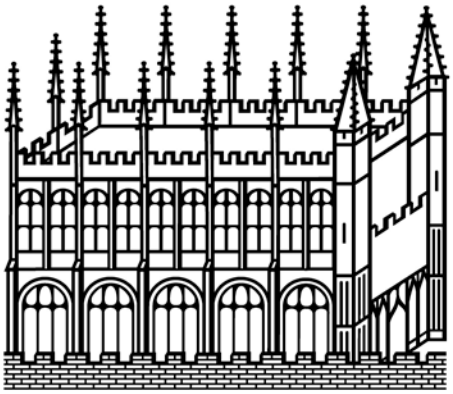

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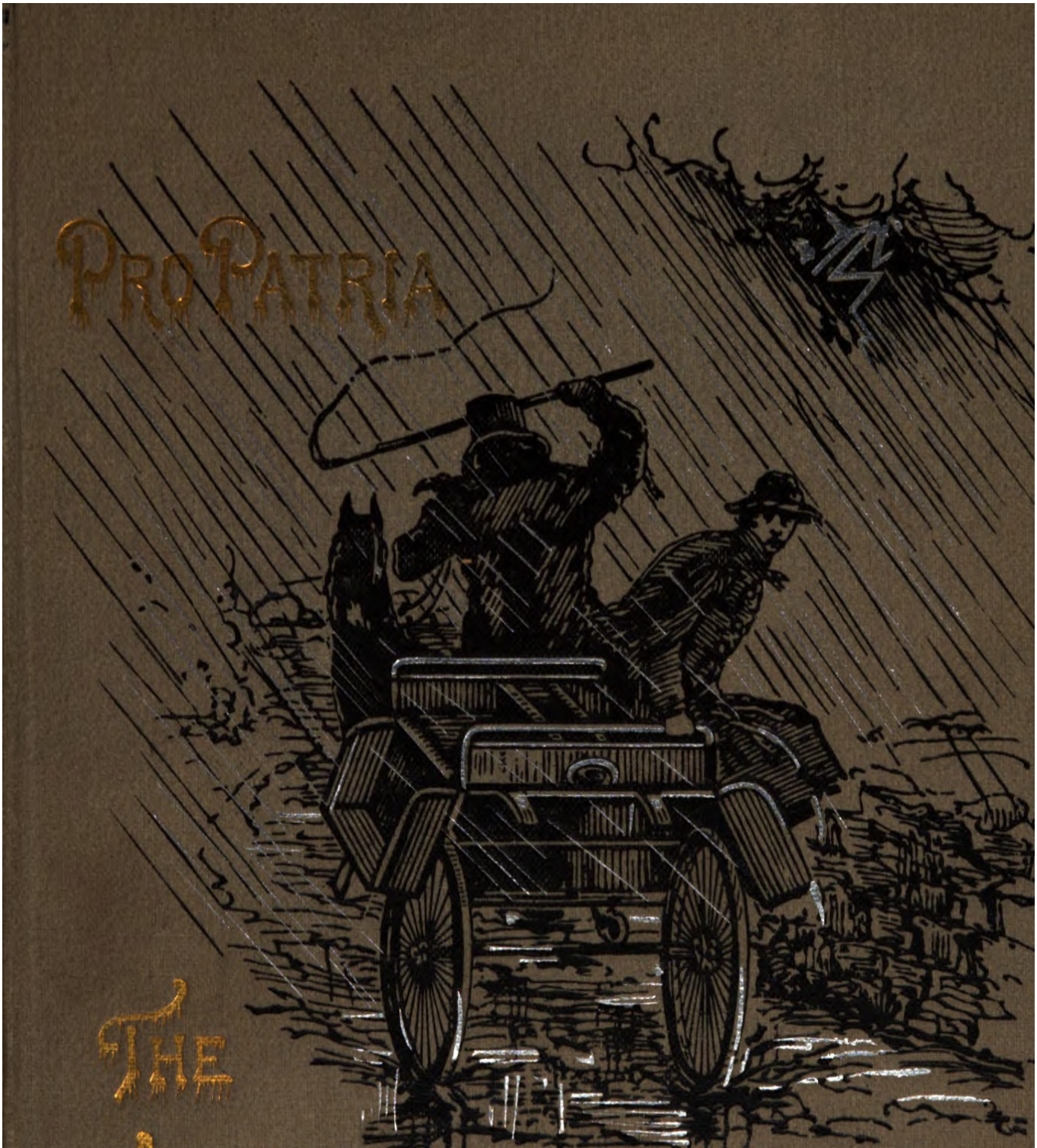

The Autobiography of an Irish Conspirator

PRO PATRIA:

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN IRISH CONSPIRATOR.

Carefully Transcribed and Edited from Authentic Documents.

BY

WILLIAM MACKAY.

Author of "The Popular Idol."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:
REMINGTON AND CO.,
NEW BOND STREET, W.

1883.

TO

MY COMPATRIOTS:

"THE MOST NOBLE, GENEROUS, BRAVE AND IMPULSIVE

PEOPLE IN THE WORLD:"

AND TO

HEREDITARY BONDSMEN IN GENERAL,

THIS BOOK IS HOPEFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THE AUTOBIOGRAPHER.

PRO PATRIA.

CHAPTER I.

NAME THIS CHILD.

"He's a boy," said my father, "and faith I'll christen him Ptolemy."

"Why Ptolemy, of all names in the world?" inquired the priest.

"Because he's a gintleman," replied my father.

My father's logic was perhaps less crushing than the blow which he struck the table with his open hand. The spoons tinkled in the punch glasses, and the glasses themselves were visibly affected. My poor mother, who was gazing on my three days'

old countenance, started in the bed, and exclaiming—

"Good Heavens! what on earth is that man up to now?" fell back again on the pillows with a little sigh.

There are, of course, a number of excellent names by which I might have been called—names of Apostles and other Christian heroes dear to the Church; it was only natural, therefore, that Father McGrath should criticise my sire's selection.

"You might as well call him Caligula. There's no sense in it," urged my father's spiritual adviser.

"Well, and what's to prevent me calling him Caligula, if I like?"

There was positively nothing. The priest shrugged his shoulders. My father went on—

"My son shall cut a figure in the world."

"If he's spared," piously interposed the priest.

"He will be spared," answered my father.

That matter having been decisively arranged, the author of my being quite regained his temper, which he invariably lost when opposed or contradicted. He set himself to replenish the punch glasses, and proceeded in calmer tones—

"I've had a spite against my godfathers and godmothers all my life for christening me Michael. I wouldn't go through life again, with my intimates calling me Mick, if I was to be made an archangel at the end of it. My son and heir shall have a better chance."

My father, with characteristic acuteness, saw a "But" preparing itself for utterance on the lips of his reverence. Anxious that the coming protest should appear to be elicited, and not volunteered, he asked—

"Now, what's your abjection to the name of Ptolemy?"

"It's heathenish," replied the priest, quietly.

My father laughed the loud laugh of triumph.

"Why, God save your reverence, that's no abjection at all. Sure, if I make a Christian Ptolemy, it's almost as good as gaining a convert. You'll be able to say, 'We've got a Ptolemy in the Church now, and it's all owing to the missionary zeal of Michael Daly.' Taste that brew," he said, pushing over a tumbler in the direction of the priest, "and if you like the mixin', faith we'll drink the health of the young convert."

It was little use to argue with my revered parent. So my health was drunk in a liquor of which, at that period of my career, I had no knowledge—my potations, as is usual with heroes at my immature age, being confined to a milder beverage.

Like St. Patrick himself, Michael Daly was a gentleman, and came of decent people. In the matter of income, he was also on a par with the national saint—who, I suppose, had very little in addition to the travelling expenses without which, it is to be presumed, he would have been unable to prosecute his various missions.

That irrepressible affection for downtrodden Ireland which has coloured my own opinions, and, indeed, shaped my destiny, was also one of my parent's most prominent and endearing characteristics—although I am bound to admit that he did very little practical good to such hereditary bondsmen as happened to serve him.

A gentleman; descended from a remote ancestry; of limited means, and possessed of a lofty sense of patriotism, the parallel between the Evangelist who

Drove the frogs
Out of the bogs,
And vanished all the varmint,

and my own excellent sire is apparent. Here, however, all resemblance between the saint and the sinner ceases.

I am afraid that Michael Daly's patriotism—with every filial sentiment I record the fact—differed from my own. Mine was a principle springing from the depths of my nature, and fortified by a subsequent study of the Irish poets and historians—men of vast learning and strict impartiality. His, on the other hand, seemed rather the outcome of a personal grievance. He hated England because to him England merely meant English law. Indeed, he had reason. For writs were as regular at our house as the monthly magazines, and my father's soul was nearly worried out of his body by the operation of almost every process that is known to the solicitors.

Castle Beg—my ancestral home—is situated within a mile of the town of Bally-

beg, in the County Wicklow. So much you may learn from the guide-books. But what guide-book can convey to the intending tourist the faintest idea of the incomparable beauty of my native county!

Nature smiles on Wicklow, and the land smiles back again. Its gentle slopes, now rising to the dignity of mountains, are cultivated to the very summit. Fleecy clouds settle round their crests like blessings. The white cottages that dot the landscape are well thatched, and the brown-faced wife finds time to attend to the potato-patch while her good-man is pursuing the science of agriculture farther afield. Even the domestic pig, which is by Englishmen charged against us as a national sin, presents in this county a general appearance of having been groomed, and his nasal utterances have acquired the melodious cadence of a kind of porcine brogue.

But the charm of the county is in the variety of its scenery. Here, we stand in the centre of an amphitheatre of hills—some of them clothed in the dark green of a gentle wood—others brilliant with meadow grass, or rich in the rippling gold of corn. Now, our road leads between two declivities ; the verdure has all ceased, and on both sides huge boulders rise stone upon stone, poised by some miraculous power, though seeming prepared at any moment to tumble, thundering down through the mountain stream that makes music beneath them. Again, we are on a wide plateau—the estate perhaps of an English lord, after whose name it is called ; deer scamper off under the shelter of the oak as we make our approach, and the startled hare scuds across our path. Leaving the lordly demesne, we seek the seclusion of a glen—one of Nature's cabinet effects—where in its miniature

perfection no blade of grass is out of place, and it seems as though the alteration of a single blackthorn, or the removal of one tapering fern, would mar the picture. Down, through a tortuous path surrounded by luxuriant undergrowths, we come at last to the stream that now flows smoothly as glass, and now rushes madly over boulders white with angry foam.

Nor is the county all inland. Setting our faces to the east, we follow the white road, the wind in our teeth becoming fresher, and the faces of the children, who now and then follow us for awhile, more bronzed. A sudden turn in the road, and we become conscious of a feeling of awe as we stand surrounded by silence, and in the presence of the sea. Yonder the waves roll musically along a shelving sand, where infants paddle; further off a dark headland meets the ocean in a contact which would shiver a three-decker; while the blue

waves of that sea which has been maligned by a Saxon statesman as a "melancholy ocean," sparkle under the sunlight in very wantonness.

The town of Ballybeg, is, however, not "convaynent unto the say," having to put up, as far as water is concerned, with a little river called the Rill. My father has often made it a matter of complaint that the inhabitants of Ballybeg should "have no sea except a bit of a stream." But that, I imagine, was only his fun. The town is situated in the basin formed by two small hills. On the slope of one of these—Mount Jerome—stands the chapel where Father McGrath officiates; and on the other stands the church which represents the national religion of the "Stranger," in whose crown, according to that eminent authority, Mr. Moore, the "emerald gem of the Western World has been set" with most heartrending results.

I may, however, here incidentally observe that I regard with the utmost dissatisfaction the disestablishment of the Irish Church, feeling, as I do, that the Hibernian patriot was by that act robbed of a grievance out of which capital might have been made for many a year to come.

A mile out of town, as I have said, stood Castle Beg. It occupied neither of the two hills, but stood close to the margin of the Rill. It is alleged against my countrymen that they are given to boastfulness, and that a very small inheritance is occasionally magnified into incredible proportions. I will therefore observe a wise reticence, although were I so minded I might narrate a history which would probably astonish those who have only known the Castle Beg estate since it dwindled down to a paltry and, I may add, but indifferently cultivated farm of about fifteen acres.

What little timber had at one time adorned and sheltered the estate had disappeared—my father very wisely remarking that its removal would leave more space for cultivation, besides giving a view of the surrounding scenery, and that for the life of him he could not bear to see the huge intruders standing about idle and unproductive when they represented so many golden sovereigns, and might, moreover, become both useful and ornamental when dealt with by the carpenter or the cabinet-maker. Like myself, my father was not much given to useful activity; although both of us were great admirers of industry in others.

My mother—Heaven rest her soul, poor thing!—was as nice a woman and as good a Catholic as ever broke bread. But she was sickly from the first, and said or did little to stimulate the energies of her husband. She was one of the Blakes of Auchnadoolan

—which is as much as to say that she had been nursed in the very lap of luxury, and could little understand that eternal want of ready money from which my father suffered, and which on his death-bed he alleged to be the greatest curse in the world. One of his last sayings was—

"I never made any money in my life except at cards, and then I always lost."

CHAPTER II.

TOUCHING MY POTATIONS AT THE PIERIAN SPRING.

I HAVE but little faith in poets and epigrammatists. They will say anything for the sake of sound. Now, Pope, who was considered—and, indeed, who considered himself—one of the most profound of philosophers, has circulated more ear-tickling nonsense than anyone in the world. He admonishes mankind either to drink deep of the Pierian spring or not to taste it at all. I will not be so hypercritical as to say that the poet had not drunk deeply enough to discover that his advice was couched in the most villanous grammar. My quarrel is with the advice itself.

In my time I have met with many pundits. But it always seemed to me that they

had partaken too freely of the spring, and had become stupidly intoxicated on their potations—in a word, blind drunk with excessive knowledge. Thank Heaven no such allegation can be made against me. I always hated the class-books, and regarded those whose ambition it was to become mere book-worms as completely lost to society. He who succeeds as a scholar is doomed as a citizen. I know that you may quote to me many instances to the contrary. It is, therefore, best to understand at once that I am not a man to be put down by an instance or by an argument either.

