance to assure Edgehill that his uncle stood there waiting to receive him. *Waiting* surely—for he never stirred, but stood on the topmost step—without a smile of recognition as his nephew jumped from the vehicle, and ran towards him.

"My Uncle Archibald, I believe," said Frank, holding out his hand.

The old man took it, and stood for some time gazing earnestly at his relative. Then an expression, more nearly resembling an intimation of pleasure than anything seen there for years, lit up his countenance—and he said,

"You're very like your mother, boy."

Then turning suddenly from him, he led the way into the house; and the door closes on them.

CHAPTER III.

DUCIT AMOR PATRIÆ.

"BEDAD, I know what I'll do—I'll send for Norah," said Murphy, winking his eye and striking the table.

It was ten o'clock at night, and Murphy was sitting in the front parlour of his own house. The room was a high one, with blackened walls and ceiling. Above the fire-place hung two fowling-pieces. One corner of the apartment was crammed with rods, baskets, landing-nets, and fishing-tackle. In another reposed a harp. At the end of the

room, nearest the door, was a heavy sideboard, on which lay, in the utmost confusion, pipes, whisky-bottles, decanters, cigar-boxes, candlesticks, and copies of "The Ballymareen Eagle." Two large candles guttered quietly on the table.

Before Murphy were a mass of manuscript, and a glass of hot whisky and water. Opposite to him sat a little man who, to judge from his exterior, was a person of some consequence. It was indeed no other than The O'Banagher, at that time the representative in Imperial Parliament of Murphy's native city. Readers will doubtless remember him as the ill-starred senator whose motion on a celebrated Government measure almost put his own party out of office. His round head was becoming bald, but what hair he had was extremely brilliant. A decided squint in his left eye diminished rather than increased the

natural dignity of his appearance. His corpulant little person betokened good living and a healthy enjoyment of the same. There was an air of gentle melancholy in his face, and he was talking in querulous tones to his host.

"I tell you, Murphy," he said, "I was as good as engaged to her, and she's slipping through my fingers."

"They're all the same," said Murphy, gravely shaking his head, "desateful above things, and desperately wicked. But are ye sure now, that she's caysed to regard ye?"

"Sure? Why my man Larry dogs them day and night."

"*Thim?* I thought you spoke of Fitzjurld's daughter. Ye mane *her?*"

"And McTavish's nephew. He's with her every day—pic-nics, croquet-parties—yesterday they were in town here by themselves, sketching the cottages on the cliff."

"Troth, it's too bad, that's what it is," said Murphy in a condoling tone.

"Too bad! It's monstrous! infamous! Why, I've known her for two years, and have never had a private conference with her yet; while this young sign-dauber hasn't been two weeks in the place and he has his sketching excursions, his moonlight strolls——"

"Come, come, O'Banagher. I won't b'lieve that now. *Not* moonlight sthrolls. I'm sure Fitzjurld 'ud never permit moonlight sthrolls."

"But I tell you it's a fact. My man Larry saw them. My man Larry hung about Fitzgerald's shrubbery on purpose to see them," and the little senator groaned, and Murphy lifted his hands in a mute denunciation of the society that permitted such transactions.

"Faix, you have my sympathy—and it's

sorry for ye I am. I had hoped—fondly hoped—one of these days to see Keet Fitzjurld at the head of your table in Castle-Banagher." Murphy took a sip of his whisky-and-water, and trifled with the sheets of manuscript.

"But hang it man, it's not sympathy I want. Can't you help me?" said The O'Banagher, looking appealingly at Murphy. The great man was silent for a few moments, and then said with sudden vicacity,

"Let me read ye a bit of me autobography. It's full of bright idayas and may suggist——"

"Damn your autobiography!"

That was a most unfortunate observation. Murphy looked sternly at his visitor, and said with great dignity,

"Repate that observation, O'Banagher, an' our frindship is at an ind."

The O'Banagher had no sooner let the

observation slip than he was sorry for it.

"I beg your pardon," he said nervously, "I didn't mean it—but I'm vexed and irritable."

"I accept your apology, Sir," replied Murphy, stretching out his hand in token of reconciliation. The other grasped it, and the difference was at an end.

"But can't you suggest something, Murphy? Don't you know any scandal about this young Edgehill? A paragraph in the 'Eagle' now might open the young lady's eyes. You know the youth, don't you?"

"Well, I thravelled wid him from Dunmannock whin he arrived, and we discoorsed together on the cyar, and faith, he's a foine young fellow, I'll say that for him, anyhow. Remoinds me of Captain M'Carthy that I met in Spain in '42, only M'Carthy

was darker. I have 'um in me Autobography —if you'd like to hear that part of it, I'll——"

"By-and-by, my dear Murphy, by-and-by. What I want now is your advice. He's going to the Hunt Ball to-morrow night—so my man Larry tells me—how should I let him see that I'm his rival?" asked the little Senator, who never could make up his mind to anything, and who has occasionally experienced the keenest pangs of agony when the Liberal Whip has ordered him to vote one way, and the 'Ballymareen Eagle' has urged him to vote another. It was his practice on such occasions to fly from the precincts of Westminster and feign a sudden indisposition.

"Of coorse go to the ball," said Murphy tersely.

"Do you think I might venture to—to—insult him—just a little—not much, you

know?" inquired The O'Banagher timidly.

"Let the occasion decoide," answered Murphy.

Then there was another little interval of silence. Murphy passed his hand over his forehead and appeared lost in thought. Then removing it, his face was lit up as with a happy inspiration and he said,

"Bedad, I know what I'll do—I'll send for Norah."

The O'Banagher who was not remarkable for quickness of apprehension, ventured to ask in what way that would serve his cause.

"Why I'll inthrojuice Norah to Edgehill, and I'll warrant ye she'll put the comehedher on him in the twinkling of an oi."

"But she won't be here in time for the ball."

"No. But it's better late than never. And I vinture to lay ye two to one that

whin Edgehill meets me daughther he'll ayther fall in love wid her, or he'll become such good frinds wid her as to give rise to sairious rumours."

"Yes, yes—I see it all," exclaimed the delighted member.

"And these rumours having been conveyed to Miss Fitzgerald by a nate little paragraph in th' 'Aigle' say, will give rise to sairious differences." Murphy winked his wicked old wink at the Senator, who grasped his hand and called him his best friend, his guardian angel.

"Mind ye, O'Banagher, undher ordinary circumstances I'd take the other side, but me counthry will be benefited by the union ye contimplate. Love's young dhrame must give way to patriotism. Love av counthry lades me on. I'll aid ye to the best av my ability. An' now ye'll listen to me autobography?"

"Certainly — there's nothing I wouldn't endure for so true a friend—I mean I'll be delighted to listen to the interesting narrative."

"See! there's the title-page," said Murphy handing to The O'Banagher a sheet of foolscap on which was written—

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF AN
IRISH PATRIOT.
BEING PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF
MICHAEL EUGENE MURPHY, ESQ.

"A very promising title," said The O'Banagher.

"There, ye see, I've left a space for the name of the publisher; I haven't decoided yet which of them I'll enthrust wid it. Now, attintion while I read the inthroductory chapther."

The Senator assumed an attitude of res-

pectful interest. Murphy snuffed the candles, indulged in a long draught of whisky, cleared his throat and commenced.

"'Chapther the furst. Descinded from an illusthrious ancisthry, I was borrun in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundhred and——"

A loud double knock at the door caused him to drop the manuscript and cover it with a copy of the "Eagle." There were some people from whom Mr. Murphy would fain keep the fact of this latest literary enterprise of his. The hall door was opened. Then came a knock at the door of the room — a knock administered with the butt end of something. Murphy said "Come in." It *was* one of the persons to whom he had never mentioned his Autobiography. It was Father O'Brien, the parish priest— Father O'Brien looking far from amiable and with his riding-whip in his hand.

The author of some admirable works on Celtic literature and of some still more admirable Irish songs and ballads, Father O'Brien was known and respected as a literary man everywhere, except in Ballymareen, where he was regarded by the villagers merely as their spiritual superior, and by those who held high ecclesiastical station as a person of dangerously tolerant views. He was a tall, ruddy-cheeked man of powerful build, and the moment he entered the room, he commenced in a loud tone,

"It's too bad, Murphy—it's really too bad—(I beg your pardon, O'Banagher. How are you?—Didn't see you as I came in)—I say it's too bad, Murphy."

"Sit down, Father," said Murphy, with complete surprise and innocence in his tone, "take a chair—what's the matter, now?"

"What is always the matter, Sir. You lead unthinking men into trouble — and disgrace."

"That's a heavy charge, your riverence," replied Murphy, covering up an escaped corner of the Autobiography.

"Not so heavy as the charge brought against some of your dupes," said the priest sternly.

"Me what?"

"I spoke plainly — your dupes. The two young Sheehans have been arrested for destroying property on Mc'Tavish's estate."

"Oh, the young divils!" exclaimed Murphy indignantly.

The priest looked fiercely at his parishioner—and the parishioner must have been conscious of some misdemeanour, for his eyes dropped. His reverence, you see, did not share the popular sentiment about the gentle-

man and entertained the lowest opinion of his literary ability.

"Now, Murphy, it won't do. I've seen the boys in jail, and they attribute the commission of the act to your instigation."

"But your riverence didn't b'lieve them? Aise the moind of an ould pathriot and say your riverence didn't b'lieve them," said Murphy in a whining voice.

"But I *did* believe them. I *do* believe them. I have read the article in the 'Eagle' that indicated plainly enough the course that that they took. They have broken the flagstaff on the lawn and torn the flag—acts which were unquestionably suggested in last week's issue."

"An' surely yer riverence don't blame them for *that*. Sure now I'd be incloined to praise them for it meself."

"I didn't say I blamed them. I don't

blame them," replied the priest in a louder tone than he had yet adopted. "But I blame those that prompted them to perform an act for which they themselves hadn't courage. And as for your praising them, Mr. Murphy, will your praise get them out of Ballymareen Bridewell, or find a loaf of bread for their families?"

It was now Murphy's turn to get angry. A man that has half the country side at his back can afford to get angry with a priest even.

"This is unfair, bedad! Now, O'Banagher, I appale to you, isn't it unfair?"

"Don't appeal to me like a good fellow. I hate being called in to decide a dispute. I must be going too." The Senator looked at his watch, and nodding adieu to the pair, ambled off. When the hall-door closed on him, Father O'Brien returned to the charge. He looked quite fierce and unclerical, and

glared at the patriot in such a menacing way that the decent man moved his chair back.

"Now that we're alone, Mr. Murphy, I tell you once for all that I won't have the lives or liberty of members of my flock jeopardised for you, or the likes of you."

There was a great amount of contempt thrown into the last words of the sentence, and Murphy, who didn't believe that "the likes of him" existed in the island, blushed profusely; actually and literally blushed.

"Now, Father, don't talk in that way, you'll repint of it by an' by, throth ye will now."

Murphy would rather raise a thousand irrelevant issues than meet the priest on the point he had raised.

"Don't talk to me of repentance," went on his reverence, "I tell you you're bringing

me into disgrace, ay and the religion I teach. This man McTavish has had three threatening notices lately, each one of which he has forwarded to me endorsed 'Received this day from one of Father O'Brien's flock.' Moreover, he sends an account of the affair to an Ulster newspaper, making free use of my name."

"In the oi of the law that's an' actionable offince," said Murphy, "but I really don't see what yer riverence is dhriving at."

"Don't you? Then I'll try and be more explicit. You have been writing down McTavish for years. The Orange institution is as obnoxious to me as it is to you, and McTavish's celebration of Orange festivals may annoy those that witness them. But he doesn't live in town, and if it were not for your newspaper his proceedings would escape notice. Mind you, I don't

object to fair comment, but I do object to a print that excites to acts of violence. As a literary man myself, I hold that editor unworthy of the name of gentleman who uses a public paper for private ends."

Murphy rose, and drawing himself up after his manner, said,

"Father O'Brien, only I respect the cloth, I'd——"

"You'd *what?*" shouted the priest, rising too, and standing opposite his refractory parishioner. "You'd attack *me*, I suppose. Just try it, Mr. Murphy!"

"Father dear," said Murphy, sitting down again, "don't put words into me mouth that I'd rather be shot than utter. Be sated." The priest sat down. "All I was goin' to say was this, that I niver perforrum a single act but wid a sincere desoire to sarve me counthry, and when I have the swate approval of conscience I can dispise wid any

other. As to the 'Aigle,' it's written by me idditor an' not by meself."

"That's right, Sir, that's right," said the priest, hitting his boot with his riding-whip, "defy the clergy—*do*."

"God forbid!" ejaculated Murphy, piously. "I take all me thayology from your riverence widout askin' a question; but when its a matther of politics, wid submission, I think I have a right to me own opinion."

It was sheer waste of time arguing with Murphy. No man ever succeeded in keeping him to the point. Father O'Brien had come to him incensed because two decent farmers had been immured in dungeons by following his advice. But from that proposition they wandered farther and farther, and as the theme receded, in the same proportion did the priest's good-humour return. In a quarter of an hour he

was as friendly as ever, and found himself discussing the approaching anniversary of the Release of the Martyrs.

"This room of yours is stifling," said the priest at last. "Come out and walk with me."

"Your riverence's wish is a law unto me," replied the devoted Murphy, rising.

"Hem !—So you *say*, Murphy, so you *say*."

"Surely your riverence doesn't disb'lieve me."

Murphy put on his cloak and hat, secured his oaken staff, and accompanied by the priest left the house. It must have been almost midnight. There was a splendid moon, and the stars twinkled in the heavens so brightly that it seemed as if there were no superior effulgence in the presence of which they must fade away.

"Let us walk towards the sea," said O'Brien.

"It is me ambition always to follow in the footsteps of your riverence."

Murphy was becoming very obsequious and flattering, and I have met with divines of far greater celebrity and of far higher social position than Mr. O'Brien, upon whom these arts have had quite as much effect, when skilfully applied, as they had on this occasion upon the worthy priest.

If you follow the main street of Ballymareen, to the right, after you leave Murphy's house, you will come presently to a turning which will lead you in a direct line to the cottages on the cliff. This turning Father O'Brien and his disciple *did* take. To stand on the edge of that cliff on such a night was worth taking a long long walk for. To look at the dwellings of the fishermen, so very white in the moonlight, to see the dark flickering shadows cast by the strange vegetables in the gardens, to watch the glimmer-

ing lights in one or two windows, and then to gaze away out on to the Atlantic, across which lay a broad path of cold glittering light—all this, I say, was much better than sitting in Murphy's stuffy parlour inhaling the fumes of whisky and tobacco, and engaging in discussions that might lead to unpleasantness and strife.

O'Brien felt all this, but Murphy had survived the period when such impressions affect the imagination. He preferred the perspective of a bar-parlour to the finest landscape in the universe. Besides, to do the old patriot justice, he was subject to attacks of rheumatic-gout, and these midnight zephyrs were keen and searching. So while Father O'Brien was standing with his hat off, his coat thrown open and his head thrown back gazing out on to the sea, Murphy wrapped his cloak more tightly about his person and shivered. He thought

O'Brien would never start out of his reverie.

Above the whistle of the wind and wash of the waves there came to them distinct and clear, the voices of men on the jetty beneath. O'Brien had a great liking for the fishing community. They gave his reverence but little uneasiness, taking but a small interest in politics, except at election times when they received a trifle for their votes, as was the fashion at the period of which we write.

"Come along, Murphy," said his reverence, leading the way to the top of the path that led to the creek. Down the narrow decline the priest walked nimbly, and Murphy, with nervous tread, followed him, emitting now and then strange ejaculations indicative of surprise or fear, as a stone loosened by his foot fell over the edge and went bumping down the side, or as an

awakened sea-gull flapped its wings and uttered a scream of remonstrance. At last they gained the sand—sparkling now under the pale light that flung a fresh beauty over everything—and approached the jetty. One herring smack lay alongside waiting to put off. Three men, with blue jersies and big tarpaulin hats, and trousers crammed into their boots, were tramping up and down the time-worn planks, and heaving off occasional remarks at each other.

When they discovered the presence of Father O'Brien their conversation ceased, and taking the pipes from their mouths they knelt—knelt on those wet and slippery planks and asked his blessing. And he gave it; as the water went "sop, sop" beneath, and the lugger bumped and creaked against the side, and the iron rings clanked with the motion of the fettered craft.

I think I see those great sun-browned men

kneeling there, their sleeping families dreaming on the cliff, and the priest uttering benedictions—while Mr. Murphy, who places very little reliance in priests' blessings, and through the sole of whose boot the moisture of the jetty is penetrating, stands by shivering.

"You're late in putting off to-night, boys?" said the priest, as the men rose.

"Throth, we are so, yer riverence, we're waitin' for——"

A shrill whistle was heard at the top of the cliff. One of the men taking a lantern from the smack answered the signal, and ran off to meet the person giving it. The party on the jetty watched the lantern move up the cliff, and then saw it descend.

"I hope I haven't kept you waiting," said a cheery voice.

"Och! don't say a word about it, Sor. It's proud and happy we'd be to wait for the likes av ye."

And then the party on the jetty saw emerge from the shadow of the cliff another man, in company with him who bore the lantern—a young man in a blue pilot-jacket. He was smoking a cigar and talking volubly to the rough fisherman by his side. Him did the honest Murphy then approach, and grasping his hand exclaimed,

"Me dear Sir, me very dear Sir, I'm d'loighted to see ye, permit me to inthrojuice ye to Father O'Brien."

"I've had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Edgehill at Fitzgerald's," said the priest, extending his hand to the new comer.

The other grasped it warmly.

"Oh! Mr. O'Brien, I wish you were coming with me. I've been reading your

poetry to—in fact I've been reading your poetry. I'm sure you'd enjoy the moonlight effects. The blues and greens are perfectly wonderful, you know. And then the sunrise — oh!" the artist had no words to express the magnificence of that ceremony.

"Nothing would please me better; but I have business in the morning, and in any case I fear I should prove a dull companion."

"I know of no company that I would prefer."

"You flatter me, Mr. Edgehill. But we're keeping these honest mariners waiting." The jersies were indeed on board, and Edgehill shaking hands with Murphy and the priest, followed the humble skipper and his crew.

The hawser was undone and pulled on board, the jib gradually began to take shape

and the old herring smack moved slowly off. Then the brown mainsail was hauled up, and the vessel that by the jetty side had looked so clumsy and sluggish, bounded into the track of the moon, gallantly mounting the waves and leaving a white boiling trail astern.

The priest and the patriot stood at the very end of the jetty, and watched the departing sail till it suddenly tacked out of the path of the moon and was lost to view. Then they re-ascended the cliff. Murphy, equally to his surprise and delight, arrived at the summit without accident. In his own mind he offered up sincere thanks to the saint that had preserved him, and registered a vow that never again would he venture on such a hazardous expedition. The priest stopped and once more looked at the sea.

"A mighty quare idaya for a jintleman to

go sailin' about all night in a herrin' smack," remarked Murphy.

The priest unheeding the observation, began repeating a well-known sonnet

> "It keeps eternal whisperings around
> Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell—"

"It's gettin' mighty cold," interrupted Murphy.

> "Gluts twice ten thousand caverns till the spell
> Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound."