While truth and modesty alike impel me to this candid confession, I would not have you run away with the notion that I am utterly devoid of a taste for letters. There are speeches, letters, and poems of mine still in existence, which prove, I hope, that I possess something very much akin to the divine *afflatus*—if, indeed, I have not that

inestimable endowment itself. I am merely anxious to explain that I found the study of Nature and of men much more diverting than the study of tomes which may probably have been compiled by people not able to boast of a tithe of my genius.

At the National School at Ballybeg I was supposed to make my initial excursions into the realms of literature, and, faith, it was as much Mr. Dempsey could do to beat the rudiments into me. Here, however, I acquired a knowledge of the superiority of the Irish gentleman over the peasantry—for my schoolfellows belonged to the humbler ranks—and you may be sure that I was not slow to insist on the homage due to a Daly.

To the mere casual observer of society and politics it may seem strange that I should have lorded it over those whose cause I have since fought on platforms and in newspapers. But that homage

which is denied to the foreign invader is the right of the lord of the soil, and it is almost invariably rendered with characteristic servility by the Celt.

If from my inferiors I demanded that which I conceived to be my right, I hope to prove by a single incident that I was ready with the utmost magnanimity to take the part of the oppressed, and even to sacrifice truth at the shrine of duty.

There was a big red-headed fellow at Dempsey's school of about my own age—and I was only twelve when I left that capital academy—who seemed to resent the deference which was paid me by the other pupils. His insolence one day knew no bounds; in fact, he waited for me just at the entrance of Gora Wood, and as I came along, satchel in hand, strode up to me and said—

"Now, ye tief av the wurrld, ye've been comin' it mighty high over me; and

who the divil are ye, afther all said an' done?"

"I'm a Daly," said I.

"Och! Daly to the divil," he answered; "an' whose Daly at all at all, wid his ould fifteen-acre patch? Why, my fadher 'ud buy ye up, only he couldn't sell ye at a profit."

"Let me pass," I replied, as brave as brass.

"Not a pass will ye pass apast me," he says, "till ye take aff yer jacket an' let us see which av us is dhe betther man; for it's insultin' me for the last three months ye've been."

With that he began squaring like a true vulgarian as he was; and I, not wishing for an encounter with a boy who would only be received in my father's kitchen, shouted to him—

"Get out, ye red-headed omadhaun!"

But the fellow gave a savage "whirroo"

—a species of war whoop which is, I regret to say, still common among the low Irish—snatched my satchel from my hand, and struck me a violent blow on the mouth.

In encounters of the kind weight always tells, and, notwithstanding my pluck, I had no chance with an opponent who was, relatively speaking, a giant. He gave me a most cowardly and cruel beating, and left me half-dead on the road.

The next day he was duly reported to poor old Dempsey—a worthy creature, who was fond of my father's patronage and punch. Of course he received a condign punishment, and always afterwards treated me with that respect which was my due.

Now, to show that I had a magnanimity somewhat singular in one possessing my high spirit and pride of birth, I may mention that, some weeks after this occurrence, we were both engaged in one of those

orchard depredations so natural and forgivable in youths of our age. I had helped him on to the wall, and he had just thrown me down an apple. Even after this lapse of years I remember its fair proportions and ruddy rotundity. At this unfortunate juncture the owner of the orchard appeared, and caught me by the collar. He called to my affrighted companion to descend, and when the robber had reached mother earth he also collared *him*. Without saying a word he marched us off to Dempsey's, evidently under the impression that he would see us both receive a sound flogging.

That sagacious orchard owner had counted without his host. He ushered us into the schoolroom, where the very punctual had begun to assemble, and formally accused us of stealing an apple. My confederate was about to reply, but in an

instant I interrupted him, and, turning to the accuser, said—

"Now, don't stand there fixin' up your lies. How could *two* boys steal *one* apple?"

The retort not only confounded our captor, but sent Dempsey into a fit of laughing, and got us off a punishment which, after a lapse of years, I may safely admit we both richly deserved. The circumstance proved that I had a heart to forgive and an adroitness of repartee not possessed by every lad of my age.

"Faith," said Dempsey, still laughing in the complainant's face, "Ptolemy 'ull never want to go to Whately for his logic, and if he was a Protestant, it's Archbishop of Dublin he'd be."

Although I should be sorry to go to such lengths as my schoolmaster, who was rather partial to me, I believe there was something in what he said, and that there

were few of the prizes in life for which I might not have successfully striven had I only given my mind to it.

My mind outgrew the limits of Dempsey's about the same time that my legs got too big for my first pair of breeches. And if I hadn't extracted all that he knew out of my instructor, I at least became too high-spirited to be kept among his humbler pupils, from whom I had earned the sobriquet of "Ptolemy the Torment." This nickname, I may observe, was never mentioned to my face, because it was well known that I would take an early opportunity of resenting any liberties of the kind.

I returned from the seminary one day and found my father in the parlour cleaning the lock of his gun, and looking as glum as Tommy Moore's statue in College Green.

"Tear an' ages, Ptolemy," he said, "what have ye been up to now?"

It had only been a little bit of a trick of mine. I had tied Dempsey by the back buttons of his coat to his chair. I had hardly completed the operation when the door of the schoolroom opened, and the Inspector of Schools walked in. Now, poor Dempsey stood in the most wonderful awe of officials placed in authority over him, and would at any time have given a week's salary to get a glimpse of the Inspector's reports. So, with his customary haste and politeness, he would have jumped to his feet, but the strings held, the chair pulled him towards the fire, and he fell back with it, his cranium coming in contact with the fender.

Of course I didn't know that the Inspector was coming, nor did I think that the pedagogue would nearly break his head—which, by the way, was never of the strongest—or perhaps I would not have bound him. So when my father said—

"Tear an' ages, Ptolemy, what have ye been up to now?" I replied—

"Nothing, father."

"Tear an' 'ouns, ye rapscallion, d'ye call it nothin' to break a man's head?"

It was no use my father trying to chop logic with me. I replied with the utmost readiness and a pretence of sincerity which has often served a turn to myself and my countrymen all over the civilised globe—

"Considering I tried to tie the man *down*, and that he hurt himself by jumping *up*, I don't see that I'm to blame."

"Blame or no blame," said my father, "I'll have to pay the fellow at the dispensary for patching up his skull."

"*I'll* pay for it," replied I, with an hereditary independence.

"It's me own boy that's in it," said my mother, who had entered just before.

She had a fine appreciation of my generosity, although she knew I hadn't a

penny in my pocket. But, as I have always said, the intention of an honest man is worth half the munificence of millionaires who publish their good deeds in the newspapers.

I may mention that Dempsey eventually recovered, and the doctor's account was charged to my father. If my father never paid, I have the solid satisfaction of reflecting that the schoolmaster was never asked to pay.

The accident—and that it was an accident I have sufficiently shown—closed my career at the National School, and I was placed under the care of Father Corrigan, our curate—a man who had all the learning of Maynooth at his fingers' ends, and who took unheard-of pains to give me a taste for classics, mathematics, and the higher branches of learning in general. I am afraid that I scarcely repaid this amiable and indefatigable ecclesiastic for

his pains. I learned that all Gaul was divided into three parts—but was not greatly interested in the fact—and when I could translate "Arma virumque cano" I made no further use of the knowledge than to write an epic on the King's Arms in the High Street, commencing with the self-same words.

His reverence was more successful in teaching me history. Under his tutelage I first derived my knowledge of the English and their doings. This information, I need scarcely say, I derived from the pages of the learned and veracious Lingard. While the delightful legends of Keating taught me that when the Ancient Briton was wandering among his native woods in a state of comparative nudity my ancestors enjoyed all the privileges of an advanced civilisation, and compiled a literature which, although unfortunately lost, is supposed to be richer in poetry, grander in imagery,

and more replete with the outcome of wit, fancy, and humour than any other literature in the world.

To the pages of the histories which I have just quoted I am indebted for those strong and accurate views of the relations between England and my own country for which I am noted. A deep study of the inestimable compilations has always rendered me proof against the misrepresentations of more popular historians. I have been deceived neither by the rounded periods of Macaulay nor by the calumnious inventions of Froude.

Indeed, so great is my interest in a true narrative of the transactions between England and Ireland, that I have myself thought of undertaking the publication of a work on the subject. In one particular my book would differ from all other works of the kind, for it would not contain a single word of Saxon.

He was a profound philosopher, who observed that the least important part of a man's education is that which he receives from books. While, therefore, I attended with tolerable patience to Dempsey with his rudiments, and to Father Corrigan with his higher branches, my physical being was under the superintendence of my father, who was excessively fond of me.

The Castle Beg stud was not, indeed, what it used to be; but we had a hunter which I declare my father would put at anything, while I rode a nag called Patsy. She wanted an eye, poor thing; but was full of pluck, and wherever my father went there I followed.

My worthy sire was under the impression till the day of his death that duelling was still in vogue, and so taught me the use of the pistol. When I had mastered the art of shooting the corks off bottles, the good man appeared one day in the

dining-room with a mahogany case in his hand. Making a signal to my mother to maintain silence—for my father was always under the impression that my mother was a chatterbox, although it was he who did most of the talking, while she, poor woman, rarely opened her lips—making a signal for silence, I say, my father addressed me in the following words :—

"Ptolemy, me boy, wid this case of jooling pistols I hand over t'ye the honour of the family."

Here he opened the lid and pointed to the deadly weapons that reposed so peacefully in their red velvet receptacles.

"Wid that one there I pinked Mr. Tandy, a Grafton Street confectioner, who had the presumption to propose t'yer mother. D'ye remimber it, Kitty, alana ?"

"'Deed, an' I do," replied my mother, with tears in her eyes, and with a look full of the tenderest love and admiration.

"Fancy an infurnal maker of jam tarts makin' up to one of the Blakes of Auchnadoolan," he went on, touching the weapon, as though he would at that moment wish nothing better than to rush out and recommence hostilities.

I afterwards ascertained that the Blakes of Auchnadoolan—who, though an ancient race, were a mean-spirited lot—would have infinitely preferred the Dublin tradesman to the Ballybeg gentleman. But my mother chose for herself, and didn't get a halfpenny in consequence.

"That little fellow there," went on my father, pointing to a second pistol, "is the wan I missed the Attorney-Gineral wid, when he stud for this county in—God knows the year—*I* forget. It was a big fight that, and has, I may say, become historical. I had called this laygal luminary a vile Castle hack, and a contimptible six-and-eightpenny pettifogger, wid other com-

pliments such as may be passed by one gintleman upon another at election times. But, bedad, he tuck me sayriously, and called me out. I met him in the Fifteen Acres, in the Phaynix Park, just at sunrise, to the intinse disgust of some deer that were browsin' about. It was a grey light, and I couldn't see well, besides havin' been sittin' up all night dhrinkin' whisky punch."

Here he shook his head seriously, and said, in that affectionate tone which characterised him when he admonished me—

"Niver dhrink whisky the night before you go out."

And I never have.

"Well," proceeded my father, "we were placed. 'Keep yer hands steady,' whispered Lord Fowlmut, who was my second. I could hear the Attorney-Gineral, whose face was as pale as a parsnip, whisper to Daniel O'Connell, who was his second,

'Is he a good shot?' 'Dead," says O'Connell, wid great good humour. The signal was given. I fired. Whin what was my surprise to see both the principal and his second fall to the cowld earth samingly as dead as mutton. 'You git off,' shouted Fowlmut to me, an' faith I didn't want tellin' twice. I showed them a clane pair of heels, for it was no joke to have shot an Attorney-Gineral and a popular layder—though how I could have managed it wid the same pistol was a mystery to me."

"And how *did* it happen, sir?" I asked.

"Well," laughed my father, "it was this way. Whether the whisky had spoiled my vision or the grey light had interfered wid it I don't know, but the fact is I covered Mister O'Connell instid av my opponent. The Attorney-Gineral didn't notice the mistake, an' his own pistol goin' aff, it kicked. He thought that the sinsa-

tion was caused by my bullet, and fell to the ground from sheer fright. And even afther they got him to his hotel he wouldn't believe but he was dead. Howsumdever, we all dined together three days afther at the Shilbourne, and wer firrum frinds till they both died in arnest."

Having thus given me part of the history of these interesting irons, he shut the lid of the box with a sharp click, and said—

"An' now, Ptolemy, they lave my possession for yours, and wid them you receive a sacred trust. So repate these few words afther me."

My dear father was as solemn as Father McGrath on a Sunday, and the following form, which at that moment appeared to me to possess all the value of a religious function, was duly gone through:—

He—"I, Ptolemy Daly, of Castle Beg,"

I—"I, Ptolemy Daly, of Castle Beg,"

He—"Do hereby solemnly declare and swear."

I—"What's the use of declaring if I swear, or swearing if I declare?"

He (sternly)—"Repate, I say."

I—Do hereby solemnly declare and swear,"

He—"That I will always protect the honour of the Dalys,"

I—The honour of the Dalys,"

He—"To the death,"

I—"To the death."

He—"Now say, 'So help you heaven,'"

I—"So help me heaven."

The oath which I then took I have since maintained, and I may mention that the pistols are still in excellent condition—never having been used—and will be at the disposal of any gentleman who may care to doubt the veracity of these memoirs, or question the honour of their author.

Besides my skill with duelling pistols, and my excellent style of riding, I became a capital shot with the fowling-piece, and was considered at the age of fourteen the most dangerous enemy to trout that ever threw a fly on to the waters of the Rill.

Nor was I wanting in the other accomplishments of an Irish gentleman. I could mix and drink a tumbler of punch, and sing with great applause the "Rakes of Mallow," and other national and patriotic melodies.

Indeed, although my mother often sighed and thought that my father gave me too much licence—a fallacy in which Father McGrath backed her up—I shall ever think that the manly tone and gentlemanly manners which have marked me through life are in no small measure owing to my father having, at an early age, instilled—or, shall I say, distilled—into me an insurmountable feeling of equality.

He was my father, to be sure. But he was also my boon companion. And I speedily became a favourite with those men of the world who used to meet nightly in the parlour of the King's Arms discussing the crops, the local scan-mag, or the latest development of that British tyranny under which my country was—and is now, God help her—groaning.

CHAPTER III.

THE PATRIOT'S BOAST.

It was a countryman of mine who wrote about the Patriot's Boast—which he declares to be that

> Where'er *we* roam,
> *His* first, best country ever is at home.

It is a pretty sentiment, and although Oliver Goldsmith spent the greater part of his life in the vicinity of Fleet Street, London, I have no doubt he felt sincerely what he wrote—when he wrote it.

I have already owned to the fervour of my personal love of county, and have confessed that it was as much a part of my nature as original sin. I may have been unconscious of the sacred possession till circumstances educed it. But there it lay,

like the gold in an Australian gully, or the pearl in a submerged oyster.

The condition of our county may have prevented an earlier appreciation of the fact that we were no better than a nation of slaves. The very soil was in league with the oppressor to deceive us. As a boy I beheld the earth producing plentifully; the meadow land rich and of a greenness incomparable; the corn waving gold in the August air; and the pretty flower of the potato plant beautifully indicating the prodigious murphies that ripened beneath. The turf smoke ascended in thin blue columns from the cotter's cabin; the children laughed and gambolled in the garden patch; and their fathers, returning from work, looked for all the world as though there was nothing wrong with their native land.

But I soon learned how deceptive were such appearances. How the hilarity of my

countrymen was a splendid hypocrisy; and how, beneath a seemingly peaceful exterior, there slumbered the fire of a volcano, which might at any moment cover the land with destruction.

I find it difficult to fix an exact date. But I must have come to a knowledge of the truth some time after making the acquaintance of Father Corrigan. His superior did not trouble himself about politics. But Father Corrigan saw that, in Ireland at least, politics and religion were inseparable, and that if England had enslaved our country, she had also contemned our faith.

Corrigan was a man of the people. His father had been a police-sergeant in Ennis. So you will infer that what education the priest received was due to his own indomitable perseverance, rather than to any paternal assistance. He was a tall, thin man, with an immense forehead; and

although he was only twenty-five years of age when he came to Ballybeg, the people stood more in awe of him than they did of Father McGrath, who was a pleasant, genial man, with a joke and a smile for everybody, and who bothered himself little about foreign governments and their machinations.

The views which I formed under the tuition of my clerical mentor were strengthened by the attitude which my father assumed towards the agents of law. It is true that when I became older, and was in a position to define my principles with clearness, I acknowledged that my father's patriotism was a thin and unreal thing, unfounded in anything more stable than personal pique. At this time, however, his acts and his deliverances did much to strengthen the admonitions of the patriot to whom my education had been entrusted.

Just after I had been presented with the

pistols, my father was at loggerheads with two or three insatiable tradesmen, and, indeed, was momentarily expecting the bailiffs in at the suit of one Green, a wine merchant, in Grafton Street, Dublin. His indignation against English law in general, and Green's view of it in particular, was a thing to witness. He discovered, however, that threats and promises, when put in writing, were of no avail, and therefore determined to go up to Dublin and see the eminent firm. My father had a wonderful belief in his own powers of persuasion.

It was settled that I should accompany him on this not very extended journey; and after a little demur on the part of my mother, my best clothes were submitted to some essential repairs, and I was ready to start and eager for the fray.

We had in our employment a man named Noonan, who had been in the family since my father's marriage, and who, from being

farm-servant, groom, and coachman, had finally been promoted to a position which was half butler and half kitchenmaid. Noonan had true notions as to the importance of the Dalys, and whenever my worthy parent went away for any length of time, the reliable Noonan was left in charge.

He was a big, bony, simple-minded man of about fifty, his face perpetually beaming with a smile, the charms of which were rendered irresistible by a squint in the left eye. As my poor father used to tell him, when he happened to pass through the kitchen—

"There ye go agin, Noonan—with one eye up the chimney and the other skimmin' the pot."

Pleasantries of this kind are accepted by my poor countrymen in the most civil way from their superiors. But only let an Englishman attempt a similar jocularity,

and I, for one, should be sorry to answer for the consequences.

When we were ready to start for the metropolis—and sure Dublin is the most elegant capital in Europe—Noonan was called in to receive his master's instructions. On such occasions only did Noonan's smile give way to an expression of the most pitiable imbecility, for the fact is the poor fellow had the most villanous memory, and was, unhappily, conscious of his defect in this particular. Indeed, he usually forgot half that he was told, and misunderstood the rest.

I can see him now, poor boy, as he stood gazing helplessly from my father to my mother, screwing up his face with a violent effort after intelligence, and wrinkling his brow in sheer desperation.

"Now, Noonan, I'm going away for two days, or perhaps three, at the fardest."

"*Three* days!" repeated Noonan, with

an accent on the numeral that implied as plainly as words that those three days would be an interval of the severest mental torture.

"Yes, three days, an' its masther of Castle Beg you'll be during that time."

"Faith, sorr, it's only a poor servant I am, an' it's not preshoomin' I'd be"—here he looked towards my mother. "Masther of Castle Beg! Shure, I'd as soon think av bein' Lard Liftinant av Oirland."

"Bedad, Noonan, yer a much more useful institution—an' almost as ornamental, for the Jook's no beauty, and *that's* the truth."

"Och, *don't*, master, darlin', for it's puzzlin' me agin ye are."

My father laughed. He had rather an exalted opinion of his own mental endowments, and was very fond of having a bit of fun with this menial.

"Well, I leave ye in charge—ye understand that much, any way?"

"Troth, I do. An' if yer anner was to *give* me in charge, it's to jail I'd go wid all the pleasure in life."

"You'll keep an eye to everything inside the house an' outside the house?"

Mental obfuscation had again supervened. Noonan drew a deep sigh and answered not.

"You'll take care of the place?—that's what I mane."

He brightened up. In this form of expression he apprehended the idea which my father would convey.

"Av coorse I will. Haven't I always tuk care av it? Where wud it be only for me?"

"Very good. Now, supposin' any one was to come here wid the worst intintions while I was away—what would you do wid him?"

"Ax 'um in, an' give um a glass av Jimison."

"Oh, ye would—would ye! Ye'd entertain me inimy, would ye—ye goggle-eyed rascal! You're a pretty servant to live on the estate of an Irish gintleman!"

"I beg yer anner's pard'n!"

"Och, go an' beg the divil's pardon. Here, listen to me."

A supreme effort of concentration had now converted Noonan's face into a mass of furrows, and the hesitation in his eye was more painful than ever.

"Now," said my father, holding up his finger, "supposing you saw the infurnal envoy of a still more infurnal court of justice comin' up the avenue of Castle Beg to put an execution into the ancestral halls of Michael Daly, what would ye do *then?*"

"Shoot 'um," promptly replied the servant.

"Bravo!" said my parent, greatly re-

lieved at Noonan's apparent return to intelligence; "you're not such a fool as you look."

"Faith, Father McGrath—God bless 'um—says I couldn't be that."

"Well, hark ye, Noonan; although your answer was in a general way correct, an' shows ye to be a thrue an' loyal servant, you mustn't shoot the officers of the law—if they come."

"*Not* shoot 'um, sorr?"

"No, not shoot them. But I'll tell ye what ye may do; ye may interview them."

"Is that an aisy death, sorr?"

"It's not a death at all, ye fool. It's only to speak to them."

"Begorrah, thin, that's what I'll niver do. I'll shoot 'um av yer anner thinks well av it. But I'll niver demane meself to spake to wan o' dhim."

"Silence, ye tief o' the world! Keep the doors well barred when ye see a

stranger come along from the lodge, and then go to the little spare room with the window over the hall door, an' see what they want."

"Shure it's meself knows what the haythen want, an' faith I'd like to give 'um a skinful av it."

Poor Noonan was anxious for the encounter, and in imagination was already peppering the sworn foes of his master.

"Tell them when you see them through the window that the hall is full of guns and the lawn full av man-traps; that I'm in France, an' that the furniture's in London. Tell 'em anything ye like. Only get rid of 'em."

"Mayn't I throw a shtone at 'em?" asked Noonan in tones of affecting entreaty.

"Well," said the author of my being, yielding somewhat; "perhaps if ye could make it appear as if it had fallen from the

wall by chance ye might let off a pebble or two."

"Faith, I'll make it luk as if id come from the wall, and no mishtake about it."

"That's the only instruction I've got to give ye. Anything else ye want to know go to your mistress about."

"An' yer anner said, I think, ye'd be back in three weeks?"

"I said three *days*, ye pelican av the wilderness."

"Three days I mane, sorr."

Full of the importance conferred by his new duties Noonan marched away to his out-houses, where his voice, raised in remonstrance with some of the minor menials, showed that he had already taken an exaggerated view of his responsibilities.

We took leave of mother, who had an embarrassing and, I think, even foolish habit of weeping copiously during a leave-taking, no matter how short the separation

which it prefaced. We tore ourselves away with much ado, and proceeded to the King's Arms, where the mail left for Wicklow, which, at that time, was the nearest town boasting of a railway station.

I need not dwell here on my visit to Dublin, as I shall speedily have to describe my settlement in that great capital. It may be mentioned that my father made some arrangement with Green, which I knew postponed the threatened hostilities. And it may be mentioned also that I never knew a man who made so many arrangements, and who fulfilled so few.

One circumstance connected with this visit to Dublin renders it memorable. It was during our stay that I paid my first visit to a theatre, and you may be sure that, to a young fellow with my taste and ability, the visit was fraught with a pleasure which I can scarcely find words to express.

The theatre selected by my father was

the Theatre Royal, in Hawkins Street, and the play announced was *Othello;* the leading part to be sustained by Mr. Leander Jones, then a very eminent tragedian. There was a full house, and from a front seat in the pit I had an excellent view of all that transpired. I was not able then to understand the allusions and rough witticisms of the gallery audience, flavoured with a certain unctuousness peculiar to Dublin humour. My father pointed out to me the various celebrities present, including the new Lord Mayor, and Mr. Hand, the great snuff manufacturer, of Westmoreland Street, whose name is known all over the civilised globe.

While my father and I were chatting away, and listening to the chaff of the gods and to the music of the orchestra, there was suddenly a silence. It was only momentarily, and was followed by a shout.

Everybody began standing up and cheering, and the band struck up—I regret to record this of a band of Irishmen playing in the capital city of my native land—I say the band struck up "God Save the Queen."

Borne away by what seemed to be a common impulse, I also rose and cheered with the greatest goodwill. I had taken this course before my father could interfere. When, however, he saw that I was really joining in the plaudits of the multitude, he pulled me down on to the seat again, and pointed to a box from which a tall, sullen-looking gentleman, with a blue ribbon across his breast, was gravely bowing to the now excited audience.

"Who is it?" I asked of my sire.

"The Jook—the Lard Liftinant," he replied.

"And why do they play 'God Save the Queen?'" I inquired.

"Because they're snobs an' jackasses, an' have no taste for music, bedad."

I trust that I am a true Irishman and a true patriot, but I must admit that I have observed in certain classes of my countrymen an abject servility in the presence of Royalty and Rank which is unworthy of their high position in the scale of nations. I myself am acquainted with many lords, and have dined at the very best clubs in London with our hereditary aristocracy, but I should never dream of boasting of the fact here, or elsewhere, except by way of pointing a rebuke which I think the Dublin people richly deserve.

It was only the other day I met Lord Sevenchurches walking down St. James's Street, and he said to me—

"How is it that your country is still under the heel of the foreign oppressor?"

"Because, my lord," said I, "we are too

fond of regarding other people's titles to look seriously after our own."

His lordship said—

"Indeed, there's something in that," and he would have asked me into his club to lunch, only he was otherwise engaged.

But I must apologise for this digression, and get back to my father, whom I have undutifully left sitting in the pit of the Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street.

There was a great delay in the raising of the curtain, and the people upstairs began to exert their lungs in questioning the concealed management, and indulging in remarks somewhat depreciatory. With the utmost coolness one youthful malefactor called upon the Duke for a hornpipe, upon which another called out—

"That 'ud be Grace before Mate, anyhow!" while a third, having a poetical gift or a ready memory, shouted—

"Up wid the linen
An' make a beginnin'."

When the confusion was at its height, a little grey-headed gentleman came before the curtain, and declared his intention of making a speech. Although this person was in the highest degree respectful in his manner, and amiable in his appearance, and although he bowed with the most humble deference towards the Viceregal box, it was many minutes before he could obtain a hearing. When at last comparative silence was restored, he made a speech, in which he expressed his regret that Mr. Jones, the eminent tragedian, was suffering from severe indisposition, and would be unable to appear. This pleasant announcement was received with a roar, compared with which the former demonstration was comparative silence. After sundry appeals for a further hearing, the grey-headed gentleman, who had moved off to the prompt side ready to make his escape in the event of an ava-

lanche of oranges, sticks, boots, and other missiles, at last succeeded in saying that at a moment's notice Mr. Dominick Murphy had consented to take the part of Othello, that those who were dissatisfied with this arrangement could have their money returned at the door, but that he trusted as many as possible would remain. Not a man stirred. Dominick was a favourite. He played Irish comedy parts to the life. And the audience, clearly believing that a man who could play an Irish character could play anything in the world, patriotically determined to remain.

I shall not record my impressions of this performance, beyond the mere fact that I was delighted above measure. Although my good father, after we left the theatre to partake of stout and oysters in a house in D'Olier Street, shook his sides with laughter, and swore that anything funnier than an Othello of five feet nothing ad-

dressing the Venetian senators in a strong Irish brogue he could never hope to see again, if he lived to be a hundred.

In those days I was not much of a critic, but if my father were alive now I could reply to all his sneers. In the first place, Mr. Murphy was as big as Garrick, who I believe played Othello with some little applause. As to the Venetian senators being shocked with his brogue, I dare say they were afflicted with as great a one themselves. And, in any case, I believe a brogue to be a great acquisition. In recent years I have heard the part of Othello played most satisfactorily by an actor with a strong Italian brogue, which in its musical cadences is generally admitted to very greatly resemble the Irish.

On the evening of the third day we commenced our journey home—my father as usual greatly elated by the success of his mission—any little postponement of an

obligation of his being invariably regarded by him as almost as good as a discharge in full for the debt. It was a cold night, and as dark as pitch when we drove up to the King's Arms in Ballybeg.