"I wish I was under my ould shadowy blankets, I know that much," said Murphy, fearing that his reverence was going to declaim at some length. The priest, however, had forgotten the remainder of the sonnet, and turning his back on the sea, said to his companion,

"I beg your pardon, Murphy, I think

you were saying something about Edgehill."

"I just remarkt that he was a foin young man, an' mighty civil spoken. I loike 'um, bedad."

"He's to be congratulated," said the priest, "and I hope you'll show your esteem for the nephew by being less sarcastic about the uncle."

"'Deed your riverence is always givin' good advice—and it's lucky for thim that follows it," replied the fulsome old man.

"I hope *you'll* follow it," said the priest, though he uttered the hope in no very hopeful tone.

In the High Street they parted, going each man to his own habitation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EVENT OF THE YEAR.

THE annual ball of the members of the Ballymareen Hunt was the one excitement permitted to the gentry and gentility of the town and its surroundings. The peasantry indeed, more catholic in their ideas, more primitive in their tastes, and possibly with a greater natural genius for invention, extemporised for their own amusement sports of all kinds, and engaged in them all at seasons. An unending suc-

cession of wakes, dances, marriages, pilgrimages, funerals, and other entertaining diversions, relieved for them the monotony of existence. But the less fortunate and less ingenious gentry enjoyed fewer reliefs—and woe betide those handsome daughters of respectable but needy parentage whose restricted means prohibited excursions to Dublin, and whose chances in the marriage market depended a good deal on the occurrence of large social gatherings.

When those puissant sons of the chase, the members of the Hunt—inspired by the mild and mournful pleading of their daughters, and the more copious arguments of the wives of their bosoms—had originally instituted the ball, they were regarded by the community generally with something of that veneration and love usually extended to popular reformers and saviours of society.

At last Ballymareen had taken its place in the van of progress. Its citizens became dimly conscious of the wild pulsation of the world ; they could catch, if at a considerable distance, some rumbling echo of the roll of the ages ; to them the waltz was a beautiful metaphor, and as they glided through its mazes, they felt, that with the great world itself, they were spinning "down the ringing grooves of change." To a description of the event, the "Eagle" patriotically devoted one of its most prominent columns, and a second column containing the list of invitations made, it must be confessed, a very formidable appearance, vying for its length and the undoubted respectability of its contents with similar fashionable muster-rolls in the "Morning Post" itself."

Just as the presence of the Court in London affects the tradesmen of the West-End, so did the institution of this annual

orgie breathe life upon the commerce of this west-end of Ireland. A Dublin dressmaker opened an establishment in High Street—nearly opposite the "Eagle"—in which organ she inserted her advertisements. In the window of her establishment she exhibited a white muslin ball-dress trimmed with light blue (it was the one misfit out of an order given by Miss Lacy, the well-known principal of the Kingstown Boarding School); here also appeared several coloured prints of ladies in various becoming attitudes, gaily habited, and illustrating the fashions of three or four years back.

The prints were a trifle fly-blown, perhaps, and the ball-dress might not have been of the most novel design; but Madame Corsette (as the lady from Dublin called herself—and I have no reason for saying that Corsette wasn't her name, except the mere sound of it), assured the families of

the nobility and gentry that she was prepared—with the aid of a large and intelligent staff of assistants—to make ball-dresses and other costumes after the very latest Parisian mode. Some of the gentility believed her, and on the support of this confiding minority Madame Corsette managed to thrive.

An adventurous pastry-cook from Tralee was less fortunate. He had hoped to obtain the contract for refreshments, the Committee, however, gave it to a more extensive, if less deserving, confectioner in the city of Cork, and the artist from Tralee was obliged to fall back for a livelihood upon the juvenile part of the community, to which he dispensed raspberry puffs and other delicious trophies of his skill.

Perhaps the strongest proof that can be adduced of the position which Ballymareen had achieved in the eyes of the outer world,

was the arrival of a German Jew from Houndsditch, with a vast assortment of devices for illumination. The enterprising Hebrew was obliged to beat a speedy retreat, owing to the obloquy cast upon him and his creed in three leading articles written by the redoubtable Murphy.

The Town Hall—the most dismal public building even in Ireland—put on during these brief seasons of delight an aspect almost cheerful. Banners of all nations, and banners of no nation in particular, floated gaily from its roof, and several lines of Chinese lanterns suspended in front of the building concealed its ugliness, and became subjects of wonder and discussion in the town for months.

The interior of the edifice was made to forget mildew, dryrot, and dinginess, by a liberal introduction of evergreens, coloured calico, more flags of all nations, tapestries,

hangings, and so forth. Indeed the old building was made to look as fresh and cheerful, and a great deal more gaudy than when it was opened nearly a hundred and fifty years before.

I have no volume of reference within reach, but I think I am correct in stating that the Ballymareen Town Hall was completed in the year 1725, and was declared open by one of The O'Banagher's ancestors —many of its admirers then avowing that for grandeur and convenience, it was equal, if not superior, to St. Patrick's Hall in Dublin Castle.

The Ball Committee was composed of most efficient officers. They had selected the autumn as the period best suited to their entertainment, because the weather less tempestuous at that season, opposed no barrier to the attendance of families residing at a distance. Moreover, the autumn usually

brought a number of distinguished visitors to the neighbourhood, whose presence was regarded as not undesirable.

Invitations were also issued to the officers stationed at Fermoy; these happy warriors and their scarlet uniforms finding favour in the eyes of Irish ladies—and of Irish ladies, sing to us Moore and Mahoney, accompanied by lyres, vibrating still from your tender touches. Say, are they not the most beautiful, the most fascinating, the most sweet-tempered creatures in the world, and don't they speak the Queen's English with melodious inflexions, unknown in any other portion of her Majesty's dominions?

It was a brilliant scene upon which Frank Edgehill entered. He was a little late in his arrival, having, indeed, only returned at seven o'clock in the evening. To dine and to dress occupy some time.

It was long after ten when he made his appearance in the ball-room, peering about through the giddy throng as if expecting to see somebody.

Conspicuous for the beauty of his raiment and the splendour of his jewels was The O'Banagher. Among other of his beliefs —and The O'Banagher's creed centred in himself, every article in it being so to speak an article of dress—was this one, that he showed to the greatest advantage in his evening costume. His clothes, you may be sure, all came from Saville Row, and with a huge white flower in his button-hole he strutted up and down, also expectant.

Edgehill's eye fell, too, upon Murphy, and his ear caught the mellifluous brogue as that estimable soul meandred through the distinguished assemblage—his celebrated emerald affixed for the nonce to a frayed

shirt-front, shining under the light of the chandeliers.

Of distinguished strangers there were but few, the principal being Mr. Marshall, the M.P. for Hampton Wick—a most droll and satirical writer, at that moment on a visit to Ireland, about which country he purposed writing a book.

Marshall's father was a wealthy brewer in Lambeth, but Marshall himself had cut the trade. With his glass in his eye, and his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, he stood calmly surveying the scene. Many a bright eye glanced slowly up to his, but he stared such glances down.

"Terribly energetic style of dancing your ladies have," he remarked to Murphy, who happened upon him.

"Think so? I suppose it's because they loike it, now," replied Murphy.

"Hem," said the literary M.P., turning

his back on the patriot, and walking off.

It was only natural when Marshall's book appeared, that Murphy should review it in the "Eagle," where he gave it as his opinion that Marshall was following the example of his father, and brewed very small beer indeed.

Recount me now, Terpsichore, if, perchance in these degenerate days thou visitest mortal ears with choral salutations—what graceful forms meandered—how here and there the silken flash of delicate ankles ravished the sight. Tell me of stately Lady Kanturk seated apart, and of white-headed General Owen ogling persistently, and of Mrs. Maloney and her five rosy daughters—and of Captain Barker's twins, tall and agile. Point me out where the ancient maiden Strahan sits disconsolate, and where Miss Mulligan, the pride of the

hunting field, whirls madly round, her lovely waist encircled by the arm of Ensign Short.

Edgehill gazed upon the scene, looking as ill-tempered almost as the sarcastic Marshall. His ill-temper, however, was not chronic, and, indeed, departed instantly when at the entrance of the hall appeared Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald and their daughter Kate. A sudden animation overspread his countenance, as this little party made its way up the room, and by the time they had taken their places near Lady Kanturk, Edgehill was shaking hands with them and talking volubly.

Fitzgerald was a fine specimen of the country gentleman, and his wife, though a little too dignified in her demeanour, was at least as motherly and good-natured a lady as any within the four seas.

Their daughter was not unjustly described

by Murphy, when he spoke of her as having been endowed by nature "wid a person worthy of Impayrial discint." She had an exquisite figure, which showed to great advantage in her ball-dress—though persons who have an eye for such matters, say that in her riding-habit her form is displayed to greater purpose—a statement which may or may not be true, one thing being certain that in the latter costume her white shoulders are not displayed at all. She had great soft blue eyes, and a quantity of golden hair.

Of her musical voice any ensign quartered in Fermoy could discourse more eloquently than I. Her delicate Grecian nose, her pretty pouting lips, her proud and easy manner, and above all, her seeming unconsciousness of all these charms have proved fatal to the peace of many a swain. Many had pined for the possession of so wonderful

a prize, but the most aspiring bachelors in Ballymareen had abandoned the chase, regarding the object as beyond their reach; and some eyes regarded Edgehill with glances not quite friendly as he stood before the lady talking and laughing after the manner of a privileged acquaintance.

"May I say the next dance?" asked Edgehill.

"Oh! all the dances," replied the maiden, who was in the habit of expressing her desires frankly and with emphasis.

A little figure had followed Edgehill up the room. A bald-headed little man, with a squint and an eyeglass. This gentleman overhearing the reply, now stepped forward, and with his gibus pressed across his manly bosom, bowed and said in plaintive accents,

"Not *all*, I trust, Miss Fitzgerald."

Kate held out her hand to the little man and Edgehill stepped aside.

"Indeed, O'Banagher, I believe I'm engaged for every dance—isn't it provoking?"

"Provoking! my dear Miss Fitzgerald, it's maddening — I shall wander about this building during the tedious hours of the night a stricken spirit."

"Nonsense, O'Banagher, you'll speedily console yourself. I'm not the only girl in the room."

"By heavens you *are* though. I assure you that this hall contains but one figure upon which I can gaze—but one voice to whose melodious music I can attune my soul."

"Well, the orchestra is attuning its melodious fiddles—and my partner is becoming impatient."

"At least you'll promise me *one* dance," pleaded the Senator.

"Well, let me see — yes, the next polka."

Then Edgehill came forward and whisked her off as the music struck up, as the red uniforms flashed and the airy muslins dashed into the thick of the fray. The O'Banagher scowled at the unconscious Edgehill, as he stood there alone, partnerless, savage. He! who represented every mother's son of them in Imperial Parliament. It was a cruel thought!

"The next polka," he repeated gloomily, and taking up the gilt-edged tablet that hung to his button-hole, he looked for the number of the promised dance. It was situated at some distance down the card, and stood thus recorded in illuminated capitals—

No. 12. Polka Mazourka.

He hastily inscribed Miss Fitzgerald's

name as a completion of the entry. Turning round, he observed smiling behind him one or two cheerful but antique dames—the mothers of the flock. They bowed encouragingly as they encountered his gaze. He returned the salute with seeming civility, but muttering to himself expressions of the most uncomplimentary character he fled the spot. Disgusted with humanity, repining at fortune, he strode off to the empty supper-room.

Empty, did I say? It was *not* empty, unless—and Heaven forbid the thought—unless Michael Eugene Murphy, Esquire is nobody.

CHAPTER V.

CONTAINS THE POPPING OF CORKS AND OF A QUESTION.

SITTING saddlewise across a chair, his chin leaning on the back of it and his legs stretched out in front of him, Michael Eugene Murphy was applying himself to the unaccustomed solace of champagne. He held a glass of the sparkling beverage before him, and winked at it contentedly. Murphy heeded not the allurements of the dance. He had noted down a rapid description of some of the dresses,

observed the more prominent of the decorations, taken in the general appearance of the room, and then, as his custom was, had retired quietly to the supper-room where he purposed remaining for the rest of the night. Here The O'Banagher discovered him. The O'Banagher, as may be supposed, was in a fierce mood. A mood which would expend itself in confidences. He was not sorry to encounter Murphy in this solitary place.

"Hope you're enjoying yourself, Mr. Murphy?" he said. He then placed a chair opposite to that of his friend, and seated himself in the same fashion; and so they sat face to face, chair-back to chair-back. Murphy smiled at the new comer; it was the knowing smile of inebriety not yet arrived but gradually approaching.

"Thank ye kyindly, O'Banagher," he said, in answer to the Senator's remark, "the

liquor's good an' there's plenty of it, thems the two necessary conditions to my idaya of enjoymint."

"Indeed?"

"P'raps there's one other condition wanted to make the happiness complate."

"And that is——"

"The company of an individual of gaynial sowl and refoined intellect, an' that I have in your prisence," replied Murphy, who rarely lost an opportunity of paying a compliment.

"You flatter me entirely, Murphy, but if your felicity depends on me, I'm afraid you'll not be completely happy to-night."

"Well, plase the pigs, I'll be complately dhrunk, anyhow. Your health, O'Banagher!"

The O'Banagher bowed, and applied himself to the claret-cup.

"I'm afraid, Murphy," said The O'Banagher, reproachfully, "that you would direct the man inquiring after happiness to only one source of it—a very limited view of life."

"Bedad it may be a limited view, as you say, but widin its limits it's wondherfully satisfyin'." Murphy winked confidentially to his glass and shook his head. The O'Banagher was silent for a few moments. Then with startling abruptness he said,

"Murphy, I give you a toast—Lovely Woman." The O'Banagher solemnly lifted the goblet to his lips.

"A toast I never refuse—Champeen, Jeems," (this to a passing waiter,) "a capital toast, and whin that infurnal idiot that's thyin' to take the wire off the cork has succeeded, I'll——confound ye for a fool, ye've spilt it all over me best trousers—

a capital toast, but don't ye think now it would give a flavour to the wine if we toasted some woman in particular, instead of the faymale sex ginerally?"

"You know the name. I drink to Her."

Both the gentlemen rose.

"To Her!" they said solemnly and simultaneously. Murphy tossed off his glass and sat down again. The O'Banagher followed his example.

"She's here," said The O'Banagher, gloomily.

"I had the honour of resaving a swate smoile from her as she intered the hall."

"And *he's* here," went on The O'Banagher, savagely.

"I saw 'um."

Then the gentlemen drew their chairs

more closely together, and conversed long and eagerly, and in so low a tone, that even the waiter couldn't catch a stray word. The O'Banagher abandoning claret-cup attacked champagne. For a whole hour did they converse eloquently but confidentially. The waiter was amazed at the quantity of wine that the gentlemen consumed.

Warned by gusts of music and the pulsation of the dance-step, The O'Banagher called to mind his engagement with Miss Fitzgerald, and in a state of some excitement left Murphy to finish the last bottle, and re-entered the ball-room. The dancers were again engaged in the delicious waltz, and the Member for Ballymareen bit his lip and pulled his fiery whiskers as he saw Miss Fitzgerald in the embrace of Edgehill spinning about the room.

Every dog has his day, and The O'Banagher's time arrived. He had the

inestimable pleasure of leading Miss Fitzgerald into the middle of the room. A polka was the one dance in which The O'Banagher was at the same time sure of his head and of his heels. Was it Fate, or was it the delicate consideration of his beautiful partner that had made so providential a selection.

The music struck up and off they went. The O'Banagher, determined to make use of the opportunity, said in gasps,

"At last, my dear Miss Fitzgerald—at last we may go on with the orders of the day—I mean of the night. 'Faith, I hardly know what I mean — your beauty confuses me."

"I do believe the little creature has been drinking," said Miss Fitzgerald to herself. And then aloud. "How nice the room looks."

"Beautiful, madam—but while in the presence of charms like yours—my tongue refuses to speak of the beauties—of aught else."

"I think you're out of time, O'Banagher." And indeed he was. It is not everybody who can talk and dance at the same time. He blushed, stopped, regained his step, and danced off once more. But love was in his heart and champagne in his head. He must express himself.

"At this moment—my dear Miss Fitzgerald—I feel that I could die."

"Dear me! aren't you well?" inquired the sympathetic Kate.

"*Well?* No, indeed—I'm ill—wounded mortally—the arrows of Cupid rankling in my bosom—can never be extracted—save by your lovely fingers."

"Mine? What nonsense, O'Banagher, I'm not a surgeon."

"Who talked of surgeons? Can surgeons amputate a mind diseased? Do my classical allusions not penetrate your obdurate heart? Will you force me to an open declaration in a public place?"

"Oh, for goodness sake *don't*," implored the lady, observing that her ardent suitor had paused, and was indeed standing before her. The entreaty came too late. It served but to inflame the already excited wooer. He flopped down on his knees before his astonished partner. She, ashamed and angry, tried to run away. But the doughty commoner had grasped her muslin skirt, and was covering it with kisses. Kate blushed scarlet, seeing that the incident was exciting the attention of those who passed.

Edgehill, whose eyes had been following the lovely form, was one of the first to notice the very irregular proceeding, and

pushing through the crowd arrived on the scene just as The O'Banagher had begun to mumble his inaudible requests. The youth did not hesitate a moment as to his course of action, but seized The O'Banagher by the coat collar and flung him violently off. He then gave his arm to the distressed maiden and led her away. The O'Banagher's little figure spun round and round till it was stopped by an ottoman at the other side of the room; leaning on this support he glared fiercely around, amid the tittering of those who had witnessed his discomfiture.

At the same moment the music ceased and there was a general movement towards the supper-room. The O'Banagher watched the figures moving off; he was dumbfounded, incapable of action. In five minutes he was alone—alone in that extensive room, still supporting himself on the ottoman, still

glaring fiercely. But his wrath was unnoticed, save by a fiddler or two in the gallery.

Presently he rose, "pulled himself together," as the expressive phrase goes, and after (must I admit it) a preliminary stagger or so, walked off towards the supper-room in almost a straight line. He reached the door, entered.

But he saw nothing.

The remainder of that night was blank to him. The surging waves of conversation with the musical variations performed on knives and forks and spoons, the popping of champagne corks, the gay peals of girlish laughter suddenly explosive and as suddenly hushed, the under-current of conversation at the sideboard; of these he was conscious, not indeed of each distinctly but of a mighty confusing unintelligible hum caused by all. The lights floating among the banners, the

wings of chickens, the jellies, the custards, the flowers, the fruits—these he saw yet saw not, he was conscious only of a blurred and unsteady mass of colour.

The O'Banagher could scarcely believe himself a spectator. It was a counterfeit presentment. The memory of a dream in childhood. A waking vision. Now it floated backwards and forwards before his eyes with such astounding rapidity that he was obliged to grasp the handle of the door. The sounds distinct enough and close beside him were enigmatical utterances in an unknown tongue. Now the floor beneath him was beginning to sway like the deck of a ship in mid-Atlantic. He must make for the cabin, or he may be thrown overboard. Waiting for the billows to subside a little, he rushed from the scene and—disappeared.