The landlady received us with many curtseys, and proceeded to mix a tumbler of punch for the owner of Castle Beg, out of which I usually had administered some spoonfuls to me as if it were a nauseous drug, in which light I am certain I never regarded it.

"I hope there's nothin' wrong up at the Castle," she asked.

"'Deed an' I hope not. But what makes ye think so?"

"Well, I hear that there's no wan been in anear the house for three days, an' it's as much as a poor body's life is worth to go on the lawn after sundown."

"How? what? why the divil? Explain,

woman!" shouted my father, all in a breath, and full of passion.

"It's Noonan, sir; swears he'll shoot any wan that comes anear the primises, and there hasn't been a sowl come in or out of the house for three days. It's meself is afraid the poor boy is mad, mebbe."

"Mad!" cried my father; "I'll madden him! Come along, Ptolemy."

We quitted the cheery portals of the King's Arms, and stumbled along the dark road. It was as full of ruts as a *boreen*, and only that we knew every inch of it we must have fallen a dozen times.

At last we got to the gates of Castle Beg. We found them unlocked, and the lodge empty. My father uttered an oath between his teeth, and strode up the avenue, I following him as quickly as I could, and anticipating I know not what.

We had got about half-way between the lodge and the house—or, why should I not say Castle; for it was a castle, wasn't it? —when we heard a voice shout to us—

"Stir another step, ye dam villins, an' I'll fire! Git aff that lawn, or I'll do a mudher an yez!"

It was Noonan's voice. My father bawled in the utmost fury—

"Shut up, ye fool, and come down an' open the door."

I suppose my father's voice must have been disguised with passion and a bit of a cold he had, for the order had no effect.

"I tell ye," continued Noonan, "that the masther's in London town, an' his few bits a' sticks is gone to France; and av ye come widin spakin' distance, it's a dead man ye'll be."

"Fool, don't you know me? I'm yer master!" came from my father.

"I'm not such a fool as to b'lieve that,

anywan. The masther's gone away for three weeks, an' it's my orders to shoot anyone that comes near the house. An' here goes!"

A heavy missile whizzed above our heads, and burst like a shell on the path behind us. It was accompanied by no report, but I was clearly impressed with the notion that Noonan had introduced some deadly engine of warfare into the Castle, and was now directing it against his masters.

We both made a rush for the trunk of a big elm that stood on the lawn, and, having sheltered ourselves thus, continued to shout in order to induce the rebel to exhaust his ammunition, whatever it might be. The ruse was completely successful. The man took sure aim, and, out of half-a-dozen shots, four took effect on the trunk which sheltered us, exploding as they touched the tree, and scattering abroad

pebbles and bits of iron, which fell in showers, and nearly blinded us with the dust that flew from them. Having stood fire for some time—the artful wretch always aiming in the direction of the voices—we could hear him say to his companion, "There goes the last of the bomb-shells, an' bad luck to it." Now we could account for the emptiness of the lodge. In his zeal for our protection, Noonan had pressed Kerry into the service, and was at this moment lamenting to that sagacious person that he had no more ammunition wherewith to exterminate his own master.

Judging that the fortress was now without the means of defending itself, we made a sudden sortie from behind our own defences, and stood right under the window at which our factotum was conducting his military operations.

"Noonan, ye imp of darkness, don't ye know me?" shouted my father.

Noonan, who bore no resemblance whatever to an imp of any kind, exclaimed in horror-stricken accents—

"Och! the saints presarve us, an' sure it's the masther that's in it. Open the dure, Kerry, for I daren't."

When eventually we obtained admittance to our own house, my father's sense of humour overcame his resentment. My mother was shivering with fright in the parlour, and Noonan had locked himself into the cow-house.

Kerry, however, who had been merely a hired assistant in the matter, was proportionately less alarmed, and explained to his employer that Noonan had, with infinite expenditure of time and labour, filled claret bottles with pebbles and old nails. These he had deposited in the spare room, at the window of which he kept watch night and day so as never to be surprised by the enemy. And as the

enemy, in Noonan's mind, included the local tradesmen, not a soul had been permitted to come near the mansion. It was lucky that none of the threatened merchants were sufficiently venturesome to defy Noonan's threat, because a single one of the charged claret bottles meeting an enemy in the face would have burst with an effect fearful to contemplate.

The blame attending the circumstance my father was pleased to transfer from the shoulders of Noonan to those of the English Government—which were perhaps better able to bear the burden.

"If it wasn't for them beastly English laws, I wouldn't have had to give the man any directions at all. An' be the Lord Harry, if I had a dozen servants like him, the divil a bit would I settle any claim made upon me by an attorney!"

That was a sort of patriot's boast in

which my irritable but warm-hearted parent constantly indulged.

Meantime, Kerry had succeeded, by blandishments and assurances, in inducing Noonan to leave his hiding-place. He came into the room covered with humiliation and the odours of the byre. There was such a pitiful expression of pain and penitence in his sinister eye, that for the life of us we couldn't help laughing, and Noonan's night defence of Castle Beg was forgiven, my father declaring that he would there and then invest him with the Victoria Cross, if he thought there was any value in that decoration.

My father could be very satirical when he chose; and I think I may mention, with a pardonable pride, that I have inherited the paternal endowment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TINDER PASSION.

THAT joke—if indeed I may call it a joke—is not mine. It was perpetrated by my father, who said that Love was called the Tinder Passion because it was so easily ignited. I have been in love a hundred times myself, and am prepared to agree with him to some extent. More arrant nonsense has been written on this subject by the poets and the romancers than on any other within the range of human knowledge.

Mr. Moore, the author of "Lalla Rookh," who was a great friend of my father's, has been guilty of a wonderful deal of poetical fustian about

The light that lies
In woman's eyes,

and was always twanging his little lyre to the tune of "Love's Young Dream." I never had any very high opinion of that bard's talents. He was insincere and artificial, qualities which one never discovers in the genuine Irishman. He could go into the most amazing rhapsodies over the land of his birth, wishing her

> Great, glorious, and free,
> First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea,

and could on occasion become most discreetly disloyal. But he cared nothing for us in his heart. He sang his little songs in the salons and boudoirs of London. And it will not be speedily forgotten of him that when he and Emmett were at Trinity College together, they belonged to the same patriotic association, but that, on an intimation from the authorities, the astute Thomas renounced those opinions for which Mr. Emmett died on the scaffold.

There is only one poem in the works of

that over-rated poetaster for which he must receive the credit due to him who utters a truth for the first time. It is a habit with shallow writers to laud the excessive and phenomenal virtue of Irish-women. Heaven forbid that I should venture upon one syllable which would in any way tend to lessen the lustre of that priceless possession. But neither would I permit the women to have all the credit. If the women are virtuous, it is because the men are chivalrous. With fearless and commendable candour, Mr. Moore, in one of his neatest lyrics, has set this matter at rest for all time. You will doubtless remember the poem.

A lady of inexpressible beauty—and all Irish ladies are inexpressibly beautiful—wanders throughout the length and breadth of the island, decked in gems that were rich and rare, and bearing a

snow-white wand. For all that Mr. Moore tells us to the contrary, this eccentric young woman had no other covering besides the articles of *bijouterie* already mentioned. I presume, however, that she was arrayed in a style becoming her station in life—the proverbially moist character of the atmosphere of my native land scarcely admitting of any other theory. Thus wandering, she encountered a knight. The stranger was evidently a Saxon snob, and was doubtless exploring the country under the personal supervision of the Cook of that remote period. With the irrepressible presumption of an Englishman, he addressed the lady, inquiring in a tone of brutal familiarity whether Erin's sons were so good or so cold as not to be tempted by woman or gold. A fitting response would have been to fell the intruder to the earth with a well-aimed blow of the

snow-white wand. But more severe was her retort, and as memorable as it was severe. "Sir Knight," she said—

> "Sir Knight! I feel not the least alarm.
> No son of Erin will offer me harm,
> For though they love woman and golden store,
> Sir Knight, they love honour and virtue more."

In this stanza it will be seen that Mr. Moore attributes the exceptional innocence of the Irish rather to the self-restraint of the men than to any denial of opportunity on the part of the women. This characteristic clings to my countrymen even when they settle in the alien's land. And although by reason of their extraordinary virtue they may earn in London and other debauched capitals the soubriquet of "Joseph," they should remember that the sneer of the wicked is a higher compliment than the eulogy of the just.

While I disagree with Anacreon-Moore in his view of that which has been called

the divine passion, I would not have you think that I ignore it altogether, or have been insensible to its symptoms. I adopt the view of those who regard it as a species of malady for which matrimony is the appointed cure—though I have known many poor fellows who are just as bad after the ceremony as before it.

My father was not a lady's man. When a party was given at Castle Beg, only men were invited, and those must be men who could tell a good story, sing a good song, and drink a bottle of whisky without showing any signs of it. Orgies—is what Father Corrigan used to call these pleasant little reunions. And, I dare say, Father McGrath thought so, only he knew it was not worth while arguing with Daly Senior.

At these orgies I did not assist, although I was usually permitted to be present during the dinner. Dinner over, the whisky jars were placed on the shining

mahogany. Pipkins of hot water hissed and spluttered on the fire, and my father, who took great pride in my accomplishments, called on me to sing, "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old," to repeat the Lord's Prayer in Latin, or to give a little song of my own composition, which I insert in this place as a specimen of my earlier efforts. My later poetical compositions have been of a more gloomy tone and more classic style. The earliest efforts of distinguished men, however, always have a charm for the sympathetic public, for which we seek in vain among the ripe fruit of their genius.

THE LITTLE PIG THAT PAYS THE RINT.

Och! Pat's devoid of vulgar pride,
An' makes no boast of long discint;
Wan thing he loves all else beside—
The little pig that pays the rint.

He loves his wife and childre dear,
The darlin's Heaven to him has sint;
But home would be a prospect drear
Widout the pig that pays the rint.

So fill the noggin to the brim,
While on divarshun we are bint,
An' dhrink wid cheers the Gruntin' Him—
The little pig that pays the rint.

Having given my song, or my recitation in the Latin tongue, I was permitted to retire, and then commenced those proceedings which, in the ecclesiastical technology, were supposed to constitute an orgie.

This may bear some slight resemblance to a digression. In point of fact it is *not* one. I am merely anxious to show that in my own home I was not likely to be brought under the influence of female society—excepting always the society of my dear mother and the servants. The sentiment of love, however, like the sentiment of patriotism, was strong within me. It only waited for the circumstance to educe it. And that circumstance occurred in due course.

I had been scouring the country on the back of Patsy one day, with no com-

panion except an Irish retriever called Arrah na Pogue—one of the finest bitches ever bred in Wicklow—and just as we got to the Glen of the Towers the nag was going a bit lame. I jumped off to have a look at the beast's hoofs, when I heard voices to my right.

The Glen of the Towers is about the most desolate spot in the whole county. A road runs at the bottom, and not a stream. But it is a road that leads from nowhere to nowhere. On each side the ground rises in steep declivities, covered with fir, and ferns, and ash, and abundant undergrowth. When the sun is at his hottest and his highest, there seems to be coolness and shade in the Glen of the Towers.

I crept forward, and kept well out of sight.

In the middle of the road stood Miss O'Connor, the daughter of our Member. I

did not know the young lady personally, though I had often seen her ride out and drive out with her father, "the Meejor," as our simple people called him. She belonged, you see, to the Protestant faith, and being therefore a heretic, I had no more dealing with her than the Jews of ancient times had with the Samaritans.

But she was a woman. She was a pretty woman. She was a pretty woman in distress. I was mighty quick in those days, and took in the whole situation at a glance. Miss Mary—for it was Miss Mary with the golden hair, blue eyes, and little laughing mouth—had dismounted from her roan mare to pluck some fern or wild flower that had attracted her attention. While thus engaged Rory Power had appeared upon the scene, and was now for some reason attempting to detain the lady. All the Irish blood boiled in my veins, and I longed to avenge a look, a

gesture, calculated to disturb the angelic girl.

A word about this same Rory. Rory was the adopted of the village. Parentage he had none. Intellect he had very little. But, if Nature had been stingy to him in the matter of mind, she had been prodigiously generous in the matter of body. He stood six feet two in his stockings, when he had any—which was seldom, as he preferred to wander free and barefoot about the world. He was at this time about thirty years of age, and had a gaunt, hungry aspect, which in no way added to his charms. His clothes were all too small for him, having in better days belonged to owners less long. His gaunt, red wrists, and his ankles, swollen with much walking, showed naked and exposed to the weather. He carried in his right hand a formidable oak sapling. And, take him for all in all, he looked by no means the sort of man

whom one would care to encounter in a lonely lane at the dead of night.

Between Rory Power and another of our townsmen there existed a friendship as singular as it was romantic. Dennis O'Loughlin, who played the organ at the little Established Church, is the very man I refer to. He came from the North, and was reputed to be a man of great learning, having taken his degree at the Queen's College in Belfast. He was a little man, and walked with a slight limp. His features were good. He had coal-black hair and bright, beady eyes. Some people called him handsome. I didn't. He had a most unpleasant, sneering smile, which seemed to say that after all you were a poor, ignorant wretch, and little understood a nature so great and complicated as that of Dennis O'Loughlin.

Over poor Rory this man exercised a wonderful fascination. Rory blew the

organ bellows for him when he practised on week nights, and there were those who lived near the church who said that they could always tell Mr. O'Loughlin's frame of mind by the way he played. Sometimes it was soft, low, and sweet—the music of moonlight and river reaches. At other times it was loud and thunderous—the music of storm and darkness. But, in whatever mood he played, Rory always blew the bellows.

One evening he entered the church in a great hurry, with Rory following at his heels. Soon the passing villagers were startled by a series of wild and passionate gusts of music, that shook the windows of the church and startled the sparrows that fluttered in the eaves. It was afterwards discovered that on the afternoon of this day Mr. Dennis O'Loughlin, who had been engaged by the Major to teach music to his younger daughters, had been dismissed.

The reason alleged by the wiseacres who assembled nightly at the King's Arms being that the musician had been too particular in his attentions to Miss Mary. This rumour was denied most strenuously by the supporters of the other house—The Harp That Once. But the other house was the resort of Mr. O'Loughlin, when he condescended to enter a tavern, and the *habitués* may have therefore been somewhat prejudiced in the organist's favour.

Here, however, standing at the bottom of the Glen of the Towers, was Miss Mary herself, and the henchman of the redoubtable O'Loughlin. Creeping nearer, and still hidden by a blackthorn, I stood and listened—

"Ah, Miss Mary, alana—don't say no."

"Let me pass!" cried the girl.

The half-witted man paid no attention to her request, but stood before her, barring the way.

"You've put your comedher an him, jool—an' he's dyin' for the love o' ye."

"Are you mad?" said the girl, with flashing eyes.

"No, Miss Mary, I'm not mad. The boys tell me I'm flighty. But I'm only pleasant."

"Please, Rory, let me get to my mare."

"Do *you* be pleasant, too, Miss Mary. Come to him that's dyin' for ye!"

"I don't understand you."

Rory drew himself to his full height. He reminded me of Othello in the play, when they confront him at the end, after he smothers Desdemona.

"May the Lord forgive ye dhat lie! And may sorra an' sickness be your portion here"—

Mary stopped her ears with her fingers.

The infuriated simpleton grasped her wrists, and held her arms down by her side.

"May your death-bed be onattinded! An' may God forsake ye in the last hour!"

"Coward—let my hands go!" cried the girl in a voice which was evidently growing weaker.

But, firm in his righteous purpose, the unpitying Rory answered—

"Come to Dinnis, thin; come an' spake wan word of love an' comfort to Dinnis—my own Dinnis—my masther!"

"Never!" she shouted.

"Thin, may the worms gnaw yer body, an' may yer bed be made in hell! May"—

The poor child uttered a moan that drew the tears from my eyes, and fell backward on to the sward in a dead faint, Rory leaning over her.

I rushed to Patsy, mounted, and rode off for assistance. You must not think that I adopted this course because I am at all wanting in personal courage. I am one of the bravest of men. But I know the

value of discretion, and no matter in what shindy I may have been during my life I have always exercised my discretionary powers. "Ptolemy has a cool head," was an expression frequently made use of by my companions when desirous of describing one of my most notable traits. Had I on this occasion taken my pistols with me, I should have fired on Rory without the slightest compunction, or at all events have so scared him by exhibiting the deadly weapons that the lady would have been immediately relieved from her embarrassing position. What, however, would have been the probable result of my rushing upon the maniac, all unarmed as I was? Compared with me, the man was a giant, and the probability is that my attack upon him would have so roused his passion that he would have murdered us both, and left our bodies by the roadside. I had no ambition to take part in a reproduction of

"The Babes in the Wood," I can tell you.

Therefore it was that I dug my spurs into Patsy, and galloped home as fast as his legs could carry me.

My father stood aghast to see me rush along the avenue, my cheeks flushed with excitement, and my nag in a white lather.

"Well, Tam o' Shanter," he shouted in his cheery way, "is it a steeplechase that's in it?"

"No," I replied, pulling up; "it's no steeplechase that's in it. It's murder that's in it."

"Hwhat?" he exclaimed.

It always required some stimulating intelligence of that sort to arouse the dormant energies of my sire.

"It's true," I said; "that scoundrel Rory has been cursing Miss Mary O'Connor in the Glen."

"What, the Meejor's daughter?" asked

my father, in a tone of voice which implied that he felt rather relieved than otherwise on hearing that it wasn't somebody else.

"Yes," replied I; "and if you don't hurry, there'll be a murder done."

"An' what the divvle would ye have me do?" he asked.

"Make Noonan put Sugar Candy into the shafts of the outside car, and we'll all three go and rescue her."

"Why not dhrive over an' tell her ould fadher?"

"Because, sir," said I, with native politeness, "I have not the pleasure of knowing him, and because when a woman is in distress every delay is a heinous crime."

"Spoken like a Trojan," said my father, with a twinkle in his eye.

The devoted Noonan, with much ado and many attempts to ascertain the object

of our quest, soon put Sugar Candy to. And my mother, who was also kept in the dark as to the goal of our journey, was admonished to be prepared to receive a guest. Noonan mounted the box, and father and I took our places, one on each side of the vehicle.

"Where to, sorr?"

"To the Glin of the Towers. An' dhrive like the divvle."

"Yes, yer anner. Whoop! Git along out o' dhat."

The latter observation was addressed, not to my father, but to Sugar Candy, who, thus admonished, dashed at once into a gallop, while Noonan, letting the reins loose, brandished his whip in the air, shouting—

"That's the style. Rowl 'im along, me beauty. It's racin' at Punchestown ye should be, me wild gyurl."

At length we reached the scene of

disaster. It seemed hours since I had left the place, though in reality the time exhausted in flying for assistance and in returning must have been considerably under an hour.

As we turned the Glen road we heard the voice of Rory. His tone was entirely changed now. The enraged fool was metamorphosed into a supplicating simpleton. He was howling out to the silent firs and insensate rocks.

"Wake, alana, spake to me—spake to me, cushla macree."

He was bending over the prostrate form of Miss O'Connor.

"I didn't mane it, darlin'. It was for his sake—for the sake of Dinnis. Dinnis that loves Rory—an' calls Mary the pulse of his heart."

He was chafing her hands now, and holding his ear to her lips to detect her breathing.

"May Heaven dhry me tongue up, acushla, for sayin' it. Wake up, darlint, or Dinnis ill kill me. I'm *not* flighty, alana. I'm only pleasant. Just wan little whisper in me ear to tell me that you're not angry, agra."

We had reached him by this time. But so engrossed was he with his charge that he did not observe our approach. My father, who was an impulsive, not to say choleric, man, jumped off the car, and rushing up to Rory caught him by what he inelegantly termed "the lug," and swinging him round, said—

"Faith, I'll whisper in your ear, ye murdherin' vagabond. What have ye been doin' to the young lady?"

"Oh, Misther Daly, it's all my fault. Only I did it for the best. It was for Dinnis—"

"Damn Dinnis!" shouted my father, in a rage.

The fool crossed himself, apparently surprised that the earth did not open and swallow up the wretch who could be guilty of that imprecation.

Meantime my father, by no means interested in ascertaining Rory's views of his objurgation, knelt down on the road, and, lifting Miss Mary's head on to his left arm, proceeded to administer an infallible restorative.

It is strange how upon the chords of our nature an incongruous element will sometimes jar. Here, in the presence of a wild and beautiful scene, arranged about a girl who was a vision of all loveliness, there is suddenly introduced a Thing which becomes more important than all else. The mountains with their coronets of cloud; the sentinel trees standing silent in the sunlight; the bubbling music of the spring—all these sank into comparative insignificance. The whole episode, with

its attendant scenery, centered round one little leather-covered case with a stopper of glittering silver—*My Father's Brandy Flask!*

A fatal flask! As the first drops trickled through her lips a slight flush came into her cheeks. In a few minutes her eyes opened, and she looked round from one to another. They fell finally upon me. And a smile such as never yet was seen on woman's mouth spread itself over all her sweet face as she recognised kindly features and ready hands.

Alas! that I should have to relate it. That smile had done for me. It shot through my being like electricity.

I was in love.

CHAPTER V.

THE MEEJOR.

WHEN Rory saw that the lovely creature whom he had frightened out of her seven senses was in good hands, and had returned to consciousness, he turned and fled through the Glen with a speed that I never saw equalled. My father, who had some notion of inflicting chastisement on the cause of Miss O'Connor's alarm, shook his fist at the retreating figure, shouting—

"Wait till I catch ye, ye divvle! I'll Dinnis ye widin an inch of your life!"

Noonan, whose philosophy took a practical turn, proceeded to throw after the fugitive the unavailing stone.

"Thry another dhrop of the brandy,

miss," said my father, turning to the girl.

"No, thank you," she replied. "I am better. Please take me home."

Here, indeed, was a dilemma; my father and I looked at each other, and I could read the thoughts that were passing through his mind. He would as soon think of walking into Hades of his own free will, as of going to Major O'Connor's. Every reason in the world forbade it. At general elections in Ireland the eloquence of rival candidates, and of those who advocate the claims of rival candidates, rises to a pitch, and, indeed, sometimes *sinks* to a pitch, not easily understood in England. My father had made some wonderful speeches against the Major, when he stood for the county; my father's style of oratory he had learned from O'Connell, who was a perfect master of crushing invec-

tive. He had no reason to believe that O'Connor had forgotten these public utterances. And as the Major had on one occasion asserted from the platform that, if ever he encountered the infernal slanderer, he would horsewhip him, my father, though by no means a man of peace, never sought the interview.

Again, as I have said, the O'Connors were Protestants. If the gulf which patriotism had fixed between us was not sufficiently wide, that made by religion gaped yawningly enough for anything.

But that which really kept us apart was a sentiment which is nowhere so powerfully experienced as in Ireland. I mean Family Pride. Although the O'Connors were immensely wealthy, with estates in two counties, and carriages, and servants, and a house in London, the Dalys looked down on them, and they felt it.

For thousands of years we had been possessors of the soil. In our veins coursed Royal Blood. Whereas the O'Connors were mere nobodys. The grandfather of the Member was the founder of their fortunes. He had been knighted and enriched by the Government of his day. And if it hadn't been that his treachery was discovered by the Irish people, and sung in ballads and denounced from altars, I believe the Government would have raised him to the peerage, or given him a baronetcy at the very least.

None but the Irish can understand how the real gentry of Ireland look down upon the descendants of a venal upstart. Notwithstanding our diminished estate and impoverished exchequer, we regarded with contempt the more opulent circumstances of our Social Inferior.

While, therefore, my father was the

very soul of gallantry, and was anxious at once to solace Miss Mary, his pride interfered, to the utter discomfiture of his kindliness; and in answer to her plaintive request he said—

"Me dear young lady, just let me assist ye upon the cyar. You're too wake to ride, an' we'll lade the mare."

In truth, Miss O'Connor was too weak for the saddle. So she was helped to a seat beside my father. I mounted on the other side, leading her mare. In a moment Noonan gave Sugar Candy his head, and we were galloping homeward through the Glen at a rate which gave us cheerful anticipation of imminent annihilation.

What were my feelings as I sat there, the balmy zephyrs of the summer borne past my hot cheeks? How can I describe them? She was beautiful. But it was not her beauty alone that had stirred my pulses and enslaved my heart. Ropes of gold

was that hair of hers. But they were not the ropes that held me in thrall. Her bright blue eyes drew mine with a fatal attraction. But it was not the lightning of those eyes that set my soul on fire. The perfect symmetry of her form compelled my admiration. But no mere admiration of the exquisite lines of her contour held my reason subject to my heart.

Which of you poets or philosophers will define or account reasonably to me for the sudden development of the insanity which men call love? Is it the instinctive suspicion of a mutual sympathy? I believe that with this sympathy—or the belief in its existence which is practically the same—a man might marry a Hottentot, and never know that she wasn't an Aphrodite.

If with the secret sympathy which acts as balm to the wound which Love inflicts, there are given also personal charms of

face and figure, why, so much the better. But I shall always maintain that I should have loved her all the same had she been black, or wall-eyed, or a cripple.

Back to back we sat upon that outside car. Its springs were a trifle defective, and we bumped cruelly over the rough stones. I had never experienced the sensation before, but with each bump my heart seemed to fly into my mouth.

Vainly did I try to catch the conversation that was passing between my father and his charge. He had spread the rug over Beauty's knees, and was playing the part of Beast, with his arm round her waist to prevent her falling off the car. As far as I could make out, he was indulging alternately in objurgations over the departed Rory, and making those sly enquiries about the *menage* at Temple Hill—the Major's place—which proved him not devoid of a true national cha-

racteristic—curiosity. Your Irishman is as curious as the very devil. But her faint low replies I heard not, though I could just catch the silvery music of her tone, and the sound filled my soul.

Noonan howled encouragements to Sugar Candy. The low wall that ran by the road-side, the trees that appeared above it, seemed to fly past, or suddenly, as we bumped over a prodigious cobble, to sink several feet into the earth. This slight episode appeared to rouse Noonan to fresh efforts of encouragement.

"Isn't he scuddin' along, Masther Ptolemy?" he asked, turning round and regarding me with honest pride.

"You'll smash the springs, as sure as fate," I answered, for I really anticipated some such *contretemps* from his recklessness.

"Divvle a fear, sorr! Woy-upp! ould gyurl!"

"That's not the way to Temple Hill!" I shouted, as he turned the Rathcumlin road.

"Whisht!" he said, shaking his head in the most mysterious and imploring way; "we're goin' to Castle Beg."

My father was an excellent strategist. The mountain could not so far forget its position as to make a journey to Mahomet. There was, therefore, nothing in the world left for Mahomet to do but to make tracks for the mountain. My father's pride of birth, of faith, and of political creed prevented his journeying to Temple Hill. He had, however, so arranged things that the Major should call at Castle Beg and recover his rescued child.

There was something delightful to me in the thought that she should be under our roof, even for the few minutes that it would take Noonan to drive over to the Major's. I should see her, should speak

with her, should at least *look* my love for her. The minutes seemed hours now, and I cared not how reckless our Jehu became in his driving.

At last we reached the house; my mother met us at the door, and curtesied as she caught sight of Miss O'Connor. I confess that this obeisance on the part of my mother pained me more than I cared to express. For although Miss Mary was worthy of the homage of all men, there was something servile in a curtsy dropped by a woman, and I bit my lip with sheer vexation as I noticed it.

When we had dismounted my father turned to Noonan—

"Dhrive aff now to Meejor, and tell 'um that Miss Mary's here."

"Hadn't you better write a note?" I interposed.

"Divvle resave the line," he replied. "Come into the house, Miss Mary."

My mother, still looking amazed, accepted the introduction to the unexpected visitor with further obeisances, and led us all into her best room.

Alas! that best room. How often had I gazed upon its decorations with simple wonder and secret pride. Its wall-paper and its carpets had been a source of constant joy to my young soul. I gazed with reverence upon the pictures that stared down upon me, and regarded the exterior of my mother's books that lay on the tables with a kind of holy awe. But now, somehow or other, the glory had departed. I would have shut the door, written Ichabod upon the panels, and conducted Miss Mary to any other room in the mansion if I had my way. The Princess had entered the Palace, and behold the state apartment had suddenly, in my eyes at least, ceased to be a reception chamber worthy of the

royal presence, and became a ghastly enclosure reeking of shabby gentility.