At three o'clock in the morning, Marshall

who was the guest of The O'Banagher and Edgehill who wished (urged by the arguments of one whose desires it was his delight to accomplish) to offer an apology to the statesman for his unavoidable violence, might have been observed rushing about the town-hall searching for the local Member.

They looked everywhere. They explored obsolete committee-rooms where on desks and chairs the dust lay inches thick; they ransacked cellars, and lost themselves in remote corridors. The guests had nearly all departed, and the contractors were beginning to put out the lights and remove the provisions. But no O'Banagher was to be found, nor were tidings of him obtainable.

A distant door opening suddenly sent forth a burst of mellifluous tones, which Marshall at once recognised as those of his

brother senator. The door closed again. Following the direction of the sound, the two gentlemen found themselves in a narrow passage at the back of the building. At the end of the passage was a door. Throwing the portal open, they discovered the object of their search.

The chamber was a small store-room in which champagne cases, biscuit-boxes, hampers, and other lumber incidental to the supper were heaped. On the floor, in the far corner, lay or rather sat Murphy fast asleep, and opposite to him stood The O'Banagher, holding on to an old beer-barrel and supporting his back against the wall. His eyes were rolling wildly. His hair and whiskers were deplorably disarranged. The flower in his button-hole was stalk uppermost. Whenever he lifted his hand from the friendly cask, he fell heavily forward, raising himself again and miserably

attempting to assume an air of dignity. The expression of his face, so far as it was possible to trace any expression there, was that of intense satisfaction. His attitude, or rather the attitude which he was endeavouring to strike, was his favourite one when addressing the House of Commons. He was addressing himself in faltering accents to the recumbent Murphy who snored heavily in response.

"I say, Sir," he was muttering, when his discoverers entered. "I say, Sir—I move th' adjournment—of th' 'ouse."

"Our honourable friend voted for the Permissive Bill; fact, 'pon honour," said Marshall, tucking the Member under his arm and throwing the contents of a jug of water over the prostrate patriot. It took some time to convey him along the passages. He shouted snatches of songs and resisted the efforts of his captor. His feet, indeed,

were in Ballymareen, but his spirit was sailing through the Empyrean.

Sub-lunar matters were as less than nothing to him. The present was a dreamy haze, the past was obliterated utterly, the future he recked not of. It was a great relief to everybody when the cloak-room attendant had succeeded in getting him into his long frieze overcoat, and his guest hurried him off to his vehicle.

The Fitzgerald carriage was the next to stop the way. In this conveyance Edgehill was to have a seat as far as The Lodge.

"I hope you begged his pardon," said Kate as they drove off.

"I couldn't. He was too——"

"Hush! Oh, how shocking."

And, indeed, that demon drink had converted The O'Banagher into a very ridiculous

object. It *is* shocking to think of it. A reflection which I would have indulged in when describing his discovery, only that he was then in the presence of Marshall who you may remember is connected with the brewing interests—and a better glass of ale than can be obtained at his father's concern, there exists not.

CHAPTER VI.

TREATS OF POLITICS, RELIGION, AND LOVE.

ON the evening after that of the ball there was a little dinner party at Fitzgerald's. The guests were only three in number, McTavish, his nephew, and Father O'Brien. McTavish subsequently assured his relative that had he known that the priest would have been present, he would never have consented to make one at that gathering, for McTavish hated popery and all its works, and all its representatives.

Fitzgerald, though a churchman and a Tory of the bluest dye, liked to see at his board men of all shades of political and religious opinion. He was particularly partial to the society of O'Brien, because he was the best hand at whist in the county, and because he never obtruded his beliefs unasked. McTavish, on the other hand, was an abominator of cards and a stern upholder of the Presbyterian Zion, in season and out of season.

The dinner however passed off quietly enough, and the gentlemen, with a self-denial that calls for special commendation, joined the ladies in the library in a very few minutes after they had left the table. Here a fire burned cheerfully, a fire lighted with a view of promoting comfort rather than heat. The evening was falling, but there was still light enough to see the pieces on a chess-board.

Edgehill prevailed upon Kate to engage with him in a contest, and the pair sat down at a chess-table in the embrasure of the window, their seniors arranging themselves before the fire. As to the game of chess, it was the merest pretence. It never was finished. I don't believe that the men were properly placed even when it commenced.

Edgehill was in love, but had not declared himself. You, who have gone through this experience, or acquired it in your capacity as subscribers to Mudie's, will understand his position. By a hundred signs and tokens he was assured that Kate was by no means indifferent to him, and that she half-dreaded, half-desired the declaration which she knew to be brooding. As they sat thus conversing in whispers, there was borne to their ears the gentle breathing of Mrs. Fitzgerald who had dropped off to sleep in her chair, and

they caught stray words from the conversation of the three gentlemen who sat before the fire. They were discussing the subject of Predestination.

"I tell ye, Sir," insisted McTavish, "it's a' foolishness and blind pervarsity tae oppose the doctrine. You have no right to do so."

"If that be so," blandly interposed the priest, holding his wine to the light, "it's scarcely worth arguing the point, for if everything that happens is predestined to happen, it was decreed that you and I should differ on this point, and any attempt to make us agree would be clearly opposing the will of heaven."

"Sir, your logic is Jesueetical and devilish, though events are predestined, opinions may change. The book says it, Sir, the book says it."

"But events are usually the result of

opinion, if indeed an opinion strictly speaking may not be termed an event. But what do our young friends say about it?" and the priest turned towards the table, and explained the point to "our young friends," who had been taking but small interest in the discussion. It was an awkward question. Edgehill who never held a political or polemical belief of any kind was afraid of making a reply which might offend his uncle, so he answered vaguely—

"Some events are certainly decreed. Marriages, for instance, are made in Heaven."

A very tiny spark of humour served to set Fitzgerald laughing, Father O'Brien chorussed in a neat little chuckle. McTavish, however, was not to be won over by such half-admissions.

"Sir," he exclaimed, with true theological

warmth, "marriages and all ither events are made in heaven. The book says it, I tell ye."

Fitzgerald put in his oar. He had an idea that there were few questions that he couldn't settle by the application of practical tests. Some of his decisions on the bench were of a very extraordinary character in consequence—and he startled the legal gentlemen very much one day, by a reply to a question put by one of them—the question put being to this effect,

"Is this a Court of Justice, your worship?"

His worship replied, "No, Sir, this is a Court of Common Sense!"

I say, Fitzgerald put in his oar at this juncture.

"Do you mean to insist," says he, "that every little event that happens has been prearranged by the Almighty—the worms in my puppies, for instance, or the age of this wine?"

"Certainly, certainly," replied McTavish, as if to convince one who was evidently trembling on the outer edge of truth, "certainly, all events, and from all Eternity."

"McTavish, lend me your snuff-box," said he of the Court of Common Sense.

The Scotch settler handed the silver receptacle to his adversary.

Fitzgerald took a pinch from the box, and holding it between his finger and thumb, asked with an air of great seriousness,

"Now, McTavish, do you mean to tell me that it has been decreed from all Eternity, that I'm to take this pinch of snuff?"

"Unquestionably," rejoined the sturdy son of Calvin, "the book says so."

"Then I'll fustrate the designs of Providence," said Fitzgerald, with a laugh, and

instead of lifting the powder to his nose, he sprinkled it on the fire.

Father O'Brien's reverential chuckle extended into a laugh, and McTavish muttering something about the play-acting tricks of the magicians in Egypt, changed the conversation to flax.

Our young friends from the embrasure heard the conclusion of the discussion. It was growing too dark to play chess now—or they had lost their interest in the contest —and Kate, who had witnessed her father's experiment with the snuff, looked across at her adversary and asked,

"What becomes of your marriages made in Heaven, now?"

"It appears they may be snuffed out," replied Edgehill, who rather prided himself on his wit.

"Oh, and isn't that awful," from the other side of the board. "Just think, you

know, of a marriage made in heaven—two people loving each other, oh! so very much, that they couldn't live without each other—and then something happens, some wretched trifle or other, of less importance than a pinch of snuff, and the whole thing is destroyed for ever."

The shadows were deepening. They could not see each other's faces distinctly, and the conversation on flax round the fire was very animated.

"Don't think of that, Kate," whispered Edgehill, pretending at the same time to move a pawn. He had called her by her Christian name for the first time, and must do something or other to conceal his agitation, "if people loved each other so much as all that, no trifling event *could* alter their affection."

Then from the other side of the board in a voice most musically sorrowful,

"It mightn't alter their love, but it might alter their lives—oh, I've heard of such things."

Evidently the circulating library was an institution not unknown in Ballymareen.

"I hope you'll never experience such things," said Edgehill, with a certain solemnity of manner. "Have you ever been in love?"

The lady laughed gaily. She saw that her adversary was on the brink of a proposal—and exclaimed with sudden determination—

"No, *never*. Have you?"

"Never till *now*," whispered the young painter eagerly. The words were quickly spoken—but his whole life was in them. He stretched across the board to lift up a queen which in his agitation he had overthrown.

"Till now? till now?" she repeated,

smiling. "Dear me, I hope it isn't catching."

"Oh, don't treat it jokingly. You guess my meaning."

"I'm the worst one in the world at a conundrum—and—and here comes Bedford with the candles; shall I play you something?"

The sudden illumination awakened Mrs. Fitzgerald, who left the room to transact some business in the servants' hall. Poor Edgehill followed his mistress mechanically to the piano.

"Now, Sir, what shall I sing you? Tennyson or Tommy Moore, Mozart or Offenbach?"

"You don't happen to have any of Moore's love songs set to Offenbach's music?"

"Don't be profane, Sir! Between Moore and Offenbach there is, as your uncle would say, a great gulf fixed."

"I don't like to differ from my uncle on any point, but I think that the combination would express a certain phase of human nature."

"Indeed?"

"Yes! Tender words of love sung in notes that breathe utter fickleness, sentiment wrapped up in frivolity, the"—No doubt he was a very great spooney. All men are under the circumstances, so we won't transcribe all he uttered. Kate looked up archly at him and shook her head.

"You talk enigmas."

"And you act them."

"I never acted anything in my life."

"You wouldn't be a woman if you didn't."

"You're not angry with me, are you?"

"I couldn't be if I tried."

"That's right!"

Saying which, with a sigh of relief, she

sat down to the piano. A piece of music lay open there. "It would do as well as any other," she said. It was of much older date than Moore. A ballad about love unspoken and true hearts broken. The music breathed melancholy and tenderness. Kate's voice, though not of great compass, was fine and melodious. She threw into the composition a ringing wail, which seemed, however, to express a sort of luxury in sorrow. She had only got as far as the second verse when Bedford rushed into the room.

"Av ye plase, Sor, Sergeant Minchin of the peelers is here; an' av ye plase, Sor, the boys is at it again, an' he wants to see ye immaydiately, Sor."

"God bless the boys," said Edgehill to himself, and "may they keep at it," as he observed that Fitzgerald and his guests had left the room in a body to hear Minchin's narrative from Minchin's own lips. Edgehill

bent over the performer; her fingers strayed without purpose over the notes. She ceased singing. Her face flushed and her eyelids fell. The ability to keep her lover at arm's length had forsaken her. The inevitable had arrived. His head is over her shoulder.

"Do you love me, Kate?"

In a moment she had sprung up. Her arms were round his neck. He caught her to his bosom, and his lips pressed hers. At least these two could boast of one supreme moment of existence. In that moment, past and future mattered nothing to them. And it was *but* a moment, for when Fitzgerald and his guests re-entered the room, Kate was sitting at the fire, her hot cheeks supported on her hands, while Edgehill, the young hypocrite, was standing by the piano listlessly turning over the leaves of the music book, and pretending to read all about the

love unspoken and true hearts broken. Kate went up to her father with as little reserve as if nothing particular had transpired during his absence.

"What's the matter, papa, dear?"

"Nothing, child—at least nothing particular, Murphy's been speechifying about the Sheehans, there's been a free fight in the town, some heads broken and half a dozen arrests made."

"I certainly think, my dear," said Mrs. Fitzgerald, who had re-entered the room, "that something severe ought to be done to that man Murphy. For my own part I don't see the use of having Habeas Corpus acts if they're not put in force."

They were all seated round the fire now, and Bedford was handing coffee about. Fitzgerald smiled at his wife's advice. As a Justice of the Peace, and consequently understanding *all* law, he could not help being amused

at so singular a perversion. Edgehill who had a curiosity to know more about his companion of the coach, and who had found the subject one on which his uncle did not care to dilate, thought this a favourable opportunity for putting a question. Fitzgerald replied:

"He's the most meddlesome agitator in the South of Ireland. He has the voice of the whole peasantry and of the townspeople in his favour. He gives his advice gratis on all sorts of subjects, and lives, I believe, on the charity of his neighbours."

Father O'Brien bit his lip, and seemed on the point of saying something but didn't say it.

"And does he live well on the popular vote?" asked Edgehill.

"Far too well. The large house next door to the 'Ballymareen Eagle' belongs to him."

"As does the 'Eagle' itself," said the priest.

"His daughter rides a blood horse," went on the Justice of the Peace, "and though the rascal doesn't dress very well, I'm told he doesn't live very badly; but if I don't succeed in driving him root and branch out of the country before long, my name's not Fitzgerald."

"That's right, my dear," said Mrs. Fitzgerald. And it is pleasant in the affairs of life to have the approval of the wife of one's bosom.

"Why don't ye establish a branch of the Orange Society here. I urged that on ye years ago," said McTavish.

"And years ago, I answered that, like flax, it wouldn't take root in our soil," replied Fitzgerald.

"Or like Presbyterian doctrine," interposed the priest, "the people would find

nothing in it to satisfy either their reason or their feeling."

"Eh, man! but I'm delighted tae hear your reverence objecting to secret societies. I always thought that ye belonged to two of them yersalf."

"Indeed, Sir, and which be they?"

"The Fenian Brotherhood and the Society of Jesus."

Father O'Brien kept his temper admirably. He seldom came in contact with McTavish, but when he did, made no reference whatever to the various communications with which the honest Scot favoured him from time to time. To the last insinuation he replied calmly.

"I cannot think, Mr. McTavish, who has been your informant, but I can assure you that he has been practising on your credulity, for which, were he one of my own parishioners, I should certainly horsewhip

him. But," he went on, turning to Edgehill, "you, Sir, have asked some questions about Mr. Murphy. I am in a position to gratify your curiosity to a little extent."

The artist listened attentively.

"At one time his family possessed a very good property in this barony. It has slipped from their hands from time to time, owing to recklessness and waste. The present Murphy was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was Auditor of the College Historical the year that he took his degree. He was called to the Bar but never practised, in fact I believe he didn't know any law. He became editor of the 'Flag of Freedom,' the most national and outspoken of the Dublin papers, and owing to his services to the National party in connexion with that journal, he was permitted by the English Government to go out of the country, with

a request that he would never come back to it. He did go out of it. He travelled over Europe a good deal. Married a Spanish lady, who died when her child was born. He returned to his native town, adopted a brogue, and devoted himself to the domestic and political welfare of his fellow townsmen. He is the proprietor of the 'Eagle,' and if the money paid by his subscribers for that organ can be regarded as a gift, then he may be said to live on the charity of the people. These are the main points in the history of a very singular man, with whom I differ on a great many points almost as strongly, and a great deal more successfully, than some who express their opposition more fiercely."

"And his child?" asked Edgehill.

"His child has grown to be a woman and with one exception," here he bowed to Kate, "is the handsomest lady in Munster."

"But surely he must have private means," suggested the artist.

"He has about one hundred pounds per annum," said Fitzgerald, "and these are very public means. But in Ballymareen ——"

"A hundred pounds go a long way," said the priest.

It was not till they had reached the avenue leading to The Lodge, that Edgehill could summon up courage to inform his uncle of the important event of the evening. McTavish had taken a wonderful fancy to his nephew, but this last act of his was so exceedingly prudent and commendable that his eyes twinkled with pleasure, and he said,

"I'm glad of it, my boy, I'm glad of it, and I promise you, you shan't marry without a suitable provision."

When McFarlan opened the hall-door, uncle and nephew were shaking hands as if they had met for the first time.

They pass on through the hall. And again the door closes on them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RELEASE OF THE MARTYRS.

AMONG other sources of income upon which, at this period, our artist depended was the "Pictorial Times," and it occurred to him that a spirited drawing of a free fight in an Irish village might be acceptable to the sagacious manager of that illustrated paper. It cannot reasonably be expected that the artistic contributors to that organ will be present at every event, great and small, of which the subscribers might

wish a representation, and so it often happens that an artist is dispatched *after* the occurrence of the event, so that he may obtain the scene with some degree of accuracy, drawing upon his imagination for the figures and grouping. And I have no doubt a free fight would be as faithfully depicted in that way, as if the talented artist had actually been on the spot.

Edgehill determined then that he would produce a sketch of the last night's disturbance; and having mentioned it to his uncle, a horse was brought round for his special convenience, after breakfast.

It had been arranged between them, the night before, that McTavish was to speak to Fitzgerald on the subject of—in fact Edgehill was a cowardly young fellow in matters of this sort, and deputed his uncle to break the news of his love to Kate's father. At about eleven o'clock he mounted

his horse, and full of hope and spirit rode off.

The road between The Lodge and Ballymareen is one of great beauty. It is a tortuous road, and every turn in it opens up some new perspective, so that instead of being one scene it is in reality a series of landscapes, all having points of difference. Now you see a ravine with a narrow stream flowing through it, and the ferns clustering about its margin. Again meadows stretch only far enough to meet thick plantations. Another turn reveals to you a round tower standing in a barren field, or a thatched cottage, in and out of which the customary pig rushes and disports himself, chased by the bare-legged and rosy-cheeked children.

Edgehill had ridden about two miles enjoying the scene, drinking in the breeze that came from a sea which was as yet hidden

and thinking, very likely, of Kate Fitzgerald's blue eyes and golden hair, when he saw something glittering on the road before him. He drew up, dismounted, and lifted from the ground a lady's riding whip, the gold handle of which had attracted his attention. Thinking, probably, that he might encounter the owner, or failing that advertise the treasure in the local journal, he remounted and continued his ride.

He had not proceeded far, when another sudden turn in the road discovered to him a lady on horseback, and unattended. She was mounted on a very powerful, angular and obstinate brute, that for reasons best known to himself was remaining stationary against the will and in spite of the threats of his rider, and even evinced a vicious inclination to back into the adjacent hedge. Edgehill touched his horse with the spur and was on the scene in a moment.

"Won't I let you have it when I get my whip, that's all!" were the first words he heard uttered, as the lady tugged at the rein, and the horse backed farther into the hedge. The artist drew up and extended the recovered trophy. The lady turned to thank him.

She was an extremely handsome woman, of that Spanish type which is encountered oftenest in the County Galway. She had a large but exquisitely modelled figure, big black eyes and hair dark as night. Her cheeks were red with exercise, and she panted with excitement. She wore a riding habit of dark green velvet, and a little hat of the same material surmounted by a small white feather. It would not have done in the Row, perhaps, but it was in excellent taste, nevertheless, and looked quite picturesque on that wild Irish road.

Although perfectly graceful and at ease,

her manners had not that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. Superior to them in most things, she still partook somewhat of the nature of those children of Bohemia so well known in the London studios. The easy daring, the frank manner, the unabashed gaze, the freedom of motion were all there. She presented, in short, a splendid study for a sketch, and with no other thought in his head the artist rode beside her and entered into the conversation which she seemed to invite.