The portrait of my father which hung over the mantel-piece, in which his honour was depicted in scarlet, with an expression of congenital idiocy on his face, appeared now the most pitiful production, and I wondered how I ever could have brought myself to admire it. The portrait—considered remarkably like—of our regal ancestor had become all at once a most villanous daub; while the pictures of the "Sleevedoon Meet," by Morrison, of the Royal Hibernian Academy, sank into something very much worse than insignificance. I observed, for the first time in my life, that the pattern was faded from the carpet, and that in parts that fabric was completely worn out. I regarded with shame the stains on the tablecloth, and frevently wished that my mother had placed some

other volumes on the table besides an ill-bound "Garden of the Soul" and a green and gold edition of the "Trial of Robert Emmett."

Nor did the appearance of the refreshments spread out on the cloth look at all reassuring. None of the glasses matched. Ours was an awful house for breakages—half a set of tumblers frequently disappearing during an orgie. The claret decanter was dusty; and why, oh! why did my mother bring in the whisky in its native jar?

Determining that I at least should show some little trace of breeding, I turned to my mother and remarked, in a tone which I intended should be rebukeful—

"Perhaps, mother, Miss O'Connor would prefer a cup of tea?"

My mother, who was easily flustered, begged pardon a thousand times; while

Miss Mary, looking her hearty thanks at me for my attention, declared that she wanted nothing, and inquired of *my* father how long it would take *hers* to come from Temple Hill.

"Bedad, it'll take him an hour or more —for Sugar Candy's dead bate, and it's a rough road, as ye know."

She gave a little sigh.

My revered parent, hearing this evidence of mental distress, and unwilling that anyone should feel the slightest sorrow under his hospitable roof, turned to me, and with a merry twinkle in his eye, said to me with loathsome heartiness of manner—

"Ptolemy, me boy, why don't ye amuse the lady?"

I blushed and frowned, but he went on with relentless familiarity.

"Repate the Lord's Prayer in Latin," he said with a repulsive accent of affec-

tion—"or the 'Wearin' of the Green'—(that's a noble pome, Miss O'Connor!) or"—

"You are annoying the young lady, sir," I replied with unaffected dignity.

"Divvle a bit. Am I now, miss?"

"Not at all," replied Miss Mary, with a sweet smile. She said "not at all," but I knew all the time that this was only her politeness, and that she felt extremely annoyed by my parent's well-meant efforts to contribute towards her enjoyment.

"Dhere!" he went on delighted—"what did I tell ye? I assure ye, miss, that Ptolemy here is a perfect progeny."

"Prodigy, you mean," I said severely.

"I *said* progeny," answered the incorrigible and ungrateful old sinner. "Why, he wrote po'thry before he was out av his frocks!"

I blushed with vexation, and Miss Mary turned her head away for very shame.

"Father!" I cried sternly.

But it was of no avail. The old man was determined to make himself agreeable, and to do it after his own peculiar fashion.

"What are ye blushin' for, ye gaussoon? There's nothin' to be ashamed of in writin' po'thry. I was a frind av the late Misther Moore"—

If one could be jealous of one's own father, I should at that moment have experienced a pang, for an expression of interest appeared on the face of the angel who was temporarily occupying our apartment, as turning to him, she said—

"Did you really know him? How I envy you. I adore Moore."

"Faith, he was an adorable craythur. Many's the time we got dhrunk together."

"Oh, father," said I.

"Michael, dear," said my mother.

"How dreadful," said Miss Mary.

"It's a fact," went on my father, who, on the matter of inebriety must have been morally oblique, for he saw no sin in it.

When once the author of my being was set going, it was utterly impossible to say when or at what he would stop. He was apparently determined to cover me with shame, and leave me not a word to say to my charmer.

"Bedad, Miss Mary," he proceeded, "if ye admire potes, ye'll admire Ptolemy—for he's a pote ivry inch of him. Ptolemy, ye raskle, just tip us the 'Little Pig that Pays the Rint.'"

I wished that the floor had opened and swallowed me up. It was embarrassing enough, however flattering to my vanity, to be described as a poet, and a legitimate successor to Tommy Moore himself. But to be trotted out as the author of a comic

song—at a moment, too, when my heart felt too small for the big sentiment that pervaded it—that was cruel.

My mother, who was not at all times a very great diplomatist, probably saw my condition at the moment, and, greatly pitying me, rushed to the rescue with a plate of home-made seed cake, which she pressed on the acceptance of Miss Mary. That young lady, however, had thoughts far away from the mere sodden delicacies of the table. Perhaps she was thinking of me. Indeed, her next observation gave me hope that I was not entirely indifferent to her, and that she regarded me in connection with a possible event that lay hidden in the track of the future.

"What a time my father *is*," she said.

The words were hardly out of her mouth, when there came such a knock at the door, and such a ring at the bell, as

had never been administered by our most relentless creditor.

"That's father!" exclaimed Miss Mary, springing from her seat, her pale face flushing with excitement.

"Troth, he tuk care to let us know it," observed my sire. "P'raps he'd like to take the bell wid him whin he goes away."

He said this as he walked to the drawing-room door, which he opened. By this time the Major had been admitted, and was bearing down on the room in which we were, preceded by our servant Biddy.

He bowed stiffly to my father, and you may be sure the bow was returned with equal *hauteur*. He also bowed to my mother, and then asked his daughter, who had run up to him, and was now, with the true inconsistency of a woman, sobbing hysterically—

"What's happened? The fool that

came for me was full of mystery, but had no information."

"I'll trouble ye, sir," said my father, "not to call my servant a fool. We harbour neither knaves nor fools under *dhis* roof."

"I'll call him a Solon, if you like," said the Major, evidently determined to be in a good temper.

"No, you won't call him that ayther," said my father. "You may call him Noonan, or Larry, for he answers to both names, bedad. An' now I'd like to hear what ye've got to say again him?"

"I have nothing to say against him, but"—

"I accept yer apology," said my father, grandly condescending.

"I didn't apologise," replied the Major.

"I say ye did, sir. Didn't he, Ptolemy?"

At any other time I would have taken my father's part. But Mary O'Connor

shot an imploring look at me, and I, with a coolness and tact in which I have never been found wanting, said quietly—

"I'm afraid, gentlemen, that we are forgetting the presence of the ladies."

"You recall me to myself, young fellow," said the Major, bowing deferentially to my mother; "I really didn't mean to get heated. And now may I know for what service to my daughter I may have the great pleasure of thanking you?"

The sins of his venal ancestors notwithstanding, the Major was a fine man, and that's the truth. He stood about six feet in his boots, had grey hair, cut as short as that of a ticket-of-leave man, and a heavy white moustache, which gave him, when he was in a passion, an air of great ferocity. He was as upright as a young fir, and his bronzed face told of foreign service.

My father answered his question.

"Faith, Meejor, ye've nothing to thank

us for. Miss Mary here was attacked by Rory of the Glin, an' me son happenin' to be handy, rescued her, and that's the whole romance from beginnin' to ind."

The Major looked kindly at me, and said—

"Accept my thanks, young sir—and my hand. If in my capacity as an humble Member of Parliament it is ever in my power to assist you—pray command me."

My bellicose sire drew himself up to his full height, and announced, with a cruel indifference to the interests of his offspring—

"A Daly, sir, nivver accepts a benefit at the hands of a stranger. A second offer of your patronage will be resinted as an insult."

"Be assured, sir, the insult shall not be repeated. At the same time, I beg you to believe that none was meant."

"Ignorance, sir, is sometimes accepted

as an excuse for incivility, an' I forgive ye, bedad."

The Major bit his lip.

"You seem anxious to pick a quarrel with me, Mr. Daly. Permit me to remind you that I am under your roof."

"Be the hole in me coat, that's a difficulty soon got over; an' if ye'll just step out into the park wid me, I thrust dhat I'll be able"—

My father was no doubt a choleric and unreasonable man, and the opportunity of humiliating his political and religious rival was too much for him. I went up and whispered in his ear the talismanic words:—

"*There's a man out in the park at the suit of Jones of Dublin. He thinks you're not in, and is waiting to serve you.*"

He suddenly ceased to be truculent, though he was as morose as a bear with a cutaneous disorder of the cranium. The

Major, observing the effect of my whisper, embraced the opportunity, and wished us good-bye—bowing with increased formality to my father, who returned the salute with a mock salaam, such as is indulged in by actors of burlesque.

I saw them to the door, where I had the honour of shaking hands with them both, and of hearing the Major renew his offers of assistance.

I returned to the drawing-room, silent and sorrowful, my soul full of the divine image, and my heart so fraught with a great joy that when my father curtly remarked—"Good riddance of bad rubbish"—I did not so much as notice the epigram.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HARP THAT ONCE.

MANY honest people turn up their noses at the mere mention of a tavern, and insinuate that those who resort to such places have become socially lost. Indecent prejudice and the manifestoes of the temperance societies have done much to produce this unfortunate result. And, in my own country, the eloquence of Theobald Mathew has brought great discredit on the resorts in which whisky and other liquors are sold to the public. Heaven forbid that I should say a word against Father Mathew, who was as good a man and as popular a priest as any in the four Provinces. I trust, however, that I may respect the philanthropic efforts of an excellent clergy-

man without at all agreeing with his tactics. Father Mathew pushed this matter to extremes, and that's the truth. For my own part, I believe that moderate potations do a man good. And I have known many a clever fellow sit as mute as a mouse in company, deliberately earning the reputation of a simpleton, who, after the fourth glass or so, displayed conversational powers of a very rare quality.

All the literature that I have read leads me to believe that our greatest men of genius have evinced a high appreciation both of liquor, and those who have supplied them with it. Horace, I take it did not like Mæcenas any the less because upon his board appeared the produce of Falernian vines, while Mr. Tennyson, the Court Poet, in no way endangers his reputation by accepting the annual butt of sherry from Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, or by publishing in his works

such rollicking Bacchanalian ditties as that commencing—

O plump head waiter at the Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port.

William Shenstone, a poet of much culture and sweetness, remarks with undeniable wisdom that—

Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

Dr. Samuel Johnson—the author of the Dictionary—a man who owed a great deal of his literary reputation to having been associated with my gifted fellow-countryman, Oliver Goldsmith—speaking from a long and varied experience, declares roundly that there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn. Although this dictum of the

scrofulous lexicographer is reported by that drunken little Scotch toady, James Boswell, I have no doubt but that it is literally true.

Even from the highest dignitaries of the Church can be quoted opinions in favour of the tavern, and that learned and holy man, Archbishop Leighton, leaves it on record in his works that, if God permitted him to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn—an aspiration which, I beg leave to say, is equally conspicuous for its good taste and unaffected piety.

Historically considered, I might find for the respectability of the tavern as an institution evidence even more cogent. What crowns have changed hands in a tavern parlour? What kings have escaped from a tavern window? What plots have been hatched in a tavern out-house? What dynasties have been deposed in a tavern loft? Patriotism finds in the place of

public entertainment for man and beast its only possible resort. It so happens, therefore, that the accident of my love of country has, as it were, pandered to an inherent taste, and I have always felt more at home in a tavern than anywhere else in the world.

It was neither patriotism nor inherent taste which led me to The Harp that Once on the day following my adventure in the Glen of the Towers. Not one word of what I had heard the gaunt simpleton say to Miss O'Connor had passed my lips to a soul; my narrative confined itself to the fact that Rory had attacked the lady.

I had said nothing of the motive which the idiot acknowledged as the reason of his interference. Rory, too, would be quite unaware of the fact that I had overheard him.

My object in repairing to The Harp that Once was to see and, if possible, to

converse with the man who since yesterday had assumed with regard to myself a certain relationship. A week before Mr. Dennis O'Loughlin was no more to me than the Khan of Tartary. I knew nothing of him, felt no interest in him, and, had I been asked about him, would have dismissed him, with a flippancy which is excusable in a youth of my years, as "the little Protestant schoolmaster." He had been less than nothing to me. Now he was an object of considerable moment. He had ceased to be a mere schoolmaster. He had blossomed into a position of great dramatic dignity. He was—My Rival!

I cannot help here alluding to the circumstance of seeking this man out as evidencing my possession of a certain amount of chivalry. My age surely will avert any charge of egotism on my part. I am a man, already declining into the vale of

years, speaking of a youth who had not yet commenced to fight the battle of life. I sometimes laugh now when I reflect on my hot-headedness in those days. Certain I am that, had fate and my father's means encouraged the notion of my adopting the military profession, I should have reflected almost as much credit on the name of Daly as did that old monarch who, in painted effigy, grinned at us from the wall of my mother's drawing-room.

The Harp that Once was not a very popular house. Its late owner—one Murphy, who had been, in the zenith of his fame, a bum-bailiff—was a man who didn't attend to his "duties" as a good Catholic. The house, therefore, was looked upon with mighty disfavour by Father McGrath, and was consequently the resort of those parishioners whose lives were not altogether blameless, and who avoided the confessional and other salutary observances

of Holy Church. When Murphy died his widow carried on the business. Mrs. Murphy had been a chambermaid in a great hotel in Dublin. She professed no religion whatever. Her conversation was of a cheery, not to say doubtful, character, and was much relished by those who met in her cosy little parlour. Several offers of a matrimonial nature had been made to the widow. But she had rejected them all—some of the more astute frequenters of The Harp that Once alleging, with great confidence, that she was *éprise* of Mr. O'Loughlin, and would give anything to put her "comehedther" on him.

For myself, I knew little of the inn or its *habitués*, although as a matter of course I was well known to Mrs. Murphy, and for that matter to every inhabitant, great or small, of Ballybeg.

It was a pretty little one-storied build-

ing, with a space in front and a stable-yard at the side. The porch was low in the extreme, and you entered a red-tiled passage, in which stood Mrs. Murphy's little bar. Creepers, wild roses, and honeysuckles grew over the whitewashed front of the establishment, and stonecrop, moss, grass, and other humble vegetables flourished on the thatch of which the roof was formed.