"So kind of you to stop and pick this thing up," she said, looking full in the face of her companion and cutting her horse, whom she addressed as Dan O'Connell, over the ears.

"Your gratitude is a reward out of proportion to the service."

Instead of receiving this compliment in the

way in which its author expected it to be received, and it must be confessed that it was very neat as an impromptu, the lady threw back her head and burst into a merry peal of laughter. Edgehill looked amazed; and when the lady observed the troubled expression on his face, it seemed to increase her merriment.

"Oh, you English! you *do* pay your compliments so solemnly and so coldly," she exclaimed.

Edgehill probably felt rather hurt, and didn't exactly see the humour which his companion detected. However, he betrayed no annoyance, and said,

"At all events, I can be a docile pupil. Come! How do they pay compliments in Ireland?"

"Well, let me see. What are the circumstances? I drop my whip. Am thereby nearly coming to unutterable grief. A

gentleman recovers the weapon and restores it to me. Am thereby placed under a great obligation to the said gallant. I express my sense of the same by words and looks, and then he says——"

"And he says what?"

"Well, if he be an O'Brallagan or an O'Reilly he probably replies, 'O, me darlin' I'd do a thousand times more for one kiss of thim ruby lips.'"

"Is that the lesson? I think I could say *that*."

"Yes, but O'Brallagan would *do* it."

And again she went off into a peal of laughter. She was in what the old writers call "a merrie fytt." Checking herself, however, she inclined towards Edgehill and said in a repentant accent, and with raised eyebrows and pouting lips,

"But you'll forgive me, won't you? I'm very rude and impulsive."

"I like impulsive people."

"Do you really? How tastes differ to be sure. Now I hate them. I like your nice, quiet, stolid Englishmen, your people that are never in a hurry, never put out, never enthusiastic."

"Have you never met an Englishman without those negative characteristics?"

"Oh, never!"

And again she laughed. Unquestionably an extraordinary young lady. Edgehill thought that it was strange enough to be permitted to jump to terms of considerable familiarity with a lady that he had never seen before, but that she should laugh at him! Still she was very handsome and fascinating, and he really must do a drawing of her.

"I know what you're thinking now," she said, shaking her head in mild disapproval of unexpressed sentiments. (Where had

Edgehill seen that significant shake of the head before?)

"Indeed," said he, "then it appears that you add magic to your other accomplishments."

"Now don't be sarcastic, or whatever they call it. If you do, I'll run away."

"At least, you can prove your knowledge of my thoughts."

"Of course I can! You were thinking, 'Shall I ride away in a huff, or shall I remain and be very wicked and satirical?'"

It was Edgehill's turn to laugh now.

"Not a bad guess," he said.

"Well, now, I want you to do neither. I'm horribly rude and ungrateful, you *know* I am. But I can't help it, can I Dan?" the last inquiry was addressed to the horse who was at the same time cut about the ears, in

response to which encouragement he became rampant.

"You *are* English, I suppose?"

"I plead guilty to the indictment."

"What do you think of us?"

"I'm enchanted with *you*."

"So am I with you. Come along and see father."

Here was a pretty state of things! They had been proceeding at a very slow pace, when the lady had suddenly put Dan O'Connell at a gallop. She hadn't given Edgehill a moment to excuse himself. He couldn't go without a word of explanation. So here he was galloping about the country after a handsome girl casually encountered, whose name even was a mystery to him. What if Kate were to hear of it?

It was impossible for Edgehill to keep up with the great big-boned horse of his fair

acquaintance. With almost super-equine strides Dan O'Connell tore on in front and sent the white dust flying in clouds, enveloping the following horseman completely. At last the final turn of the road was passed. Ballymareen and the sea burst upon the view. In a few minutes they were dashing through the High Street. Dan O'Connell drew up with startling abruptness at—oh, heavens and earth!—at the house next door to the "Ballymareen Eagle."

The next circumstance of which Edgehill was conscious, was that of Murphy issuing from the door thereof and assisting his daughter to alight. The next that he was being assisted to alight himself.

"Me dear Sir, me very dear Sir. It's d'loighted I am to see you. Permit me to inthrojuice ye to my onlee dawter, Norah, whose acquaintance you have casually but most honourably made."

"Doesn't father express himself nicely?" she said, leading the way into the house.

"Here, Pat, ye divil, take these bastes round to the stable," shouted Murphy, delivering the reins of both animals to a stable-boy.

Yes! McTavish is undoubtedly right. In a single combat with destiny, the mortal must come off second from the fray!

"Now thin, Norah darlin, go up an' change your things, an' be down directly. This way, Sir."

Dutiful to the paternal admonition, the patriot's daughter disappeared upstairs.

Edgehill was led into the identical parlour in which a few nights before Murphy had made up his mind to send for Norah. It looked less comfortable by daylight. It was an apartment sacred to candles and the fumes

from steaming tumblers. Edgehill blamed himself for being in the house at all, but reflecting that it is always advisable to make the best of a bad bargain, he at once explained to Murphy the object of his visit to the town, and his desire to have it effected as soon as possible.

"Och, faith, if it's a stirrin' sketch ye want, ye're in luck's way. Faith I'll inthrojuice t'yer notice to-day a scene that'll beggar all the free fights in Christendom, a scene that'll immortalise ye, if ye do it justice."

"Indeed?" said Edgehill, forgetting all other considerations in the absorbing one of business.

"Yes, in throth! D'ye know what day this is?"

"Yes, Thursday."

"Ay, but d'ye know what evint is celebrated on this day in Ballymareen?"

"No."

"Well, on this day is celebrated the Relase of the Marthyrs, it's an anniversary that occurs twoice a year wid us, and is kep up wid great public sperrit by the boys about here."

At this moment Norah entered the room. She was now in a walking costume, and a gipsy hat borne on the masses of her thick black hair had a really wonderful effect.

"Your father has been endeavouring to persuade me to attend your demonstration this evening," said Edgehill.

Norah was standing at the sideboard, placing edibles of some sort and drinkables into a small hand-basket.

"Oh, yes, you really must come. Our national enthusiasm is a thing you can form no conception of unless you see it. Picture to yourself a platform filled with the genius

(that's pa) and the beauty (that's me) of Ballymareen. Fancy an excited but sentimental mob adorned with the national emblems, uttering the national war-cries and brandishing the national shilleleagh. In the immediate background you will have the town, and in the distance the sea crowded with the multitudinous fleets of all nations. There's a picture for you."

All this was delivered with great animation, and accompanied with appropriate gestures. Edgehill determined to go to the demonstration at all hazards, and asked,

"But who were the martyrs, and why were they released?"

"I really don't know. And pa doesn't know, though I dare say he'd invent something if you asked him. Wouldn't you, pa dear? All I *do* know is that the performance will commence at three o'clock precisely.

At a quarter of an hour before that time, an open carriage will arrive at this house to convey myself and my revered parent to the scene of action. There are four seats in the carriage, pa and I will require two of them, the other two are very much at your disposal."

Then she turned again to the sideboard, covering the contents of the basket with a napkin, while Murphy, winking at his guest, said in a whisper that must have been quite audible to his daughter.

"Norah's in great sperrits to-day, she's the proide of her ould fawther's loife, bedad!"

"I'm going for a short walk. I hope to see you when I return," said Norah, making for the door.

"P'raps now," suggested the solicitous parent, "Mr. Edgehill might feel incloined to accompany ye."

"Certainly," said Edgehill, rising. He

was in the swim now, and he might just as well try to enjoy himself.

"Come along then," said Norah, handing him the basket. When they reached the street, Norah, much to the young gentleman's surprise, took his arm, and in this order they walked through the High Street. Murphy standing at the window, his face, beaming with pleasure, watched them till they were out of sight.

"Why didn't you tell me who you were when I met you on the road?" was Norah's first remark.

"I don't know. Why didn't you tell me who *you* were?"

"I don't know either. But I'm very glad to meet you. I've been hearing such a lot about you."

"Indeed! from whom?"

"Oh, from lots of people! From the fishermen on the cliff. How I should like

to go out in a herring-smack and fish all night. Don't shake my basket about, Sir. There are bottles in it."

Edgehill had indeed been swaying that article to and fro.

"Then The O'Banagher has been talking about you. He was at our house yesterday when I arrived from Dublin."

"I don't suppose the honourable Member had anything pleasant to say about me," said Edgehill, hastily. Norah laughed.

"Well, to tell the truth he had *not*. Oh, he was in such a rage! He wanted to call you out, you know, but pa and I persuaded him to forget all about the circumstance, and I don't think he'll find it very difficult, for I believe he finds it hard to recall what occurred that night." Norah laughed again as she tried to picture the incident.

"And who told *you* about it?" asked the artist.

"Mr. Marshall. Don't you know, Mr. Marshall? He's a very handsome man, I think, and he's quite spooney about me. But he has such a sneering way, I never could like him—never."

"I suppose there are very few men that you could like," said Edgehill.

"Oh yes! there are *some*." And Norah looked straight up into the eyes of her companion, and he felt—yes, there could be no doubt about it, felt a slight pressure on his arm. He was beginning to be far from comfortable.

They had now got beyond the precincts of the town and were on the Dunmannock road; turning down a leafy lane, they proceeded up it for a quarter of a mile, and stopped at the door of a little cottage, hidden with creepers and overshadowed by a huge elm-tree.

"Give me the basket," said Norah, "I'm

going in here, will you come with me?"

"Who lives in the cottage?"

"Mrs. Sheehan, whose two sons are doing a month in Bridewell for pulling down your uncle's flag-staff. A sad story, Mr. Edgehill. The wife of one of the young men is here too. But they won't know you. Come in."

She lifted the latch of the door as she spoke, and Edgehill followed her into the cottage. They stood in the principal room of the building—the kitchen with its earthern floor. Everything was beautifully clean and tidy. At the fire sat an old woman swaying herself to and fro and moaning sadly. A girl of singular beauty was ironing at the table, and it was easy to trace her likeness in a little child of two or three, who was sprawling about the floor and crowing in an ecstacy of enjoyment. The eyes of the girl

at the table were red with weeping, and every few moments she laid her iron down, pressed her hand against her side and heaved a deep sigh. Norah's entrance caused a momentary brightness. The old woman started up, exclaiming,

"Oh, Miss Norah, Miss Norah, have ye come back to us, alana, have ye come back to us?"

The younger one left the table and stood before her. Norah took both her hands in her own and kissed her forehead. The young woman then brought a chair forward, and wiping it with her apron, asked Norah to sit down. Edgehill seated himself near the door. Then the ironer, unmindful of the presence of a stranger, fell down on her knees at Norah's feet, and bursting into a flood of tears, buried her face in her lap. Norah patted the brown head of the afflicted woman, and said to her with a tenderness

of which Edgehill had not thought her capable,

"There now! there now! Don't cry, Kathleen, darling."

"Oh, I wish," exclaimed the elder woman, "I wish every tear was a drop av pison in the cup of him that prosecuted me poor boys, me two brave sons."

The young woman sobbed convulsively.

"It's sad throuble we're in, alana, an' sad disgrace," went on the elder, "niver before has the jail closed on the back of a Sheehan. Black curses on him that done it. The mother's desolate heart curses him and his."

Edgehill did not know what to say or do. These bitter observations were no doubt intended to apply to his uncle. It was hardly dutiful of him to listen to them, he thought. He began exhibiting his watch to the little child on the floor, who seemed

quite unconscious of his father's incarceration and of the distress around him.

"Oh, as for the disgrace," said Norah, replying to Mrs. Sheehan, senior, "don't think of *that*. There's no disgrace in going to jail unless for doing a disgraceful thing. It's an inconvenience, certainly, but it's not a disgrace. Why, pa's been in jail!"

Kathleen looked up through her tears and gave a sigh of relief.

"Say that agin, Miss Norah, darlin'. Say it's not a disgrace. Say that my husband can hold up his head agin, and his brother. Say that, Miss Norah!"

"Of course I'll say it, dear. There now! you really mustn't take it to heart so. Doesn't pa hold his head up; tell me that."

"Ay, that he does, Miss, and sure it's the idol of the people he is. God bless him!"

"Well, pa was in jail for twelve months, think of that, and the boys have only got one, they'll be with you in no time."

"And for what offince did they lock up Mr. Murphy?" asked the elder woman, "if wid submission I may ax the question, alana."

"For writing in a newspaper, and I'm sure that's worse than breaking a flag-staff."

"Troth, Miss Norah, thim's the comfortable words, an' ye've taken a load off our hearts, a big load, faith! Only I wish ye'd spake to me son James. He feels it more than any of us. He frets an' frets. He scarcely ates a morsel, an' won't spake a word even to his poor ould mother."

"I'm sorry to hear that. I've brought you some chicken and things, and if you have any difficulty about the rent, won't

you let me know? I've some influence with your landlord, The O'Banagher."

"Sure you're an angel out of heaven, acushla, and may ye niver know what it is to pass through a big sorra."

The minds of the two women being now relieved, they had time to notice Edgehill, who was still engaged in amusing the infant. Kathleen looked over at him, then glanced slily up at Norah, and whispered in her ear; in answer to the whisper, however, Norah shook her head, on which Kathleen seemed to lose her interest in the gentleman. Mrs. Sheehan the elder, however, being one of those who jump to conclusions, said to Edgehill.

"It's yerself's the happy man, Sor, to get Miss Norah; an' may the blessin' of the widow be about ye both for a handsome pair."

Norah laughed and informed Mrs. Sheehan that she had made a mistake; but the old lady said not to tell *her*, and rallied Norah and overpowered Edgehill with benedictions. Her most frequent prayer being that they might have an abundant progeny. For in Ireland, it is considered the greatest felicity to have one's quiver full of them, even though the mouths should outnumber the crusts of bread obtainable for their gratification.

The visitor had succeeded in putting the family into good humour, and had risen from her chair to bid them good-bye, when the door was flung open and a young man entered. He was dressed like an ordinary farm labourer, and appeared to be about eighteen or nineteen years of age. He looked terribly haggard and savage. His lips were quite pale, his teeth set, and there was a permanent frown on his brow. Even when

he saw Norah, his expression underwent no change. She held out her dainty hand to him. He took it but said nothing. Of Edgehill he took no notice. The women seemed almost frightened.

"Haven't ye got a word to say to Miss Norah, my son," said his mother.

The young man bit his lips, his eyes wandered about the room. He shook his head.

"Miss Norah says it's no disgrace at all, at all, sure now she tells me that ——"

"Don't talk to me, mother," said the son in an agonised voice. "For God's sake don't spake a word to me! *No disgrace!* I think I'm going mad," and he pressed his hand to his forehead. He left the kitchen for an inner room, but on the threshold repeated.

"*No disgrace!*" and laughed a loud hollow

sceptical laugh. The mother recommenced swaying herself to and fro. Norah whispered some comforting words to Kathleen, and kissing her once more, signed to Edgehill to accompany her from the house. Edgehill could not but be impressed by the scene that he had just witnessed. What interested him most of all, probably, was the fresh insight he had received into Norah's character. Little conversation passed between them on the way back to town. As they were turning into the main road, Norah said to him,

"You're an artist, Mr. Edgehill. Tell me, what did you read in that young man's face?"

"Lunacy," replied Edgehill, without hesitation.

"I think you're wrong!"

"Indeed! And what did *you* read there?"

"Revenge!"

And Norah gave a little theatrical shudder, as she uttered the word and pressed more closely to her companion's side.

Arrived at the house in High Street, they found luncheon laid, and Murphy, who was preparing his speech, walking up and down the room excitedly. He welcomed his daughter and his guest, and regretting that he could not join in the conversation, asked Edgehill if he'd like to read a bit of his "autobography." Edgehill had not the remotest conception of what the patriot meant, but at a wink and frown from Norah he proposed to postpone the pleasure. The patriot merely said "very well," and resumed his promenade, whispering to himself and gesticulating. The patriot had partaken of luncheon, so Norah and Edgehill sat down to the table alone.

"Papa's rather eccentric, but he's a man of genius," whispered Norah.

"I can quite believe it," said Edgehill.

At a quarter to three o'clock an open carriage, drawn by a pair of greys and decorated with a quantity of green ribbons, drew up before the door. Norah ran upstairs and reappeared in a few moments in a change of head-dress, and drawing on a pair of lavender gloves.

"Come along, childre,'" said Murphy, opening the hall-door. The carriage was opened, the steps let down. Edgehill followed Norah, and was about to take the seat opposite to her, when Murphy motioned him to that next her. The driver cracked his whip, and away drove the chariot in very grand style indeed. The few individuals who remained in town—for, of course, the shopkeepers couldn't afford to leave their

businesses—cheered the carriage as it passed, and Murphy raised his hat in answer to these salutations, bowing gravely. Even on the open road to reverential stone-breakers and obsequious pig-drivers did the patriot bow.

The place of meeting was a field at no great distance from the town. As the carriage drove up to it, the ears of the occupants were saluted by the strains of a national brass band playing "Garryowen," and other proscribed melodies. Presently the carriage dashed up grandly to the outskirts of a very considerable crowd. When Murphy was recognised, the cheering was tremendous. The carriage was drawn round to the back of the platform, a rough, but firm and capacious structure already filled with the better class of sympathisers. Among others there present, Edgehill was distressed to see Father O'Brien and The

O'Banagher. He wished for an opportunity to explain his presence to the priest. No opportunity occurred, and his reverence was at the far end of the platform.

When Murphy appeared on the stage the applause increased, if possible, and when Norah took her seat the enthusiasm knew no bounds. The place next to her was awarded to Edgehill, as being a convenient one for his purpose. He took his sketch-book and pencils from his pocket and prepared to commence operations.

The editor of "The Ballymareen Eagle" moved the first resolution. It was in these words:

"Resolved: That Michael Eugene Murphy Esq. do take the chair."

The editor was a youthful, bald-headed and unhealthy man. In the remarks with which he prefaced his motion, he dwelt rather more upon his own gifts than upon

the qualifications of his chief, mentioning among other interesting items that he had edited the "Kinsale Chronicle" at the early age of fifteen. The egotism of some Irish editors is so amusing that it ceases to be offensive, and our friend's remarks were received "with every demonstration of applause," as he himself admitted in his own paper on the very next morning.

"The boys" occasionally interspersed observations of their own during the delivery of this and the following orations, substituting for the solemn and monotonous "hear! hear!" extemporised encouragements such as "Go it, ye divil!" "Thrue for ye, ma bouchal!" "Pitch it sthrong, me jewel!" and the like.

Murphy then arose, amid a perfect storm of applause, which he made apparent attempts to assuage by pompous motions of his hand, the motions having in reality the effect of

encouraging the storm. The pompous motion of the hand said, "Really, gentlemen, this is *too* much." What he actually did say when the applause subsided amounted in effect to this:—

He felt the importance of the occasion, and the proud position into which he had been thrust. He plaintively appealed to the spirits of his ancestors to look down upon him, to aid him, to support him, to inspire him.

He requested his fellow countrymen to remark that Irishmen were the bravest, and Irish women the most beautiful of God's creatures. He further felt it his duty to remind them that they were engaged at that moment in fighting a great cause, not the cause of an individual, not the cause of a party, not even the cause of the Murphies. No! they were that day fighting a nation's cause. For these and other reasons he would call on

Jacob Butler, Esq., Q.C., M.P., to move the next resolution.

Mr. Butler rose amid great enthusiasm. He was a florid white-haired barrister of many years standing, and had from time to time represented in Imperial Parliament a surprising number of constituencies, and advocated a confusing variety of political beliefs. His present belief happened to be Home Rule, to demand which favour he had been dispatched in all good faith to St. Stephens' by a Connaught constituency, to which he had been recommended by the national papers in Dublin. He was a man of very great oratorical power. Gifts of mystification which he had perfected by a long practice on common juries, he now exercised to delude a general audience. He had a wonderful turn for scriptural quotation and at once commenced,

"Fellow countrymen, what came ye out

for to see? The poor advocate of his country's rights appealing to the generous verdict of mankind against Saxon wrongs? No. The descendants of kings taking their places as natural leaders of the people? Not even that. You have come here this day to be the chosen witnesses of a resurrection. You have assembled in your thousands on this green sod, hallowed by the blood of martyrs, and sanctified by a history the most beautiful at once and the most terrible ever recorded, to witness the spirit of freedom descend to earth and say to this dead and buried nation, 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk.' You have come to see her arise, and scattering from around her lovely form the polluting remnants of her grave clothes, walk forth in simple majesty, lovely as the first-born of the morning, terrible as an army with banners."

This is the sort of thing that excites an

Irish multitude, especially when accompanied with emphatic nods of the head, rolling of the eyes, and wild use of the arms, and in this strain did Mr. Butler continue for more than an hour.

During that time Edgehill was able to produce a very fair likeness of the Hibernian Demosthenes. It appeared some three months afterwards in the "Pictorial Times," where the reader has no doubt seen it.

When he resumed his seat, the antics of the mob beggared description. "The boys" yelled and danced, twirled their shilleleaghs round their heads, threw their hats into the air, and seemed half frantic with delight. It was strange to look upon this wild excitement and then look off to the sea, a glimpse of which might be caught from the platform, peacefully sparkling in the sunlight.

Edgehill set to work at once in order to catch, if possible, a few of the attitudes of individual members of the audience, and so intent did he become in his work, that he paid but scanty attention to the observations which the chairman had risen to make. A few sentences indeed may have caught his ear—about an English sympathiser—a gentleman of European celebrity—present at this moment—anxious to address you; but he certainly had no notion of connecting the words with himself, if indeed he attached any meaning to them. He knew nothing, till he felt his arms grasped and himself led forward to the front of the platform with one idea so prominent as to exclude all others, namely, that if he didn't say something he would be most probably torn limb from limb by an excited populace.

It was a terrible moment. The un-

fortunate artist grasped the rail of the platform, and supporting himself thereby, gazed out stupidly upon the mass of upturned faces. Deafening cheers greeted him. He found himself unable to utter a word, and to increase his confusion Norah Murphy stepped forward and fastened a green rosette to the breast of his coat.

The agony experienced by the young Saxon at that moment must have been fearful. Fortunately, however, Miss Murphy's act, which had called forth renewed demonstrations of applause, served to rouse his resentment; and he incontinently determined that the crowd should understand who and what he was, the cause of his presence on the platform, and his utter inability to understand their politics, much less to sympathise with them.

Now, although the inexperienced orator could *think* all this neatly and rapidly, his

ability to express it was by no means considerable. The position was distressing beyond endurance. Here was the nephew of McTavish, Tory of the Tories, the affianced of the daughter of Fitzgerald—Murphy's bitterest enemy—taking his stand on a national platform, a green rosette fluttering at his breast, and every attendant circumstance conspiring to register him a Fenian, or something worse.

"Gentlemen," he gasped, "I fear that I owe you some explanation. Nothing could be farther from my intention than to intrude myself upon you as a sympathiser in the cause. I am an Englishman ——"

On this there arose a wild chorus of groans, with a sub-storm of hisses and a number of national war-whoops, demonstrations which the speaker found extremely disconcerting. Murphy arose to quell the

riot, and Edgehill turning round at the same moment, observed Norah laughing in undisguised enjoyment. He was in a perfect frenzy.

"Fellow countrymen," roared Murphy, "lind me your ears. Although this gintleman is a Saxon, it is through no faut of his own. An' I'm sure if you give 'im a quite hearing, you'll foind out how much he sympatises wid our cause."

"I tell you, gentlemen," shouted Edgehill, now thoroughly in a passion, "I tell you that this is a horrible mistake. I tell you that I am not——"

Mr. Butler stepping forward, whispered earnestly into Edgehill's ear——

"For God's sake be careful, Sir. They have strange ways of expressing their opinion of an opponent, here. Sometimes they throw brick-bats at him."

The confusion beneath was sufficient to

prevent any pause or hesitation on the part of Edgehill receiving immediate attention. Reflecting on Butler's warning he hastily determined not to incense his audience, but at the same time to say nothing that could be construed into an expression of sympathy.

"Gentlemen," he said, "than myself, probably no one has a higher esteem for your beautiful country, or a greater faith in the destiny of your generous race. Gentlemen, of the history of the martyrs whose release you this day celebrate, I am unhappily ignorant, but judging from the extent of this meeting and the array of national talent on this platform, I have no doubt that they were persons of great respectability, and that their release must have been a matter for hearty congratulation among their numerous acquaintances. I have had many opportunities of observing

nature since coming amongst you, and I may safely remark—for it is a sentiment justified by the records of the past and ratified by the experience of the present—that in no civilised country does nature exert herself to the same extent in producing works creditable to the walls of this academy. I beg your pardon, I mean to say, worthy in the highest degree of that humanity of which we all more or less partake. But, gentlemen, when I leave the verdant meads of nature to enter the parched and stormy region of party politics, I feel that I shall most effectually serve the cause of true liberty of which I am as hearty an admirer and as devout a worshipper as the most enthusiastic patriot here present, by ——"

"By saying nothing on the subject," the speaker was about to add, when he was interrupted by a burst of applause which

lasted for several minutes. During the uproar, Mr. Butler again whispered into the ear of the artist, and pressed him back into his seat.

Murphy rose when the applause had subsided, and put to the meeting a resolution breathing the bitterest enmity towards England, and the most undying hatred towards Tory landlords. This resolution was read as having been moved by Jacob Butler, Esquire., Q.C., M.P., and seconded by Francis Edgehill, Esquire. In vain did the latter protest. Murphy motioned him back. Butler cautioned him with great earnestness. The editor of the "Ballymareen Eagle" shook his little head and turned up his little nose at him. And Norah, gazing at his woe-begone countenance, red and perspiring from his recent effort in the cause of true liberty, was convulsed with laughter. The O'Banagher had

thrown himself back in his chair and was shaking with suppressed satisfaction. Glancing angrily round, Edgehill rose and left the platform.

He made straight for Murphy's house, but failed to gain admission. The servant of the establishment—if indeed the establishment boasted of such an appendage—was no doubt engaged in howling before the platform; the mansion was shut up, and the artist had no idea where his horse was stabled. He turned and wandered off in the direction of the cottages on the cliff. With the families of the fishermen he had become a prime favourite. The demonstration had not drawn them from their peaceful occupations, and the scene wore its ordinary aspect. He looked into a couple of the little dwellings, and in exchange for his somewhat mournful "How d'ye do?" received cheery responses. Then he wan-

dered down the old path to the creek, and walking along the jetty chatted for half an hour with the fishermen, who, barefooted and with sleeves turned above their elbows, mopped the old smacks, or picked seaweed from the cording of the nets, or put stitches in the rent of an old sail.

The tide was high, and the old green planks covered with spray; he walked back to the sand and sat down upon the gunwale of a disabled boat, which was drawn up under the shadow of the cliff. In the bottom of it sat two brown children, erecting edifices of sea-shells under the thwarts. Edgehill took out his pipe and sat and smoked for hours, talking to the children as the slow waves turned themselves over to embrace the sand, and fell sparkling in the sun, moaning musically. Under these influences his excitement subsided, though his mind was

still full of bitter thoughts and sad presentiments.

At last the evening began to fall, and the wind from the sea became cooler and the children were tired of play. With one of them in his arms, and the other led by the hand, Edgehill re-ascended the zigzag path and deposited them with a mother delighted with this attention.

As he passed the front of the cottages he saw through the open doors active preparations for the evening meal, for which entertainment the boy, who still whistled while he made the floats or spliced a broken oar, was quite ready, as were the fishermen, whose voices might now be heard as they sauntered up the cliff. The head of one of them appeared above the edge, and the artist turned to go.

When for the second time he knocked at Murphy's door he gained admittance, and

walked straight into the parlour. Murphy and his daughter had returned and were sitting there. When Edgehill entered, he said with considerable asperity.

"You have treated me somewhat unfairly, Sir, and may have compromised me seriously."

Murphy, who had been refreshing himself both during the meeting and since it, only shook his head and winked his eye. Norah answered for her sire.

"Now, pray don't treat it so seriously. You don't know what a silly you looked. You'll put yourself into the sketch, won't you? The English people are *so* fond of humour. And to think of sending you all the way over here for it, too!"

"I regret, Madam, that I can't enter into the spirit of your joke. That perhaps will not surprise you when I say that the work of

this wretched day may have wrecked the happiness of a life."

He had hesitated somewhat before saying this. And would probably not have ventured it at all, had he not observed that the popular idol had succumbed to the effect of his potations and was fast asleep. The disclosure produced an immediate change in Norah's manner. The fact is she had nothing whatever to do with the conspiracy that had placed Edgehill in a false position. Nor was she aware that her parent had any motive for acting as he had done. She had simply regarded the affair from a dramatic point of view, and her part in it—the pinning of the green rosette—was an unpremeditated piece of wickedness, the temptation to which she could not withstand.

"I'm really sorry," she said, dropping her eyes, "what mischief have I done? Can't I do something to set it right?"

"I can offer you no explanation," replied Edgehill.

They both relapsed into moody silence. The horse was led round to the door. Edgehill rose to take leave of his entertainer; Norah rose at the same time. She had guessed the full meaning of his words, and her great dark eyes were liquid; but what feeling caused those tears, who can tell?

"Sure I wouldn't have done it for all the world, if—if I had known,"—she said.

"Known what, Miss Murphy?" exclaimed Edgehill, pettishly. "Surely it was enough for you to know that you were putting into a false position and rendering utterly ridiculous one who—but why dwell on the subject?"

"Oh, don't talk so cruelly. I didn't mean it. I'm sure pa didn't mean it.

Tell me what can I do to set matters right?"

"Nothing," he replied. "I have now only to thank you for your hospitality, and bid you good-bye."

"Don't leave me so," she said, catching with both her hands his extended one. She was very beautiful, and Edgehill was of an impressionable age. She stood looking tearfully into his face. "Oh, you don't know how it would distress me to think that I had injured *you*." She placed her hands on his shoulders and a half-smile struggled through her tears. "*Do* forgive me!" she pleaded. She held her face towards him.

I offer no apology for Edgehill. If the reader comes to the conclusion that he was unworthy of Kate Fitzgerald, because of a momentary indiscretion, I can't help it. Probably the reader is right. Although

Edgehill was a very good fellow, and although his love for Kate was sincere and deep, and although never for a moment did any other being displace her image in his heart, yet I never considered him a hero.

The fact must be recorded, however. A beautiful girl whose acquaintance he had only made that morning, was standing, half in tears, with her hands on his shoulders.

"*Do* forgive me," she pleaded, with her face held up towards his. The temptation was tremendous, and although neither you nor I, my dear reader, would have yielded under the circumstances, Edgehill *did.*

He kissed those eager lips, and the Popular Idol waking suddenly, chuckled and cried, "G'bless ye, me childre," and then sank back into slumber. Disengaging

himself, Edgehill rushed from the house, and was soon galloping madly homewards, a guilty being.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT NIGHT.

THAT night McTavish congratulated his nephew in his cold formal way, and told him that he had been a successful ambassador, that Fitzgerald had consented to the union, and had even mentioned in confidence the amount of the settlement which he intended to make. The nephew failed to exhibit those uncontrollable symptoms of delight which McTavish evidently anticipated. He was conscious of

a presentiment of evil. His mind was full of strange misgivings, and not knowing what his uncle's opinion might be, he related to him the strange adventures of the day, dwelling very lightly, it must be confessed, on the particulars that related to Norah, and omitting all mention of the visit to Sheehan's.

To the astonishment of Edgehill his uncle treated the matter very lightly. He didn't regard it as a serious business at all. His relative had been incautious no doubt, but he had been inveigled by an unprincipled scoundrel, and his equally unprincipled daughter, whom the stern Presbyter compared to several Scripture unworthies. All would be made right, he assured him. And when some reliable witness, who had been present at the meeting, explained to Fitzgerald and his daughter the precise circumstances, they too could think nothing of it.

Thus did the usually cold and reticent old man encourage the nephew whom he had begun to love as a son. Edgehill tried to shake off the gloom that oppressed him, but not successfully. He retired to bed, but lay awake all that night, thinking—thinking.

That night there were high jinks at Castle Banagher. Never had Mr. Marshall seen his host display such tremendous animation. Father O'Brien, who was present, was quite puzzled to account for such an extraordinary flow of spirits. The Member for Ballymareen related anecdote after anecdote of his London life, and laughed loudly at every incident. He revived old stories of elections, and peculiar experiences among tenantry. He even volunteered a song, and persuaded the priest to chaunt some of his own compositions. He invited Marshall to sing;

but Marshall, who had a greater respect for himself than for anybody else in the world, declined. He ordered in whisky and water, and when Larry,—"my man Larry,"—returned to the kitchen, he told the cook that "he never saw the masther in such iligant spurrits in all his life, bedad!"

The O'Banagher became more and more garrulous as the night grew late. He discoursed of love and marriage, and told his friends that he intended resigning his seat one of these days and settling down on his estate, and when he asked Marshall's opinion as to whether he ought to take a wife, that literary Senator thought to himself that if he were only a short-hand writer he might make his book on Ireland a very diverting performance indeed.

That night the little editor of the "Ballymareen Eagle" sat over his proofs. He

was seated in a stuffy little room at the back of the office. An oil lamp with a green shade stood before him, and in that light his unhealthy face looked several degrees more unwholesome than when seen by daylight. He scratched away with his pen, and dropped slip after slip on to the floor beside his chair. A boy came into the room every few moments, and gathering up these precious scraps of literature, walked away with them.

When the boy left the room, the little editor fell back into his chair and laughed and struck the table before him, and then set to work again. Some very great joke was no doubt recurring to his memory, and tickling him to such an extent that he was obliged to relieve himself by these explosions. I say some very great joke, because he was by no means a merry little man, this unwholesome editor of the "Ballymareen Eagle."

That night, in the parlour of the house next door to the "Eagle" office, Norah Murphy betrayed considerable nervousness and uneasiness in her manner. Her venerable parent slept and snored. She walked hastily up and down the room. She took up a novel, read a few pages, and flung it aside. She sat down by the fire and looked steadily into the flames. Then she tried to write a little, but I suppose her compositions were not happy efforts, for she tore them up, and remained sitting at the table, her cheek supported on her hand.

She gazed at her father for some time, but not finding the spectacle edifying, she muttered something to herself and commenced pacing the room again. Then seized by another impulse she sat down at the harp in the corner, and to its accompaniment sang wild snatches of Irish songs, till her father aroused from his

slumbers, rubbed his eyes, yawned, and said pathetically,

"Keep quiet, Norah, me darlin'."

That night, Kate Fitzgerald flung herself on the outside of her bed and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"False to me! false to me!" she moaned, and cried bitterly till she fell asleep.

Her mother, coming into the room, found her lying thus, the pale moonbeams falling on her fevered cheeks, and awakened her child, and stroked her golden hair, and spoke words of comfort to her; but Kate, looking almost wildly into her mother's face, said,

"Oh, mother, I loved him *so* dearly," and again the tears fell down her hot cheeks, and she refused to be comforted.

And the same moon that threw its rays upon Kate Fitzgerald's couch, shone peacefully upon the quiet waters of the Atlantic and made beautiful shadows among the rocks, and peered down upon the sleeping families of the fishermen above the creek. Soundly they slept, nor once dreamt of the commotion taking place that night in several homes, and of which their lately made friend, the artist, was the culpable and only cause.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE CONSTABULARY IS CALLED OUT.

THE breakfast-room at The Lodge overlooked the lawn. Seated at the window McTavish glanced now at the disabled flag-staff on the terrace, and now at that morning's "Eagle," which he held in his hand. His thoughts, though excited, were evidently not fixed by either of those objects. Nine o'clock was the breakfast hour at The Lodge. McTavish was punctuality itself; he might have consented to

alter the hour at the request of a guest, but having fixed the time he never would postpone the meal even for a single moment, if the guest happened to be late. When the clock struck the hour, McFarlan took his place behind the master's chair, and the master rose to say grace.

It was a strange exercise this same grace, to which on every morning for years and years McFarlan had bowed his head and said, "Amen," from behind his master's chair. It was not a short expression of gratitude, but a long and rambling address to the Almighty, in which prayers were mingled with petitions, and in which benedictions were bestowed upon some, and maledictions called down upon other sections of society. The concluding paragraphs of the grace were invariably devoted to McTavish's religious and political opponents. "Scatter our enemies, good Lord, we be-

seech thee. May it please thee to break them and scatter them speedily, and unto thee shall be ascribed all the glory both now and always. Amen."

This was usually the ultimate petition. On Orange anniversaries he gave way to his feelings a little more freely, and became somewhat personal in his remarks, praying the Lord to break and scatter the Pope himself, and to turn the hearts of those who put their faith in that potentate.

It is related that on one occasion, having waxed very warm on this subject, McFarlan became excited, and when the master resumed his seat, instead of responding with the customary "Amen," he shouted out, "To hell with the Pope," and waved his napkin over his employer's head. An indiscretion which McTavish rebuked very mildly.

Frank Edgehill did not appear on this morning at the appointed hour. The excitement of the previous day had kept him awake all night. It was only towards morning that he fell asleep, and then he slept beyond the breakfast hour. It was ten o'clock as his uncle sat at the window with the "Eagle" in his hand, looking out on to the lawn. His thoughts were disagreeable. You could see that in his face. And McFarlan had never heard him offer up such bloody-thirsty petitions for his enemies as he had uttered that morning. No doubt Murphy was included among them, for the eye of the old man was fixed upon the local organ during the entire grace.

When Edgehill entered the room, he found his uncle standing before the large oil-painting of King William the Third which hung above the fire-place. When in a particularly savage mood, McTavish was

accustomed to gaze upon the smiling, not to say imbecile, face with which the artist had endowed that great monarch, and Edgehill, who had began to understand the indications of his uncle's temper, guessed at once that something serious had occurred.

The relatives bade each other "good morning." Edgehill sat down to breakfast, and McTavish resumed his seat at the window. Not a word passed between them during the meal. But when Edgehill had quite finished, his uncle came over to him, and putting the "Eagle" into his hand, he pointed to a particular column and said,

"Surely, Sir, this is 'na true?"