On the beam above the door was painted, in white letters, the following legend :—

JANE MURPHY:
LICENSED TO SELL SPIRITS, TEA, AND TOBACCO,
TO BE DRUNK ON THE PREMISES.

Who the topers were who drank Mrs. Murphy's tobacco I could never ascertain. Nor do I think that the consumption on the premises of tea was very extravagant. But malt-whisky and Dublin stout were in considerable demand, so that, notwith-

standing ecclesiastical disfavour, the Widow Murphy managed to live, and to meet her brewer and distiller with a smiling face when they paid their periodical visits.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and a sweltering day, when I entered The Harp that Once. I had walked fast, and the perspiration was pouring down my face. In my very appearance there was an evident excuse for entering a house of refreshment. If ever a young Irish gentleman stood in need of a glass of ale, I was that hopeful scion of a good old stock.

The Harp that Once consisted on the ground-floor of four apartments—the bar itself, if I may call *it* an apartment; the private bar parlour of Mrs. Murphy behind it; and the kitchen beyond the bar. These rooms stood on the right of the tiled passage. On the left stood the large

public-room of the establishment, in which Mrs. Murphy's supporters smoked and discussed the neighbours and the times, played various game of chance, and got "drunk on the premises."

During business hours she confined herself chiefly to the little bar and its communicating parlour, whisking occasionally in and out to see that Kitty was practising domestic economy in the kitchen, or that Flanagan, in the stable-yard was finding something for his hand to do, and doing it with his might.

There was observed a sort of etiquette in this rural tavern which I have not found characteristic of more palatial institutions in other cities. In the matter of caste, for example, the inhabitants of Ballybeg were as rigid as the very Hindoos. Certain favoured individuals—the Brahmins of Ballybeg—were permitted to loiter round the bar. And even these

were subdivided—some of them, like myself, being treated with deference by the buxom landlady; while others, whose descent gave them no such claims to social position, indulged in badinage which was at times somewhat highly seasoned—for Mrs. Murphy had been a married woman. And if in Ireland the ears of maidens of the lower classes are never saluted save by the most chaste and elevating of sentiments, I must honestly admit that your married woman in the same class loves *double entendre*, and practises it, too, with astonishing effect and great gusto.

Those who indulged in these sallies of wit with Mrs. Murphy and in front of her bar were the "bloods" of our village—as I have since heard them called. They were the gallants of Ballybeg—the men about town—the *jeunesse dorée* of Wicklow. There was young Aiken the dispensary doctor, Nick Davin the Vet. and Radley

the agent—these and others of the same kidney kept the ball of conversation rolling, and I dare say they had as much right to be regarded as wits as had such tavern-haunters as Dryden and Shadwell, who never seem to have been outside a boozing-ken.

The mere bog-trotters who sought refreshment at the sign of The Harp that Once—the poor creatures in corduroys stained with the yellow clay of our productive country—these worthy people never so much as dared to approach Mrs. Murphy. They saluted her with awkward indications of respect as they passed the bar and proceeded straight into the public room, where, at all seasons of the year, the fire was burning for their convenience, and where they were waited upon by a good-humoured servitor, who, if he did not receive that degrading species of *bakshish* know in England as a tip, was frequently

refreshed from the mugs, or pewters, or glasses of those upon whom he waited. He was, indeed, the type of that higher life to which the patriotic politician sometimes aspires. He was a servant who knew no servitude. He illustrated the dignity of service—a tapster, but no menial.

At the hour at which I entered The Harp that Once the space in front of the bar was clear, and I could see the fresh-faced hostess sitting behind it, and mending—let me mention it in the merest whisper—a stocking. She rose at my approach, and curtseyed to me, accompanying the obeisance with one of the most enchanting smiles it is possible to imagine.

"It's proud I am to see ye in me 'umble house," she said, "an' I thrust all's well at the Cyastle."

I assured the woman that we all enjoyed

excellent health, and requested her to draw me a glass of ale.

The ghastly custom of drawing beer from hidden depths by means of that wonderful result of our modern civilisation, the beer-engine, was unknown in Ballybeg. The beaming hostess, therefore, left the bar, and, descending to the cellar, returned speedily with a foaming glass, clear as amber, cool as claret cup, and refreshing as the nectar of the gods. This civility, I may tell you, was not extended to all comers, as behind the little shrine of Bacchus was a beer-barrel, from which that beverage was drawn for the ordinary customer. It must have been a warm decoction. Mrs. Murphy knew better than to offer it to the heir of the Castle Beg estates.

"You seem to be quite alone to-day," I said, in my patronising manner.

"Throth," she replied, "I never had better company in my loife before."

I bowed.

"You honour me," I said stiffly.

"Faith, the honour's all the other way," she replied, still with a most delightful smile playing about her dimples and the corner of her mouth.

"By no means," I went on. "At the shrine of beauty all stations are levelled to the one condition of worshipper."

"Arrah, Master Daly, don't go on like that. It's afther makin' me blush, you'll be."

"Whatever you do will only add to charms already too dangerous," I gallantly retorted.

It's wonderful how I seemed to get along with Mrs. Murphy. I was as eloquent as I dared to be. Whereas, when in the presence of Miss O'Connor, my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my

mouth, and no matter how I wished to frame a compliment, I failed at the very threshold of the enterprise. I can only account for it on one theory. Miss O'Connor was my social equal. Mrs. Murphy was my social inferior. The polished conversation of the *salon* was demanded in one case. In the other, the agreeable badinage of the bar. Is it wonderful that, with no opportunity afforded to me by my estimable parents of meeting with ladies of my own rank, that I should have failed in my initial experiment at polite conversation?

"Now that you've found your way here, I thrust we'll aften see you, Masther Ptolemy."

"I'm afraid the attraction is so great as to render a protracted absence impossible."

Oh, Father Corrigan! Father Corrigan! if you had only heard your pupil now. Here I was, making use of that

holy man's instructions in the proper use of my mother tongue to pay outrageous compliments to the owner of an inn which flourished under the ecclesiastical censure—a house of public resort which was under the ban of the Church.

Some such thought as this must have passed through my mind at the moment, for, placing my now empty glass on the metal ledge that served as a bar, I announced my intention of investigating the public room on the other side of the passage.

It was a long, low room, with blackened ceilings and whitewashed walls, with here and there the likeness of a political martyr, in glaring greens and reds, pasted up to remind all comers that whoever would be free to state his opinions and go to jail for it—"himself must strike the blow." Four long tables, brown and shiny from use, occupied the sides of the room, and before

these were four long forms, even more brown and shiny than the tables. A few wooden stools stood here and there for the accommodation of the superior spirits ; and the whole furniture and arrangement of the room irresistibly reminded me of poor Dempsey's school.

The window was open, and the honeysuckle intruded its leaves and odorous flowers above the lattice. From without the heavily-laden summer air also made welcome entrance, almost destroying the stale, unpleasant memories of potent tobacco and steaming whisky. Beyond was the white road, along which now and then trudged the patient and heavily-laden donkey ; now the domestic porker—evincing a swinish desire to diverge to the right or to the left—to do anything, in fact, rather than "go straight"—and grunting with undisguised disgust at the inferior intellect that drove him. Again, a youth

of seven summers, with his unconfined golden curls floating in the air, his plump red cheeks tanned with the sun, and his feet guiltless of the unnecessary shoe and stocking, drives with a sally-switch, from which floats a crimson rag, an able-bodied and refractory goose that, suddenly remembering the insignificance of his juvenile commander, turns with appalling "hiss," and sends little curly-head squalling home.

On the hearth a low fire of turf—emitting, I think, the pleasantest odour of any fire whatever—smoulders, and deposits its soft white ash. Upon a huge iron hook hangs a kettle, and looking up that wide chimney you can see the blue heaven above, with thin white remnants of clouds ever and anon lazily sailing across it.

Stretched out before the fire, with nothing between his shock head and the tiles, lay Rory Power. He was breathing heavily, and slept—perhaps dreamed—if

to such as he the gods send dreams. His red, swollen feet, seen thus in a room, looked fifty times more red and more swollen than they did on the high road. His coat and vest were open at the neck, displaying a chest of respectable proportions, and rich in hirsute adornment. He looked all over a powerful brute, and on inspecting him thus nearly I felt perfectly satisfied of my own discretion in declining to tackle him single-handed in the Glen of the Towers.

I touched the recumbent form with my foot. In an instant he awoke with a surprised snort, and stood before me with an expression which was partly fright, partly deference, and partly defiance.

"Having a nap?" I asked, in a conciliatory tone.

"No, Masther Ptolemy—Rory o' the Glin niver shleeps. He only dhrames. I

was only dhramin', sorr. It's no harrum to dhrame, yer anner—is it now?"

"That very much depends upon what you were dreaming, my man. What were you dreaming about—eh?"

"Whist!" he whispered, earnestly, and looking towards the door; "don't ax me dhat, acushla—don't ax me dhat."

"It's only a dream, you know."

"But dhrames comes thrue—sometimes. An' the good Lord sinds 'em sorr; he do indeed. Father Corrigan tould me so."

"Faith, it's little you trouble Father Corrigan. And I suppose you haven't been at Mass this twelve months."

"Musha, don't blame me, sorr. I haven't got the clothes—indeed I haven't. I daren't kneel on the same flure wid yerself an' the other ginthry in these ould rags."

He looked at me in an appealing way, and I thought I could detect a tear forcing itself out of his wild and shifty eye.

Anxious to test his memory and credibility, and to find out, if possible, O'Loughlin's responsibility for the scene which I had witnessed between the idiot of the Glen and Miss O'Connor—who had now become dearer to me than aught else in the world —I looked at him straight in the face, and asked—

"What did you do or say to frighten Miss Mary O'Connor in the Glen yesterday?"

His face suddenly changed its expression. The wildness in his eye increased; his tongue seemed parched, and his fingers twitched nervously as he answered—

"Nuthin, sorr, nuthin; may hell resave me—"

"Don't blaspheme," I interrupted, raising my eyes towards Heaven, and adopting a tone of profound piety. "The lady had fainted. You must have said something to alarm her."

"Not a word," he said, scratching his head, and looking as though he were a hunted thing.

"Now, Rory! be careful;" I said, shaking my finger at him in a warning manner.

"Shure, sorr, it was the luk of me that froightened the darlin'. I'm a poor ragged boy intoirely, an' not fit to be luk'd at be dhe quality."

I gazed at him sternly and said—

"Do you know what it *is?*"

"No, Masther Ptolemy, I don't. What is it, avick?"

"I don't believe you're half as mad as you pretend to be."

"Mad! yer anner," he answered, smiling and putting his dirty red hand to his forehead—"I'm not mad. The boys say I'm mad. An' Mrs. Murphy (the saints betune her an' harrum) says I'm flighty. But I'm not flighty. I'm only pleasant."

"Pleasant! I should think you must

have made yourself damned pleasant to that young lady, yesterday."

He was cringing now like a very cur. For all his bulk and reputed strength, I had him completely under my control. Now that I had an advantage I was determined to push it to the uttermost. Still keeping my eye fixed on his, I said—

"Now, listen to me, Rory!"

"Sure, Oi'm list'nin, Masther Ptolemy. An' your words is music to me sperrit."

For the life of me, I couldn't help winking at him, as much as to say, "None of your blarney, my good man!" What I really did say was—

"If you were not annoying Miss O'Connor, why was it you said to my father when we came up—'It's all my fault, Mr. Daly. Only I did it for the best.' What did you mean by *that*, Rory Power?"

His brow worked in thought.

"I mean what I said afore. It was my

fault to be durty and ragged. An' I did it for the best, bekase there's no harrum in me. I'm only pleasant, Masther Ptolemy."

"Well, let that pass. But answer me another question."

"I *will*, Masther Ptolemy—I will, indeed. But let me swear. Get me the book, avick, an' let me swear t'ye."

"D'ye think," I said, impressively, "that I would let the Holy Gospels into the hands of a man that hasn't been near a chapel for a twelvemonth? I want to know this. What did you mean when you said to my father—'It was for Dinnis'?"

In a moment he was on his knees. His trembling hands were clasped, and he looked at me with his lean, hungry face in a very agony of supplication.

"God forgive ye, sorr, for sayin' them words. I niver said 'em. I swear I niver said 'em. On my sowl I swear it. I do indeed."

I turned from him with a gesture of contempt.

I had no sooner turned than he jumped to his feet and stood before me.

"Don't repate that, for the Lord's sake," he said.

A complete change came suddenly over his face. His eyes sparkled, his cheeks flushed, and a look that was almost intelligent spead itself over his face.

At the same time I heard a footstep cross towards the bar from the door.

"Whist!" he said earnestly, "it's *him*."

"Who?" I asked.

"Misther Dinnis," he whispered, rushing away immediately, and leaving me standing alone in the middle of the dingy and smoke-begrimed room.

CHAPTER VII.

"MISTHER DINNIS."

I DID not stand long irresolute. In all the Dalys there was an inherent gallantry and an indomitable courage.

I left the public-room, crossed the little flagged passage, and striding up to the bar, lifted my hat to Mr. O'Loughlin, as though he were a Prince of the Blood. There is no method so surely calculated to humiliate a social inferior as to treat him as if he were one of the lords of creation.

This man was not only my social inferior. He was a heretic as well, and was of even the worst class of heretic, believing in the unhallowed creed of those who inhabit the Black North.

There are many estimable but ignorant

historians who allude with fond iteration to the "Irish People." Statesmen also, who ought to know more about the matter than historians—who, after all, are mere museum bookworms—fall into the same grievous mistake. There is no such thing as the "Irish People." There are the Irish Peoples, indeed, differing in descent, physiognomy, language, and creed. With the exception of the aborigines of the country, there are none with a real claim to the title Irish. As, however, these descendants of Scotch and English settlers have usually the money to support their claim, we—the genuine Milesians—make no effort to oppose their pretensions.

Of all settlers in my unhappy and down-trodden country, none is so unpopular with the real son of the soil as the Presbyterian of the North. Like us of the older faith, he mixes politics with his religion, just as he mixes lemon-juice with his punch. He

regards us with contempt. We regard him with loathing. With an affectation which is worse than hypocrisy, he pretends that the Crown stands in need of defence against the people, and he forms himself into Orange Lodges. The Orange Society is a standing insult to the Irish people, and its only social use is to afford its members an excuse for getting periodically tipsy—an excuse of which they do not stand greatly in need. They are, indeed, given to the practice of a sort of funereal conviviality in season and out of season.