Edgehill took the paper and began to read. The portion indicated to him by his uncle was a report of the demonstration of the previous day. As his eye ran rapidly

over the column, his face turned pale. He was absolutely amazed to read the romantic account of his proceedings, and the ingeniously incorrect report of his speech which appeared in that broadsheet. All that the penny-a-liners of Ballymareen could do had been done to place him in a false position. Norah Murphy's name was constantly coupled with his own. He was repeatedly alluded to as the English Delegate, or the British Sympathiser. His speech filled a column and a half, and was not only Fenian in sentiment and revolutionary in doctrine, but contained a gross personal attack upon Fitzgerald, the "mushroom squatter, the Tory tyrant."

Edgehill started up when he had read it all.

"You don't mean to say you believe this, uncle. It's every word false. By heavens it is!"

"Don't sweer, my. boy, don't sweer. I didn't believe it; but you *were* on the platform, and you *did* make a speech. This report——"

"The editor shall retract every word of it in his next issue," exclaimed Edgehill.

"The blow is aimed at me, and I hope he *will*," replied McTavish.

The nephew looked helplessly at his uncle, and implored his advice.

"What shall I do, uncle?"

"I don't know," replied the other, who liked to see people act for themselves.

"What would *you* do?"

"Ah! that's anither matter. I'd gang straight down to this editor chap, and if he didn't promise to retract his lies, I'd brak every bone in his body."

"I will," said Edgehill, running towards the door, determined to strike while the iron was hot. At the door he was stopped by McFarlan, with a note and a parcel on a salver.

"For you, Sir," said the domestic.

The envelope had the Fitzgerald crest on it, and was directed in Kate's hand. Edgehill sat down at the table, and tore open the letter. When he read it, he crushed it in his hand, and falling forward, groaned,

"Oh, God! this *is* hard."

It was from Kate, and ran——

"Dear Sir,

"All must be over between us. I have not come suddenly to this conclusion. It took me *all night* to make up my mind. I would not have you think that I take this course on account of *anything* I have read

in the 'Eagle' this morning. I would have disbelieved *every word* of that, had I not *witnessed* your insincerity *with my own eyes.* Yesterday I was quite close to you when you left Sheehan's cottage. Oh, Mr. Edgehill, you have broken my heart!

"I remain,

"Yours truly.

"K. F."

That was one of the bitterest moments in the painter's life. All the more bitter to bear, because he felt that his own folly had brought it upon him. As he lay with his head on his arm, he groaned and cursed Norah in his heart, and cursed his own want of decision. How that sentence about Sheehan's cottage brought back to his mind the scene of the previous day. Norah leaning on his arm, nestling to his side and

looking up familiarly into his face. And to think that Kate should have witnessed it. How could he explain to her that women differed in their ideas of propriety, and that Norah meant nothing by her friendliness. She would not believe. She would not understand.

How Edgehill hated Norah! how he hated himself at that moment! And still he must act the hypocrite. He raised his head; his face was deadly pale as he said to McTavish,

"It's all over between us, uncle. She believes the report."

"She must be undeceived, that's all," replied the other, knowing of nothing beyond the report.

"Impossible!" groaned Edgehill, and taking the parcel in his hand he left the breakfast-room and sought the privacy of his own apartment. He cut the string, and

there fell about the floor one or two water-colour sketches, a poor trinket or so, and the few scribbled notes that he had despatched to Kate—answers to invitations to croquet-parties and so forth — even these she had treasured up! In short, there were returned to him all the sad memorials of his love.

He gathered them up, and as he gazed on them the tears sprang to his eyes. There was not anything whatever heroic about this young man, you see. He cried in his room as passionately as a school-girl.

He spent more than an hour there brooding over his misery, and irresolute as to what course he should adopt. And then, having bathed his face to remove the traces of his emotion, he descended the stairs.

He found Fitzgerald with his uncle.

Both the old gentlemen were laughing when he entered the room, and Kate's father coming up to him, said very heartily,

"Come, come, Frank, my boy, you musn't take this seriously to heart. When Kate knows the truth, she'll come round, I warrant you."

"She knows too much of the truth," thought Frank to himself; but he said nothing as he grasped Fitzgerald's hand. The worthy magistrate was evidently unaware of the visit to Sheehan's. Kate had kept her secret.

"I'm sure I wonder how she could believe the 'Eagle;' that bird is always soaring beyond the regions of truth. To think of them putting an attack on me into your mouth too!" and the good-hearted parent laughed at the idea, and at his own little joke.

"I'm obliged to you for your confidence in me, but I fear I'm unworthy of Kate."

"Tut! tut! my dear fellow. Momentary jealousy, lovers' quarrel. Just leave Kate to *me*. I'd advise you not to see her until after the 'Eagle' retracts. Let's see; the next issue will be on Monday, the 'Eagle' only leaves its nest to feed on carrion three times a week," and again Fitzgerald laughed, and his laughter jarred very unpleasantly on Edgehill's ear.

"I've ordered your horse round," said the uncle, "so that you may interview the editor at once. I expect to be in town in the evening, and will look out for you."

"Very well, Sir," replied the nephew. He nodded to Fitzgerald, and left the room. In the hall he met McFarlan.

"Get me my uncle's heaviest riding-whip," he said to that domestic.

"Not for the mare is it, Master Frank? She's verra quiet."

"No, *not* for the mare, McFarlan."

McFarlan, no doubt, thought him an eccentric young person; he, however, brought him a stout whip, and Edgehill, after "swishing" it through the air once or twice, answered that he thought it would do. Then he left the house, and was soon on his way to Ballymareen.

He put up at Molloy's Hotel, which is situated in Henry Street, and boasts in an advertisement, which appears every month in Bradshaw's Guide, of being the oldest establishment of the kind in the South of Ireland.

That Mrs. Molloy ever should have made money enough to pay for that monthly advertisement, has often astonished others beside the present writer. No one ever

seems to stop there. The candlesticks that repose on the hall-table, repose undisturbed. Nobody ever carries them upstairs. Boots enjoys a sinecure. And in return for her smiles, the faded chambermaid receives no shillings. The waiter bursts into occasional activity, for dinners are now and then ordered there. And the groom does something for his wages, for farmers, visiting the town, invariably stable their beasts in the yard attached to the establishment. Mrs. Molloy herself sits in the bar; a small glass case of a bar, with a little leaden ledge affording standing room for about three glasses. Sits there from morn till night gazing sleepily at the bottles of brandy and liqueur that stand ranged on the shelves around her. Bottles of brandy that are never opened, liqueur bottles that were never intended to be opened.

Having seen his horse properly housed,

Edgehill, whip in hand, proceeded to the "Eagle" office, taking care not to approach it from Murphy's side. He didn't wish to pass that house. He hated its inmates heartily. He was disappointed in his visit to the office. The editor was not in, and would not be in till seven in the evening.

"Who shall I say called, Sir?" asked the boy.

"Don't say anybody called," answered Edgehill.

Then he wandered off to the cliff, and finding that one of the smacks was going as far as Cork Harbour the following morning at six o'clock, he determined to make one of the jovial crew, having heard much concerning the beauty of that inlet of the sea.

The proprietor was delighted, for Edgehill was a favourite with the fishermen, and,

moreover, rewarded them generously for the privilege of cruising about in their queer old vessels. This excursion would occupy three or four days, and Edgehill was glad of an opportunity that would take him away from shore till he could see Kate Fitzgerald again, if ever he could see her again. Having arranged this matter to his satisfaction, he left the sunburnt mariners drinking his health, and walked slowly back to Mrs. Molloy's hotel.

As he passed the bar, the cheery proprietor offered him a kindly welcome; he stumbled through the ill-lighted passage and entered a door on the left, which bore the inscription COMMERCIAL ROOM. A piece of cruel irony, for no sample cases had ever been thrust under its side-board, nor had bagmen ever sat at its table telling their wonderful stories of the road, or betting bottles of sherry on the result of their journeys.

It was a most depressing room. The wall-paper was of a deep-brown, and was peeling off in strips near the ceiling. The old carpet was torn in sundry places, and the heavy mahogany table that occupied the centre of the room was covered with dust. On the immense sideboard were two old salvers, the use of which was unknown to any inmate of the house; between them stood a tea-urn, waiting patiently for the bagmen that never came, and a cruet-stand which was occasionally called into requisition, and so was a little more out of repair than the more ponderous ornaments of the sideboard. The pictures on the wall were of a sporting character, the most noticeable among them being the celebrated steel engraving from the still more celebrated oil-painting of the Ballymareen Hunt. The painting was the work of a distinguished Cork artist named Meekins, and was exhibited in the Royal

Hibernian Academy in Dublin, in the year '50. At the end of the room, opposite the sideboard, was a large sofa, with a glossy mohair covering, from the edges of which the intestines of this article of furniture were obtruding.

Edgehill rang the bell, and after a considerable delay the waiter entered the room.

"Can I have anything to eat here?" asked Edgehill.

"Throth ye can, Sor, anything yer 'onor likes to mintion."

"Well, there's no use telling you what I'd *like* for dinner, because they never have that at Irish hotels, but bring me whatever there *is* at about three."

"Yessor."

"And waiter, can I have a bed here to-night?"

"*A hwhat*, Sor?" asked the waiter, with astonishment in his face.

"A bed, to sleep in, you know."

"Faith, I dunno, Sor, but I'll ax the Missis."

This was quite a novel experience for the waiter, and he looked rather suspiciously at the gentleman who gave an order for a bed in such an off-hand manner, and as if there was nothing whatever extraordinary in the request. His astonishment was, if possible, increased, when Mrs. Molloy signified her intention of acceding to the request. And there was quite a subdued air about him when he announced the result to Edgehill.

Anything like the activity displayed by that hotel servant in laying the table has rarely been witnessed. He covered its entire surface with an immense clean cloth, which Mrs. Molloy had actually left the bar to obtain for him. He jerked it from side to side in insane efforts to prevent its "laying

crooked" as he expressed it. He dashed down the knives and forks, and touched them delicately, shoving them into position, and standing back with his head on one side. Everything had a habit of "laying crooked" with him, and the knives and forks could not be induced to take a parallel direction. He polished the cruet with his apron till it shone again—and was much disappointed when Edgehill objected to his placing the two salvers on the table to adorn the feast.

When the dinner-hour actually did arrive, the guest fared a little better than he had expected. And the waiter disrobed of his apron, and clad in sober black, commented on the merits of each dish. The mullet was "a pictur bedad." The cutlets under their brown bread-crumbs were worthy of a nobleman's table. And when, after the cutlets had been disposed of, a roast chicken

was placed before the diner, with sprigs of parsley adorning its breast, and slices of bacon round its body, the good fellow, with the dish-cover in one hand, and the other raised in an ecstacy of delight, exclaimed,

"I'm sure it's not every day av the year, as yer 'onor sets down to the likes av that!"

Concerning the bread and the cheese, he was equally garrulous, but was perhaps most entertaining on the subject of wine. He praised the "clar't," assuring Edgehill that it was "unayquilled." And declared that there wasn't an "oulder port in Munsther" than the glass his honour was drinking with his Stilton.

Dinner over, the guest informed the good-humoured creature that he wished to be alone, and lighting a cigar, he flung himself on to the old sofa. When the waiter, who

rarely had afforded to him an opportunity for exercising his conversational powers, returned to the room, he found that the cigar had fallen from between the "gintleman's" fingers, and that he was fast asleep.

It was a great disappointment to the menial—this untimely somnolency on the part of the "gintleman." There were many points upon which he was anxious to challenge his honour's opinion, giving his own at the same time at great length. So he walked about the room, and endeavoured in the course of a few minutes to create a variety of disturbances. He overturned a chair. He blew his nose violently. He knocked one of the ponderous salvers on to the floor. But the guest slept on, and didn't awake till after seven, when he found the attentive waiter standing over him like a guardian angel.

"I hope yer 'onor slep well."

"Very well, indeed, thank you, Pat."

"Mike, yer 'onor—*not* Pat."

"Well, Mike, then. I'm going out for a while."

"Is yer 'onor goin' to hear Misther Morphy's speech?" asked Mike.

"I sincerely hope not, I didn't know he was going to speak."

"Oh, faith, he's goin' to spake to the boys, to-night; he's a wondherful man, Sor, is Misther Morphy," and Mike shook his head reverentially.

Taking his hat and whip from the sideboard, on which he had placed them, Edgehill left the hotel. When he arrived in High Street, he found that thoroughfare rather crowded. Labourers had left off work and were lounging about in a purposeless sort of way—mustering most strongly in front of Murphy's house. He had not time to stop now. He entered the premises of the

"Eagle." In the outer office, he was informed by the boy that the editor was engaged with a visitor, but would be disengaged shortly—would the gentleman take a chair. Half an hour passed before the editor *was* disengaged.

This office in which Edgehill was seated did not look on to the street, but he had not been seated more than twenty minutes before he heard a considerable amount of cheering, as to the cause of which he had not much doubt. At last the door of the inner office opened, and The O'Banagher issued forth. When he saw Edgehill, he glared at him. Edgehill returned the gaze. Both men scowled, but neither said a word, and The O'Banagher, turning up his nose and shrugging his shoulders, walked off.

Edgehill went straight into the editor's private room, shut the door, turned the key

in it, and stood facing the literary chief of the local organ with anything but a pleasant smile playing about the corners of his mouth. It was a room with but a small inlet for daylight—the lamp was lighting, and the unwholesome editor was seated in the editorial chair.

Edgehill's first act was to knock the green shade from off the lamp, in order that with increased light he might have a better view of the literary den. The act, in itself, must have been sufficient to indicate to the editor that the intention of his visitor was hostile. However, to do him credit, it must be said that the sudden entrance and unceremonious procedure of Edgehill did not seem to disconcert him in the least. He rose, bowed, and motioned the intruder to a chair. The other affecting not have to noticed this overt act of

politeness, snatched a copy of the "Eagle" from the table and asked,

"Do you know who I am, Sir?"

"Perfectly well, Sir," replied the undaunted little man.

"Are you responsible for the reports in this organ?" he said, shaking the paper at its chief.

"I'm the editor of that journal, Sir, *that*, I suppose, is a sufficient reply."

"Will you acknowledge in your next issue, that every statement made regarding my share in yesterday's proceedings is a deliberate and wilful falsehood?"

"Certainly *not*, Mr. Edgehill," replied the editor with perfect calmness, "and now, I presume, our interview is at an end?"

"Is it, by Heavens?" shrieked Edgehill, and swinging his whip in the air, he struck the little man across the mouth.

If I were to stop and apologise for every

unheroic act performed by this hot-headed young artist, this history would consist of little else than apology. His assault on the editor of the "Ballymareen Eagle" was certainly not a very creditable act. He has acknowledged as much since. True, the provocation was great, and his uncle had advised this method of revenge. But to come upon an opponent unawares—to lock him in his own room, and there to horse-whip him within an inch of his life—these are acts which no one can justify. The heinousness of the offence is increased, too, when it is remembered that the victim was a weak, unhealthy little man, and had no chance whatever of defending himself successfully.

Edgehill administered a fierce castigation, and when the editor lay bleeding and insensible on the office floor, he flung a card at him with the intimation

"That's my address if you'd like any more."

Then, unlocking the door, he strode out with the air of a man who had performed some meritorious action, and telling the office-boy that he'd better attend to his master, who was very ill from an attack of horsewhip, he marched out into the street.

Arrived there, he found every prospect of a riot. A large and tumultuous mob was surging in front of Murphy's house. The Popular Idol, standing on the highest door-step, was addressing his adherents in eloquent strains. From the top window of the house a large pole had been thrust, and from this fluttered a silken banner, bearing the disloyal device of a harp without a crown. On the footway, at the other side of the street, was drawn up a detachment of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

It was getting dusk now, but mounted and beside the Sub-Inspector, the artist was able to distinguish Fitzgerald. Edgehill drew near the orator. He was expatiating on the wrongs of his country in general terms, and as he wound up each period the mob cheered him and encouraged him to proceed—though there is no doubt that he would have proceeded whether they had encouraged him or not.

Presently, the orator descended to particular illustrations of the tyranny from which the nation suffered. He would mention a recent event in the history of Ballymareen. Then he alluded to the arrest of the Sheehans, which he stigmatised as grossly illegal; passing from prisoner to prosecutor, he denounced McTavish in the strongest terms. He called him a ridiculous old Scotch fanatic, whose presence had insulted them for years; he said that he was a

disgrace to the religion that he professed—despicable as that religion was—and goodness only knows what more he might have said, had not the crowd suddenly been cleft asunder by the decided and sudden action of a little grey-headed man, who made his way up to the steps, and placing his hands on Murphy's shoulders, and his left leg behind the orator, quietly knocked him down, and then faced the crowd.

"My uncle!" exclaimed Edgehill, trying to get to his assistance.

"My father!" cried Norah, appearing on the steps, and helping to drag Murphy, whose head had been cut by the fall, into the passage.

They got the patriot in and shut the door. All this had occurred so suddenly, that the mob hardly knew what to make of it, or of the resolute little man who, with clenched teeth and folded arms, stood looking at

them. They speedily recovered their surprise however. Murphy had been attacked by the Scottish landlord; with a wild howl they rushed towards him. In a moment his nephew was by his side.

As the nearest members of the crowd were making up their minds as to who should first lay hands on this old heretic and his defender, the word was given to the Constabulary to "march." They came from the other side of the street "tramp, tramp," the mob dispersing at each side, and forming again in the rear of the gallant guardians of the peace. They marched right up to Murphy's house, and placed themselves between besieger and besieged. And so it came to pass that McTavish was *not* torn limb from limb as he had expected to be.

The mob, however, was still turbulent, and swayed to and fro, and bore down on

the backs of the police. The Sub-Inspector advising McTavish and Edgehill to "fall in," gave the word to his men to fix bayonets—then to the right about face, and then to the "double," and so they proceeded to the other side of the street. Then "to the right about face" again. So they stood staring up at Murphy's third floor front, where the banner fluttered gaily.

The mob formed again in front of them, and seemed to consider this charging about from side to side as very excellent fun indeed. They began now to indulge in groaning and hissing the police, and in cheering Murphy's flag and, under cover of the shadows of evening, in the projecting of sundry missiles in the direction of the armed force, which had just been charging backwards and forwards for their amusement.

Conduct of this sort irritated Fitzgerald.

He liked to see a mob that fled before his men, and disappeared in the back streets. He hated a mob that fled before his men—but turned up the next moment behind them. He was just consulting with the Sub-Inspector as to the advisability of firing a round of blank cartridge among them, when a light appeared in Murphy's drawing-room windows, which like many other drawing-room windows are situated on the first floor. The centre window was flung open, and Norah appeared at it, her face pale and her eyes sparkling.

When she stepped out on to the balcony, a perfect silence fell upon them. To the great astonishment of Edgehill, she commenced addressing the crowd. Her musical accents were heard distinctly from their side of the street.

"Gentlemen," she said, "my father requests me to state that he is too seriously

hurt to appear before you again to-night. The individual who committed the assault, will, he desires me to inform you, have to answer for it elsewhere. As a little rest and quiet are necessary, I have to request, gentlemen, that you will be so good as to retire, and with as little noise as possible."

Fitzgerald, who was perhaps angry that the girl should have succeeded in quelling a mob that had displayed a total disregard for his authority, determined to exercise it on the lady herself. He rode forward a pace or two, and shouted, pointing up to the banner,

"Have the goodness to lower that flag!"

Norah, who had retired into the drawing-room, immediately stepped back on to the balcony.

"Certainly not," she replied, flinging back

her head, and looking defiance at the magistrate.

At this the "boys" set up a ringing cheer. More missiles were discharged, and the police began to feel far from comfortable.

"If you don't take it down," shouted Fitzgerald, "I'll have it pulled down."

Norah, standing at her full height, one hand touching the rail of the balcony, and the other holding a red scarf which had fallen from her shoulders, replied,

"Mr. Fitzgerald! a week ago you imprisoned two poor men for interfering with an Orange flag at The Lodge, although its colour was an insult to every one who saw it. My father displays an emblem that all within hearing of my voice respect and love. We may surely claim equal rights with an alien. Now, Sir, touch that flag, if you dare!"

So saying, she stepped back into the drawing-room, and shut the window down with a bang. She took a light from the table, and the eyes of the crowd watched her till the light disappeared through the door, then there rose such a shout as has seldom been heard in Ballymareen streets. They were nearly mad with excitement. Stones and sticks were thrown at the police without disguise.

The mob called for McTavish and groaned at the police, and hissed them because those myrmidons of the law refused to comply with their demand. Fitzgerald went through the absurd form of reading the Riot Act—a ceremony to which they had become thoroughly used, and which failed to produce the slightest effect. Then the order was given to charge with fixed bayonets, but the boys were nimble and laughed at their pursuers.

It was not until a second detachment of constabulary had been called out, and a couple of rounds of blank cartridge fired into the midst of them, that order was restored. One or two of them declaring that they were mortally wounded behind, the rest speedily dispersed, having no desire to die in behalf of the cause which they had espoused.

When all was quiet, McTavish and his nephew, who were thoroughly exhausted from marching and counter-marching, and doubling and charging with the police, were congratulated by Fitzgerald on their escape from the mob. All three, accompanied by a mounted escort, then went to Molloy's Hotel, where Edgehill informed them of his intention of going to sea for a few days.

Both approved of the design. It would give things time to settle a little. Kate was

sure to come round, they thought. If Kate only saw that termagant, her father was quite sure that she would at once come to the conclusion that there was nothing in the silly reports. But Kate was a very self-willed and high-spirited damsel — and — and—

"Don't look so glum over it, my boy. Egad, Sir, if you only knew the trouble I had with her mother."

Edgehill then gave them the history of his interview with the editor, and they both laughed heartily, and shouted "Serve him right."

That McTavish should take this view of the case is not to be wondered at, for it has been seen that he himself was a man of violent temper, and capable of knocking down an opponent who made unpleasant remarks about him, although five hundred enemies were standing by. But that Fitzgerald

should have approved of it, is a very singular and deplorable circumstance, for Fitzgerald was a Justice of the Peace, and ought to have known very well that it was a clear case of assault and battery, and that the offender had rendered himself answerable to the law, and liable to a fine or a term of imprisonment.

Fitzgerald, however, laughed so heartily, that you could hear his cachinnation as he left the house, and went round to look after his horse and order McTavish's to be brought to the door.

When Edgehill was left alone with his uncle, he could not help observing that the old man was more than usually affectionate in his manner. For a moment he supposed that it must be on account of his attempt to rescue him from the mob. But it is not always the past or the present that shapes a man's sentiments or his actions. "Coming events

cast their shadows before," is a proverb that might be wonderfully extended in its application. Some shadowy, mysterious warning of the future is now and then vouchsafed to a mortal, and under its influence he is awed.

It was not the stern, hard man, whom he had met but a few weeks ago, that sat before Edgehill in the dismal old coffee-room, every article of which will remain in the memory of the artist for ever, on account of the short interview which transpired there now.

"It'll a' come right, my boy—it'll a' come right."

Frank shook his head and said he hoped so.

"I'll be the first to tell ye of it—ye won't want me to brak that news to ye, eh, my lad?"

The old man was in a strangely excited

state. They were quite alone. He bent over towards his nephew.

"Frank, boy, tell me again, what ye told me once before, aboot my sister—ye ken what I mean."

And Frank repeated to him the story of his mother's death, and how she had forgiven her brother and blessed him with her latest breath. The old man listened eagerly.

"And she died in those arms?" he said, pointing to his nephew. "I was a' wrong, Frank, a' wrong—and God has punished me—but I'll atone for it yet."

Then he looked long and steadily into his nephew's face, and said, as he had said standing at the door, when first they met,

"You're very like your mother, boy!"

When Fitzgerald re-entered the room, the old man was sitting with his hand covering his eyes, and Frank, with a half-

puzzled expression on his face, was sitting opposite him.

"Cheerful company, upon my word," cried the jovial magistrate. "Come, McTavish, your horse is waiting — and the police too."

McTavish rose and grasped his nephew's hand.

"Noo, me lad, you'll be very careful in that herring-smack. It's sometimes dangerous work, ye ken—an' death comes at a moment when we least expect it. I'll be on the look-out for ye on Tuesday—they can't be back before then—and we'll have good news for ye. Eh, Fitzgerald?—good news. An' mind my last words to you—for you're all I have in the world noo, Frank."

Fitzgerald too shook him by the hand, and both the seniors left the room. To Edgehill's surprise, however, his uncle came

back again, and standing in the doorway, said once more,

"Good night! God bless ye, my boy!"

And as he turned to go, a tear glistened in his eye.

Edgehill went to the window to watch them ride off. The streets were dark now, and he could only see the figures very dimly as they mounted. Then they were surrounded by the mounted constabulary in their long cloaks. And so they rode off—as hundreds of other gentlemen have to ride off, for life is a precious thing, and some Irish roads—quite erroneously, of course—are supposed now and then to be dangerous for the unguarded traveller, if the unguarded traveller, by deed or opinion, should happen to have offended certain Hibernian prejudices. For it is repeated as a great boast in Ireland, that people are not killed there for the sake of booty, but

are shot down for conscience sake as it were, and thus become victims on the national altar. A poetical idea, though, strange to say not found consoling in any degree by the surviving relatives of the victims.

Mike, garrulous as ever, entered the room as the police rode off. He received but little encouragement, however. Edgehill gave him directions about his mare, which was to remain in the stables three or four days—until his return, in fact. Told him to be sure and call him at five in the morning—asked to be shewn to his bedroom, on which the faded chamber-maid was produced and pointed out his apartment, with the poor stereotyped old smile playing about her face.

That night Edgehill dreamt—not of Kate—nor of the stirring events of a few hours before—but of his uncle's figure standing

in the doorway of the coffee-room, with a tear glistening in his eye, and a "God bless ye, my boy" on his lips.

CHAPTER X.

THE DESCENDANT OF KINGS.

IN a historical work of this kind, it is well to be quite clear as to the sequence of events. The proceedings of one day affect the next, the transactions of the next shape the course of the following. It is particularly desirable that the student of Irish History should bear this in mind, while "getting up" the period now under consideration. We are not disposing summarily of cycles. We are dogging the

incidents of days. On Thursday, the Release of the Martyrs was celebrated. On Friday, the two savage assaults were committed—one of them resulting in a civil war, which involved the calling out of an armed force, and the discharge of several rounds of blank cartridge. This brings us to Saturday.

On the morning of that day, The O'Banagher sat in his dressing-room at Castle Banagher. He sat before the toilet-glass enveloped in a large white cloth, which was tucked under his chin. Beside him stood his faithful domestic, Larry, with an open razor in his hand, and from the wall a painted effigy of the First O'Banagher—King of Munster, and founder of the race—smiled down upon his latest descendant.

Shaving the master was one of the greatest delights of Larry's life. For it was

during such operations that master and menial exchanged confidences, the former actually seeking the advice of his subject, while the latter related such items of gossip as he had picked up for the monarch's guidance. With the razor in one hand, and The O'Banagher's nose daintily held between two fingers of the other, he felt in a position to adopt a tone of familiarity greater than on ordinary occasions; the Honourable Member was so completely under Larry's thumb at such times—was so clearly a man subject to the various little weaknesses incident to human nature—retained so little of the dignity generally supposed to appertain to a Royal Personage.

Larry felt quite convinced on this Saturday morning, that when once he had the master seated in the chair, with a snowy napkin under his chin, and a foaming lather

on his face, the recently practised reticence of his chief would vanish with the soap-suds. With unrelenting brush, he covered the ruddy autumn stubble with a foam, white as that from which Aphrodite sprang.

"Larry," said The O'Banagher, spluttering through the lather that had strayed on to his lips.

"Yes, Sor."

"I dare say now you have (thup, thup) heard of the attack made upon me at the ball by Mr. Hedge-hog? (thup, thup), don't put the soap in my mouth—idiot!"

Larry removed the paste from his master's lips with the corner of the napkin.

"Troth I have heard of that same, yer 'onor. Misther Edgehill ye mane, Sor."

"Well now, Larry, I'm going to see

Miss Fitzgerald to-day, and d'you know I think I ought to punish that young fellow before I go."

As the master had not propounded a question, but stated his own view as to a line of conduct to be adopted, it became no part of Larry's duty to reply. The razor glided swiftly through the stubble.

"Now, Larry, supposing you were a Member of Parliament, mind, I say *supposing*, what d'you think you'd do to a man that had wounded the tenderest feelings of your nature, and flung you violently about a hall built by your ancestors and crowded with your constituents—I dare say you'd strike him, now?"

"Faith! I'd pitch into 'um sure enough. But I wouldn't advise ye' onor to thry it."

"And why the deuce *not*, Larry? I

suppose my sense of honour is as great as yours."

"Well, I dar say it is, Sor. But yer 'onor's fightin' weight is infayrior, an' this same Edgehill is the very divil of a boy intirely, a very nate hand wid a horsewhip, they tell me. He a'most killed th' idditor av the 'Aigle' last night. Och! will ye keep quiet, Sor. It's afther cuttin' yerself ye'll be," said Larry, holding the razor before his master's face.

"Um——I wouldn't have you think that I'm wanting in courage, Larry. There's not an ancestor of mine, but would have washed out such an insult in blood, not a solitary monarch among 'em. Faith! I can handle a hair trigger as well as the best of their Majesties, and egad I'll call this young swaggerer out."

The O'Banagher attempted to torture his countenance into an expression of dignified

ferocity, but with a fast disappearing lather on his face and a razor going *sweesh, sweesh* over his chin, the attempt was scarcely a success. Larry could not repress a smile had he been hanged for it.

"Ay, no doubt that ud be an aisy way av settlin it, Sor."

"But you shake your head, you villain, as if you didn't mean what you said. Why shouldn't I call him out?"

"Bekase he wouldn't *come* out, Sor. Av yer 'onor sent him a challenge, it's tin to wan he'd insult ye first and bind ye over to keep the pace aftherwards. Och! sure they're a mane lot entirely, these Saxons, an' it's a disgrace to a free country they are, bedad."

"I tell you I *will* call him out!"

"I wouldn't av I was in yer 'onor's place."

"Don't attempt to bandy words with *me*, Sir."

There was a silence for some moments. The O'Banagher was evidently cogitating: weighing the pros and cons of the whole question, and there was a smile on his face when Larry came to sponge it. He had evidently abandoned his blood-thirsty intentions.

"And so you tell me, Larry, that it's all over between Edgehill and Miss Kate."

"I have it on the autority av the cook. Faith, yerself an' Misther Murphy cooked *his* goose between ye."

"How dare you insinuate such a thing, you rascal?" exclaimed The O'Banagher sternly.

"I'm only tellin' yer 'onor what the cook said," replied Larry, with an air of great simplicity.

"I don't believe the cook said anything of the kind. I can't conceive what you mean

by such an insinuation. Don't say it again, that's all. Murphy indeed!" The O'Banagher was enraged that his domestic should harbour so ungenerous and unfounded a suspicion, and Larry, with true contrition in his accents, said,

"Of coorse there's nothing in it, av yer 'onor says so. An' I'll spake very sayriously to Misther Fitzjurld's cook about it. Faith! it's too bad that reports should be got up about a gintleman like yer 'onor."

Another interval of silence now set in, during which Larry removed the shaving materials and proceeded to arrange his master's auburn locks. The O'Banagher placed his glass in his eye in order to criticise his hair-dresser, whose operations were reflected in the mirror. Having first annointed his chief with the fragrant Macassar, he passed a pair of soft brushes over his

head with professional swiftness. He arranged and rearranged the tresses, coaxing and teasing them into position, with the feeling of a true artist, and finished off by drawing a comb lightly through those brilliant whiskers of which The O'Banagher was so justly proud. He then selected and fastened on The O'Banagher's collar, and adjusting a bright magenta scarf fastened by a heavy gold ring round the same, he stood back to admire the effect.

The O'Banagher's decorations were simple but massive. The white waistcoat, into which Larry helped him, was in excellent taste, and witnessed to the simple heart that throbbed beneath it. The blue frock-coat contrasted pleasantly with the magenta of the tie, and the pure white of the vest. His patent leather boots glittered in the morning sun that fell through the windows of Castle Banagher. No wonder that the little man

should stand for some minutes before the mirror regarding his image with a smile of satisfaction.

The little monarch, turning sharply round, said to Larry who was also lost in admiration,

"Where's Mr. Marshall?"

"Own room, Sor."

"Has the 'Times' of the day before yesterday come yet?"

"I think so, Sor."

"Well, then, take it to him. My compliments to him, and I'll be back to dinner, and hark ye, Larry, see that my guest wants for nothing."

"No, Sor—I mane yes, Sor."

The O'Banagher went down to the library, and seating himself at the desk, proceeded to reply to that morning's letters. The first was a missive written by the national schoolmaster of the town on behalf of a tenant

named Sheehan, begging in touching terms for an extension of time to pay an arrear of rent occasioned by severe family misfortune. To this The O'Banagher replied, referring the petitioner to his agent. Then he wrote to the agent, warning that functionary to refuse the Sheehans' request in decided terms, and to threaten ejectment in case of failure. The second letter was from a Dublin wine-merchant, requesting the Honourable Member's cheque for the sum of ninety-nine pounds, eleven and ninepence. To this the chief replied that he would remit when quite convenient, coupling the promise with a hint that tradesmen were becoming every day less obliging in their dealings with customers, and less careful of hurting the feelings and susceptibilities of gentlemen. The third letter was from Miss Murphy. That lady would be glad if The O'Banagher would call on her when next in town. She

had something very particular to say to him —particular underlined.

"What the devil is she up to *now?*" said The O'Banagher to himself. That letter he would answer in person. The fourth communication was from the Liberal Whip. That letter he wouldn't answer at all. And so having transacted the business of the morning he took his hat and stick, lit a cigar, and sallied forth from his castle halls, like a rale ould Oirish gintleman, all of the oulden toime.

Kate Fitzgerald sat in an easy-chair in her father's drawing-room. She was alone, and the window-curtains were drawn. She had her own reasons for seeking solitude, and for shutting out the sunlight. Her face had lost all its colour, and her eyes were inflamed with weeping. Now and then she sighed and uttered an exclamation of pain. Father

O'Brien's ballads lay on her lap. But its bright presentation binding was turned towards her. She was quite unmindful of its racy contents. She had had a long conversation with her father that morning, but had announced that her decision was unchangeable. Frank had deceived her, she could never be happy with him.

The father, scanning her pale face, gave it as his opinion that she would never be happy without him. But she was resolute. It might kill her, she said, or as was more probable, she might get over it, but speak to him again she never would.

That was her fixed resolve. No argument would move her. But if she could only see *that vixen*, and hear her addressing a mob of roughs, the anxious parent suggested, she would at once come to the conclusion that the reports had no foundation.

"I *have* seen her," said Kate, and thereupon she left her astonished father, and sought the retirement of the drawing-room.

There she remained brooding over the infidelity of mankind, and thinking, perhaps, —for the nature of women is composed of most contradictory elements—thinking, perhaps, of him who was now being borne over the blue waves towards the Cove of Cork. Her reverie must have been very deep, because she failed to notice the entry of a servant with a card, and it was not until the domestic spoke that she raised her eyes languidly, took the card from the salver, and read, "The O'Banagher."

"This is for my father, Bedford."

"No, Miss Kate, for you," replied Bedford, with just the least bit of a twinkle in his eye.

"Then tell him I'm not at home," the

lady was about to say, when she caught sight of the visitor's ruddy face at the door.

With a want of etiquette, which can only be excused by the excess of his affection, the Senator walked across the room, and Bedford left it. He was received with freezing coolness. But he was not sorry for it. This was confirmation of the report that Edgehill had been disestablished. The only circumstance which at that moment caused The O'Banagher to feel sorry, was the fact of the closed curtains. His toilet would not be displayed to such great advantage as under a stronger light.

Having shaken hands with her visitor, Kate said,

"Your business *must* be with my father, I think."

"No, I assure you, my dear young lady, my business is with you."

"Indeed!" she said. Evidently she took very little interest in him or in his business.

"You surely must guess the object of my visit," said The O'Banagher, with his head on one side, insinuating artfully "you really *must*, you know."

"No, indeed, O'Banagher," replied the other.

"My dear Miss Fitzgerald, since the night of the Hunt Ball——"

"Pray don't recall such disagreeable reminiscences," interrupted Kate, sharply.

"But you really must allow me to say," went on The O'Banagher, reddening, "that since the fatal evening I have spent sleepless nights. I was indiscreet, rude even, I fear."

"You were," acquiesced Kate.

"But whatever my faults may be, Miss

Fitzgerald, you can never accuse me of insincerity."

"I assure you, Sir, I have never thought of the matter."

"Then you'll accept my most abject apology," cried the delighted swain.

"I will—I do."

"Oh, Miss Fitzgerald, if you could only know what a weight you have taken off my mind. You have made me the happiest of men. And now that we are on the old footing, suppose that we change the subject."

Admirable tactician! It has already been stated that The O'Banagher possessed a great fund of anecdote. And now it appeared to him that he might put the lady in a good humour by drawing upon this fund. Already he flattered himself he had accomplished half the object of his mission. He had gained her forgiveness. It only now

remained to restore her good temper, and then he would proceed to the more serious proposal. He wished those beastly curtains were drawn that she might have a satisfactory view of his charms, natural and acquired. She still held his card in her fingers. That would serve him as a text. Pointing to it, he said in his gayest manner,

"I'll tell you a most amusing anecdote about that card, Miss Fitzgerald. When I was stopping in Dublin last year at the Gresham, you know, (*you* stop at the Shelbourne, I think,) my servant—my man Larry—brought up a card to me, and told me that the gentleman bringing it was downstairs. I looked at it, and what do you think was engraved on it?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Kate.

"Now guess."

"I really can't."

"Well, upon my word I'm not surprised," said The O'Banagher, who did not notice the asperity with which the reply had been delivered. "I could hardly believe it myself. It was 'THE OTHER O'BANAGHER.' I went down to see the fellow, and would you believe it, he claimed to be the real representative of our family, and wrote to the papers claiming the title; now, wasn't it absurd?"

"Very," replied Kate, who had not paid the slightest attention to the narrative. "Will no one come in and relieve me from this odious little man?" she said to herself.

"She's evidently coming round," said The O'Banagher to *him*self.

"But you know I am *The* O'Banagher," he persisted, "I can trace my descent in a

long and unbroken line, from pre-historic times."

He was leading up to the point, and took care to mention incidentally the length of his rent-roll, and the fact that the Government was favourably disposed towards him, and would probably give him something. Kate was hardly conscious of what the visitor was saying to her, but was suddenly startled into attention by the earnestness with which he exclaimed,

"There's only one thing wanting to complete my happiness; Castle Banagher is a lonely place, Miss Fitzgerald."

"So I've heard. I never was in it," replied Kate, absently, sighing at the same time, as she reflected on what a lonely place her own home had become.

"No! my dear creature," he cried, "but if you *were* in it, its loneliness would vanish. In it, I mean, as its queen,

its mistress, the brightner of its desolate hearth !"

Kate rose, flushed and indignant.

"O'Banagher," she said, "this is extremely distasteful to me, and I am surprised that you should repeat a——"

"But you have forgiven me for the indiscretion, you know," he reminded the young lady.

"On one condition," said Kate, still on her feet, "that you never mention such a thing to me again."

The O'Banagher was down on his knees in an instant, he was a man evidently not unused to that sort of exercise.

"If you don't get up, Sir," said Kate, stamping her foot, "I'll ring the bell."

This threat brought him to his feet very suddenly. He was now glad that the cur-

tains were drawn, under such circumstances any man must look sheepish. In subdued accents he muttered,

"But you'll give me leave to hope—whisper to me one word of encouragement. You're out of spirits now. At another time I may renew the application."

"Out of spirits, indeed! How dare he insinuate *that?*" thought Kate to herself. She would prove to him that she was in excellent spirits. Her last words to The O'Banagher deprived that gentleman of all his confidence. As he listened to them, the last spark of hope that flickered in his bosom was extinguished for ever.

"O'Banagher, you have forced your presence upon me this morning. After your disgraceful conduct on Wednesday night last, I must regard a repetition of the proposal you then made as a fresh insult. I am sorry you have obliged me

to say so. I must now wish you good morning."

The O'Banagher was a man who, on numerous occasions, had been summoned into the presence of Her Majesty the Queen to hear Her words of advice or commendation at the opening or close of the Session. Attended by the Black-Rod and accompanied by the few conscientious representatives who make it a point to be present at such ceremonies, he has marched right gallantly to the Bar as became a descendant of kings, and has retired from the august presence with so haughty an air, that I am sure Her Majesty must have been struck by the dignity of his demeanour. But now, alas! such experiences avail him nothing, and we refrain from describing his exit from Fitzgerald's drawing-room. As the watchful Venus covered the discomfited Paris with a cloud, carrying him off invisible from

the scene of his defeat, so do we catch up our unfortunate hero and whisk him away in silence.

When The O'Banagher entered Murphy's parlour, (so far indeed have we conveyed the unhappy hero) he found that favourite of the people in a mood far from amiable. His eyes were sunken, his expression sickly, and a red handkerchief was bound about his wounded head. He had been bled that morning by the local practitioner, and had received strict injunctions to avoid whisky and spirits of all kinds. He was engaged in writing that never ending autobiography of his. Doubtless the passages penned that morning had a melancholy tone. Norah was also seated at the table writing.

Things fall out sometimes even better than conspirators hope. A plot takes shape

of its own accord. Accident assists design. Providence aids the plotters. Take the well-known enterprise of Guy Fawkes, as a case in point. That melodramatic hero proceeded much further than one would have supposed possible. Perhaps the reader has seen his lantern, carefully preserved under glass in the Bodleian Library, and will wonder how an individual carrying such a utensil should have succeeded in getting in his stores of gunpowder and other combustibles into the cellars beneath the House. Fortune favoured him—up to a certain point.

And so with the conspiracy of Murphy and The O'Banagher. Norah had been summoned, but had not been taken into the confidence of the conspirators. She was quite innocent of the part she had been playing. By accident she met the would-be victim. By accident she helped to place

him in a false position. Then design came in and fixed his fate. The expected rupture had taken place. The plot *as* a plot, was all that its authors could desire—*but* there had been unanticipated results.

Some of the indirect consequences—the consequential damages one may say—were extremely disagreeable. For example, Murphy had received a scalp wound, was obliged to go about with a ridiculous red bandage on his head, and had been forbidden his whisky-and-water. His editor had fared even worse—was confined to his bed with but a faint hope of leaving it for two or three days, so that the entire management of the "Eagle" fell upon the shoulders of its proprietor. It is possible that even these grievances would have been endured with patience, had the grand object of the design been accomplished; but when Murphy saw the face of The O'Banagher appearing

in his parlour, he read discomfiture there and knew that they had plotted in vain.

Norah, of course, was unable to read the same message in The O'Banagher's crest-fallen appearance, as was deciphered by her parent. She only thought that the gentleman was in a bad humour, and that she might experience some difficulty in getting him to transact the particular business for which she had summoned him.

"It was *so* kind of you to answer my note so soon," she said.

"You asked me to call, and of course I have called," answered the Senator taking a seat. He was nothing if not gallant.

"You heard of the assault on papa last night?" was her first observation.

"My man Larry told me something about it. McTavish, I understand?"

"Ay, divil a wan else," said the patriot, replying for himself, "but I'll put me mark on the ould villain yet, besides holding him up to the scor-run of future toimes in me Autobography," and the old man bent over his manuscript, leaving Norah and the visitor to transact their business.

"You know," went on Norah, "that the two Sheehans have been put in jail for breaking McTavish's flag-staff."

"My man Larry told me something about that too."

"They're tenants of yours."

The O'Banagher guessed what was coming, and determined to be very cautious in dealing with this fair young diplomatist.

"My rent-roll is large, Miss Norah, and I daresay contains the names of several Sheehans."

"Come, come, O'Banagher," she said, drawing her chair quite close to his, "you'd have me believe that you're a hard-hearted landlord. But I won't; kind men like yourself always wear a mask of indifference. These Sheehans *are* tenants of yours, and the rent isn't forthcoming because the rent-earners are in jail. You'll give them time, won't you, now?"

The O'Banagher shook his head.

"What! you'll allow McTavish to have a complete victory, then?" said Norah, trying another tack.

"You're begging the whole question, my dear child. Besides, you know, I leave all these matters to my agent."

"But don't leave *this* matter to him. Your agent is a very worthy person, but I happen to know that he wants the cottage himself, and he's not likely to be influenced by poor me!"

"You underrate your powers of persuasion, I assure you," replied the landlord, bowing.

"Now don't be sarcastic, O'Banagher. You don't know how I hate it. Listen to me! Ladies sometimes, when they fail with a prime minister, throw themselves at the feet of the sovereign himself. See!" and rising from her chair, she sank gracefully upon the floor, and with her elbows supported on The O'Banagher's knees and her hands clasped, she looked beseechingly into his face — a beautiful suppliant.

"Well, well! we'll see about it," he replied, making no effort to raise the fair petitioner. Norah Murphy was a very beautiful girl, and her present attitude was far from displeasing to him. However, the lady arose assured of victory.

"No, no—you musn't see about it," she said, "here's paper and here's a pen. Now, write me a dear little note to the agent, telling him not to distrain." Thus did she wheedle the landlord till he actually drew up to the table and made out the desired document. He folded it, and giving it to Norah, who stood behind him with her hand on the rail of his chair, said,

"I think I deserve some reward for that, Miss Norah."

"Pa! I'm going to kiss The O'Banagher," she exclaimed, overjoyed at the success of her management. And faith she *did* kiss him, and the Honourable Member for Ballymareen seemed to like it very much, and left the house bearing away with him a more agreeable expression than that which he had brought into it.

Many were the blessings that were showered upon Norah's head, when she brought news of the reprieve to the Sheehans. She found them in a state of great distress, for they had received the curt reply of The O'Banaghar, and knew how hopeless it was to expect consideration from the agent to whom they had been referred. The son James had been at home when the missive arrived, and had left the house almost demented, they told her.

"But this will aise his mind, Miss Norah, darlin'," and the two poor women blessed her, and fondled her, and wept over her; and she sat with them for a long long time, talking cheerfully to them and singing to the baby, till one would find it hard to believe that this was the same dark-haired girl who, on the night before, had stood upon a balcony with blanched cheeks and

flashing eyes, hurling defiance at a magistrate and encouraging the riotous ebuilitions of a tumultuous mob.

CHAPTER XII.

"He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

SUNDAY evening. . . . The big bell of St. Malachi's Chapel calls the inhabitants of Ballymareen to Vespers and to Father O'Brien's sermon. A hard, heavy clanging sound has the bell of St. Malachi's—a remorseless summons that will take no refusal from careless parishioners. A crowded congregation kneels upon the flags as the priests pass to and fro before the altar,

as the gaudily-painted Madonnas glimmer in the uncertain light, as the windows shake with the rumbling blast of the organ.

Now the "Kyrie" peals from five hundred lips, and going up towards Heaven, dies away among the stained beams under the vaulted roof. What pathetic voice is it, that ringing through the upper spaces of the temple, leads the less cultivated vocalists?

Two poor women kneeling by a font of holy-water, and offering thanksgiving from sincere hearts, tremble with pleasure as they hear that voice, for the Sheehans consider its music the divinest upon earth, and strain forward unwilling to lose a note.

The bell of the little Established Church on the hill invites, with a modest tinkling. The still small voice of Protestantism—it has called together a highly respectable, but not

very numerous gathering. The tinkling ceases. The curate rises in his place. "When the wicked man——," then the congregation rises too.

Outside these temples there is a great calm—a beautiful silence. Down by the cliff one would be almost afraid to raise the voice, for Nature herself is hushed. The boy who all the week long whistled and made floats, or spliced the splintered oar, whistles no longer, and his implements and materials are put aside. The smoke from the cottages mounts straight into the air in thin blue columns. The strange stalks in the gardens are unmoved by any wind, and the blades of dry grass at the cliff's edge are motionless.

In some of the dwellings, gossips cluster round the turf fire and discuss their absent husbands. Even the pig is affected, and giving up his porcine gambols for the day,

reposes peacefully in his odorous sty. The sea seems to have adopted a slower motion and slides almost noiselessly up the sand, "sopping" quite quietly under the green planks of the jetty.

A peaceful Sabbath evening. So peaceful that some of the petitions put up in the little church on the hill seem altogether superfluous. Still, when the curate says, "from battle and murder and from sudden death," the congregation, as in duty bound, respond, "Good Lord deliver us." But there is no particular meaning attached to the words by the worshippers. The ideas which they are supposed to convey being quite out of harmony with the peace pervading nature. Kate Fitzgerald, kneeling in the old family pew, does not hear them at all. Her thoughts are elsewhere and her eyes dwell dreamily on the patch of colour that the evening sun, coming through the stained

window, has flung across the white surplice of the curate — a patch of colour, red, like blood.

McTavish is not present to join in that prayer, for he regards the Litany as a pernicious exercise, and second only to the Mass itself. In his own house and after his own fashion he too worships his Maker. A large room on the basement-floor has been set apart for the purpose. A room with white-washed walls, and no ornament save an engraving of the death of Calvin in a black frame, that hangs between the windows. At the end of the room, nearest the door, three forms are drawn up in three rows.

On these benches are seated McFarlan, and the cook, and the gate-keeper and his wife, and the groom, and the gardener and one or two others discovered in the high-ways and hedges and compelled to come

in. At the other end of the room, with the light from the windows falling on his grey head, sits McTavish. Before him is a deal table bearing three large books and quite a number of little ones. He opens the Bible and reads—reads from one of the minor prophets awful words of denunciation. He has a harsh grating voice, but he enters into the spirit of the bitter predictions, and his eyes sparkle with satisfaction, as, on through the lapse of time, he seems to witness the fulfilment of the prophesies. Already he beholds the wicked hewn asunder, and the works of their hands destroyed with fire from Heaven.

The chapter over, McFarlan takes the little books from the table and hands a copy to each member of the congregation. Then McTavish reads a paraphrase, and the congregation turning to their little books, help him to sing it. They sing

woefully out of tune, it must be confessed —but the writer of the paraphrases having ingeniously contrived to rob them of all the beauty of the original, these poor people may be excused for doing scant justice to the music of the composer.

The paraphrase at an end, McTavish opens an old book of sermons. It contains a discourse for every day in the year, and the orthodoxy of the discourses is unimpeachable, for they were written by Master George Samson and imprinted for him by J. R., at the sign of the Archangel over against Powles, in the year 1655.

This Samson was a divine who loved lugubrious subjects. He always chose the gloomiest texts, and his own comments thereupon were usually more gloomy still. The normal condition of the Lord's people he believed to be a state of affliction, and the fact that a man prospered was to his

mind proof incontrovertible that the fortunate individual was a child of the devil.

Assuring himself of the day of the month, McTavish turned to the discourse thereunto appointed. Although accustomed to the works of this divine, he started as he read the text. He almost wished that some other portion of the Word had been selected for that particular evening. It was an ominous scripture. His mind instantly went off to Frank who was at sea, perhaps in danger.

It was a long, long time since he had loved anything, and the thought that the one object round which his heart had twined itself should be taken away from him, caused him to pause before reading. Not one of the little congregation sitting before him could divine the reason of that pause. Between him and them there

was not the slightest link of sympathy. *There* was the text set down for that particular day of the month. It was his duty to read it. In the same harsh grating voice, he announced:

"He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

The preacher dwelt on the uncertainty of life, and the vanity of it. He enumerated the various messengers of Death that clustered round the mortal, always ready to do the bidding of the awful King of Terrors. He spoke of the soldier on the tented field, the citizen surrounded by the provocatives of plague, the mariner at sea. . . Time was a speck out of Eternity, a drop in the ocean. He enjoined his hearers to be ever ready for a summons that was often sudden, but that should always be welcome. McTavish closed the book.

Then the little congregation knelt and the old man prayed. Prayed to the Almighty to break and scatter his enemies, to destroy them utterly, to cleave them asunder, to empty the vials of his wrath upon them, and to remove them from off the face of the earth. In a more subdued tone he offered up a petition for those that were absent, that they might be spared and protected, that if any unseen danger threatened them it might be graciously removed. He mentioned particularly those who went down to the sea in ships, and earnestly pleaded that all who did business in the great waters might be saved from the perils of the deep. While he was pleading thus, the little choir at the church on the hill was singing,

> "Oh! hear us when we cry to Thee
> For those in peril on the sea."

So he prayed for enemies and for friends;

prayed for every one but himself, except in so far as his closing petition included him. "Protect us from a' kinds of danger this night, and unto thee shall be ascribed a' the praise and the glory, world without end. Amen."

Then the dependants at the end of the room, who had been falling to sleep with their elbows on the hard forms, yawned "Amen," and filed out of the room one by one, McFarlan alone remaining to receive his master's instructions.

The evening had begun to fall. McTavish rose from the table and left the room. McFarlan, taking up the books, followed his master to the dining-room. He placed the volumes on the table devoted to them, drew the curtains and lit the lamp. He was about to leave the room. His master detained him.

"I don't suppose there's likely to be any

change in the weather soon. It doesn't look like storm?" he said, in an inquiring tone to McFarlan.

The servant didn't see the slightest probability of a change. The glass was at "set-fair." There would be a week of fine weather at least.

"Those fellows down yonder by the cliff can tell the weather better than the best glass," suggested McTavish.

Well, if the master wanted the assurance of one of them, the servant was glad to be in a position to give it to him. The man who brought the turbot to The Lodge yesterday had confidently predicted a week of fine weather. McTavish's mind was considerably relieved by these assurances.

"Tell me now, did ye ever hear of ony accident to thae fishing-smacks?" he asked.

No. McFarlan had never heard of such a thing, except in a great storm, and even then they were safer than any gentleman's yacht whatsoever. The servant was perfectly aware of the anxiety that occasioned these inquiries.

"I feel a bit lonely to-night and may take a stroll as far as Fitzgerald's. Don't any of ye stay up for me. I may be late, and I'll tak the key. Good-night, McFarlan."

"Good-night, Sir," replied the servant, and went off to his basement, where he gave it as his opinion that the master was unco' fond of this newly found relative of his, and the cook agreed with him, discussing the matter, and marvelling greatly over it.

McTavish sat in his dining-room, not very well knowing how to dispose of the time. At last he opened his desk, and read

under the lamp a letter received years and years ago, a letter from his sister telling him of her son's birth, a letter full of tender expressions and fond regrets, a letter to which he had never replied. . . . Silently, in his inmost heart, he prayed God to forgive him that wickedness. He would have prayed to the departed spirit of his sister to look down upon him, had he not regarded such prayers as idolatrous and popish.

He put by the letter and locked the desk. He sat in his arm-chair thinking, till the clock on the mantel-piece chimed half-past nine. Then he went into the hall; he put on his hat, took a stout stick from behind the door and passed out into the starlight. He walked down the avenue under the thick shadow of the trees. He looked in at the lodge. The gatekeeper was about to throw open the portals over which he kept watch.

But McTavish was not going that way. He would let himself out at the small gate at the other side of the lawn, would the lodgekeeper give him the key of that. The lodgekeeper offered to accompany him. McTavish preferred to be alone; and receiving the key departed.

He turned and walked along the gravel path that ran by the side of the wall dividing the estate from the high road. It was a very long wall this, a very long path that stretched beside it. It was met at right angles by another wall of the same height. In this second wall and near to the angle was a small green gate. This McTavish opened, and passing through it, stepped into a narrow lane that led direct to Fitzgerald's. A dark lane, with the high wall at one side and hedges on the other.

Along this lane McTavish walked with

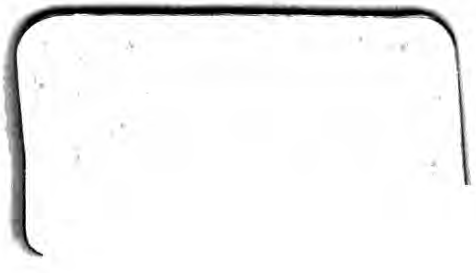
firm, decided step, the ferrule of his stick striking sharply upon an occasional flint. He was enjoying his walk. The assurances of his man had quelled his unreasonable anxiety. The serenity of the night satisfied him as to the groundlessness of his misgivings. All was very still. Nothing moved. There was no sound. No sound, save that of his own quick footsteps, and the occasional click of his ferrule on a flint. . . . The stirring of a thick bush on in front attracted his attention. Only a trembling of branches and a rustle of leaves. An unhoused cow had doubtless rubbed against it, or a belated bird returning to its nest had shaken the foliage, or——

Suddenly there came another sound from the bush, a terrible sound that rent the air and awakened echoes for half a mile round, the report of a gun. A cloud of smoke rose

slowly through the leaves, rose slowly and floated off quietly dissolving. A disturbed sparrow chirped and fluttered nervously and went to rest again. The deep baying of a distant mastiff came across the fields. Then all was silent.

Meanwhile the old man had flung his arms into the air, had staggered, had fallen on to his back, shot through the heart. He lay there motionless, his face ghastly under the starlight.

A peaceful Sabbath evening. Every where a great calm, a beautiful silence. The stars twinkled serenely in the early Autumn sky. The motionless shadows fell across the deserted lane.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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