It will be easily imagined, then, with what feelings I—an embryo patriot, and a true son of the true Church—regarded Mr. O'Loughlin as he stood before Mrs. Murphy's hospitable bar, mopping his forehead with a large orange handkerchief, in the centre of which figured King William of Glorious, Pious, and Immortal Memory, seated on an impossible charger, and point-

ing to Space with an extended scroll. It struck me at the moment that it was but a poor compliment to the deceased monarch to put his effigy to uses so ignoble.

I admit that, as I gazed on Mr. O'Loughlin, my religious and political sentiments were not prominent. At that moment I was not gazing upon a Protestant and an Irishman. I was regarding with the utmost curiosity a rival. No child with a new and elaborate toy indulged in a more earnest scrutiny.

He was not much to look at, in any case. His face was several degrees paler than was its wont, and the white forehead contrasting with the raven locks that fringed it gave him the appearance of an alabaster cast. As he knit his brows his bright, large eyes seemed to become more prominent. He was plainly dressed in black broadcloth—the only bit of colour being a necklet of bright blue, the insult-

ing colour of the alien heretics. *Our* colour, as my Saxon readers may have heard, is green—for the wearing of which a tyrannical Government has before now slain with ignominy and dispatch my countrymen and countrywomen. There is nothing but the merest truth in the answer attributed to Napper Tandy by the poet. When that immortal patriot was asked how poor old Ireland was, it will be remembered that his reply came with wonderful readiness and pathos :—

"It's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen,
For they're hanging men and women there for wearing of the Green."

Thus unsated with the restrictions which are placed upon our convictions, the Alien Oppressor proceeds to interfere even in the matter of our personal adornment.

To return to O'Loughlin. The only gaud which he wore was a plain gold ring

on the little finger of his left hand. An eye-glass depended from his neck on a piece of thin elastic. This he used not so much as an aid to sight as an ornament, for not a man in Ballybeg had better sight than he. It was probably a foppish habit picked up in college, and I am surely not going to allege it as a circumstance at all prejudicial to O'Loughlin's character.

O'Loughlin acknowledged my salute with gravity, and Rory, who had taken a place beside him upon seeing me, crept round behind him, and glared at me over his shoulder. His whole attitude and expression seemed to say, "Now, just let me hear you say a cross word to Misther Dinnis, that's all."

"It's a fine day," I remarked, not wishing to open the conversation with any controversial matter."

"Hot," he replied, curtly.

"But very pleasant, for all that," I ventured.

"Perhaps," he said.

"No," I went on—for why should I be brow-beaten on a subject of no interest, and one which I had purposely introduced with a view of avoiding differences of opinion—"no, Mr. O'Loughlin, *not* perhaps. It *is* pleasant."

"Do you want to get into an argument?"

"No. Do you?"

"If you care for it. There are very few of the natives of these parts do."

This was a little too bad. My well-meant attempts at conciliation had been abortive. I had, however, no intention of becoming conciliatory at the expense of my dignity. So I replied boldly—

"The natives of these parts, Mr. O'Loughlin, are quite as respectable as the

strangers—although they may not be so fond of advertising the fact."

He showed his white teeth and smiled sarcastically.

"You mean, I suppose, that I advertise myself?"

"I confess I do," I answered, not to be put down.

"Perhaps you're right. I'm only a poor tutor, and am, in a measure, compelled to advertise."

I had got the best of him, for all his sneers. I have had reason to observe before now that I had born with me a certain intuitive appreciation of the principles of logic, which had been greatly educed, refined, and systematised by the instructions of Father Corrigan. Having gained my point, however, I was magnanimous enough not to take advantage of it. So I replied—

"Not a *poor* schoolmaster. Mr.

O'Loughlin's accomplishments are known to all Ballybeg."

"*All* Ballybeg!" he replied, lifting his hands in a mock deprecation. "You surely extend my fame to impossible limits."

"No," I answered, determined not to see his satire, for when a man is ironical, the only way to settle him is to take him in earnest. "No," I went on, "I often hear you talked about, and Ballybeg takes the greatest interest in you. You are one of the local celebrities."

"You are vastly polite, my young sir. But are you quite sure that you're not deceiving me? Come, Rory," he said, turning to the fool, "do you think this gentleman's right in calling me a celebrity?"

Rory shifted those hesitating orbs of his from one to another. He was clearly of opinion that I had applied an uncomplimentary epithet to his patron. The ad-

venture of yesterday, however, warned him not to take part against me, so he scratched his shock head and replied—

"Sure, Misther Dinnis, no wan dar say a word agin ye. An' it's Masther Ptolemy himself I've heard sayin' the great man ye are."

"Quite right, Rory," I said, nodding to him in a cheery wey.

"An' don't quarrel wid aitch other," went on the fool. "Be pleasant wid aitch other. I'm very pleasant; amn't I, Mrs. Murphy?"

"Faith," replied Mrs. Murphy, who had been listening to our conversation across the bar—"faith, you'd be a mighty dale pleasanter by raison of a trifle av soap and wather."

"D'ye hear that, ye villain?" said Mr. O'Loughlin. "Mrs. Murphy here thinks you'd be all the better for a washing."

He understood. He had, however, a

strong dislike to any ceremony of the kind. His remnant of intellect brightened up at what he considered a personal reflection, and expressed itself in strong resentment.

"Throth, av I'm clane enough for Misther Dinnis's drawing-room, I'm not too dhirty for Mrs. Murphy's bar."

"Neatly put—for an idiot," added O'Loughlin with his hard dry laugh.

"I'm not an eediot, Misther Dinnis."

"Upon my word, I'm half inclined to believe you. You're only—*what*, Rory?"

"Only pleasant, sorr."

He turned to me.

"I'm afraid," he said, still with that unfortunate sneer—"I'm afraid I shall be obliged to agree with you in your estimate of the gifts of the natives of this country. Rory particularly has a keenness of intellect and a neatness of repartee very seldom observed in other countries."

He raised his hat as though to compli-

ment me on Rory as our representative public man. I could scarcely stand a covert insult, and ventured to object mildly.

"I trust that you have found others with natural gifts as highly cultivated as those of Rory?"

"Before me I am pleased to see the result of high cultivation. If I may without offence say so, you are so highly cultivated that there remain but few traces of the natural gifts."

I knew that there was a good deal of truth in this. And as an open compliment should always be permitted to atone for a covert sneer, I accepted the *amende* in a charitable spirit. At the same time I was unwilling to see too high an estimate placed on the abilities of Rory Power, and I was anxious at the same time to ascertain if possible some clue to his motive for molesting Miss O'Connor on the previous

day. I saw my opportunity, and I hastened to embrace it.

"I would rather believe that our friend Rory was half-witted," said I. "I should be sorry to believe that Rory had the full possession of his senses."

"That sounds uncharitable."

"It may *sound* so. And yet it is prompted solely by a feeling of charity."

"You speak in enigmas."

"And yet," I replied, "there is nothing enigmatical. You forgive a fool for acts which in a knave you would punish."

I observed that Mrs. Murphy came close to the bar, and, while she pretended to be busily engaged in cleaning a glass, she was really paying the utmost attention to our conversation. I will do Rory the credit to say that up to the present he did not seem to see the drift of my observations.

"I cheerfully admit your general proposition," said Mr. O'Loughlin, fiddling

with his eye-glass, and speaking in a tone of great condescension, "but I fail to understand its application to our friend here."

"You shall learn it from himself. Rory!"

"Yis, Masther Ptolemy."

"Tell Mr. O'Loughlin here what you were doing in the Glen of the Towers yesterday."

I may have been mistaken, but I thought I saw a glance of intelligence pass between them. Rory's face grew as white as his patron's. His eyes wandered about in the most pitiful way, and he rubbed his hands together as though he expected to gain some intelligence. In a parched, choking tone he replied—

"The Glin, Masther Ptolemy, the Glin? I niver was in the Glin at all. I'll swear to it av ye like; take me to a coort. I'll swear it to a judge. I tell ye I niver *saw* the Glin yesterday."

"I'm afraid," said I, "that you are right in your estimate of Rory's intellect. He is no fool. Only now he admitted to me in yonder room that he was in the Glen, and that the other circumstances which I reminded him of were in substance correct."

"You will pardon my not taking so profound an interest in your narrative as if I were acquainted with the circumstances to which you allude so dramatically."

"You shall hear, sir—particularly as you have every right."

"Right? You really astound me. What right could the poor Protestant schoolmaster have to participate in the adventures of a young Catholic magnate?"

"You shall hear. Your *protégé* Rory there met Miss Mary O'Connor yesterday in the Glen of the Towers."

I saw that he winced at mention of the name.

"His manner had caused Miss Mary to faint. My father—to whose house she was conveyed—and myself fortunately happened to be passing. And when we asked Rory the meaning of the episode, his reply was that he had done everything for *your* sake."

"For *mine?* How very singular," said O'Loughlin, his face pallid, and an unpleasant expression playing about his eyes.

As for Rory, he had adopted his usual tactics. He was down on his knees calling for all the holy volumes in the world, upon which he was ready to be sworn that in all my statements there was not a single word of truth. His observations on this occasion, however, were addressed not to me but to O'Loughlin, who administered a sharp kick to him.

"Get up, you fool, and go home."

Rory's face was a most pitiable object to contemplate as, admonished thus, he

rose to his feet. All the light had died out of it, and he looked much as a criminal must look when ordered off to execution.

"Don't be hard on me, Misther Dinnis," he pleaded.

"Get home, I say; and never let me see your face again."

The idiot stretched out his hands appealingly. O'Loughlin struck them down and turned his back. Rory walked with head cast down and melancholy pace to the open door. When he stood with his bare feet on the hot dust of the road outside, he turned round and looked at us with an expression of mingled sorrow and contrition. But the back of his master was still turned to him. No encouraging gesture was accorded. Rory placed his hands over his eyes and, uttering a deep sob, fled from the place.

Mr. O'Loughlin's manner towards me was quite changed by this time, as my

readers will very easily imagine. The sneer had left his lip, and the tone of ill-disguised sarcasm gave place to one of studied respect.

"I am afraid," he said, with a feeble attempt at laughter, "that it is no sign of wisdom to afford protection to fools."

I made no reply, although I could read in an instant the drift of this observation, and understood thoroughly its artfulness.

"I believe the poor soul loves me with all the nature that has not been crushed out of him."

"The attachment is romantic, and has been the talk of the town for"—

He turned fiercely to me and said—

"And what do you think I care for the talk of your infernal village? Do you imagine that a man of my"—

He stopped himself in time. I knew that he was about to assert his superiority

over those among whom his lot was cast. He went on—

"Excuse me. I was hasty. I am a student, a musician, a recluse. I had a certain affection for that simpleton—the sort of affection which a man has for a dog."

"And his, I suppose," said I, filling up the pause, "is the sort of affection which a dog has for a man?"

"Quite so."

"What a pity he was not born as dumb as a dog."

"You are right. It's a great pity. When men are born without the power of reason they should be born also without the power of expression. The utterances of a fool must necessarily be unreasonable."

"Hum!" I interjected, softly.

"You will perhaps admit the general proposition without the particular instance.

And you are right. I was just coming to that. This poor fool knows that I have left the employment (a gentleman like yourself starts, and no wonder, at another gentleman using such a word in reference to his professional engagements)—when, I say, I left the employment of the Major, I felt the loss because I am a poor man. Rory, in his unreasoning affection for me, meets Miss O'Connor in the Glen, and pleads my cause—begs for my reinstatement. I am a graduate of my University and an honourable man. But I admit that I cannot but feel touched at the fellow's solicitude."

"But," said I, "Rory proferred no such request."

"Indeed. And what did the poor simpleton say?"

"The poor simpleton pleaded your cause as a suitor for Miss O'Connor's hand."

His eyes pierced me like gimlets. But I did not wince. O'Loughlin was a cool hand, and was evidently prepared for this turn in the conversation. Mrs. Murphy was listening but, at a glance from the tutor left the bar for the little parlour behind.

"May I ask how you came by this information?" said O'Loughlin.

"Certainly. I was present. And I sincerely trust that Rory is the idiot he is supposed to be, and that the suit he was urging was the outcome of his own disordered imagination."

Perhaps I had gone too far. My rival flushed and said—

"Your inference, sir, is that you trust that I have never made love to Miss O'Connor."

"I must confess that my words might bear that construction."

"Might? Do you admit that they were intended to bear that construction?"

"I am not afraid to stick to my words. My words express that which I intended to express."

"Then," said he, in a very angry voice, and with the sarcastic note regaining its normal influence; "what right have you to express any opinion as to any act which I may or may not have committed?"

"In this case I imagine I *have* a right," I said.

I was not going to be bullied, and looked at him as bold as brass. His expression was that of mild surprise.

"If I am not requesting too much, may I ask what is your right to investigate my private affairs?"

"You are not asking too much," I replied; "I love Miss Mary O'Connor."

The effect of this announcement on my rival was, to say the least of it, singular. At first he looked me straight in the face, as though he would inquire into my sanity.

Then he shrugged his shoulders, and finally he burst into a laugh, which brought Mrs. Murphy running into the bar to hear the joke. For the good lady was very fond of a jape, and indeed had a pretty wit of her own, which she could exercise very pleasantly upon occasion.

I was mightily indignant at this cachinnation, but a moment's reflection put it down to rage and disappointment, and I paid no more attention to it than I would to the screaming of a tom cat.

"You will, I am sure, pardon me, Mr. O'Loughlin, for not joining in in your laughter. But, upon my soul, I fail to see the point of your joke."

"It is I, sir," he replied, "who must ask yours for having laughed at a joke which has no point whatever."

I fancied for a moment that there might be something sinister in this apology of his. But I was master of the situation,

and could afford to overlook the ironical efforts of a disappointed lover.

I went further. I held out my hand to him. His was cold and clammy as I grasped it. I was about to say "Good-bye," when an unusual circumstance happened.

The common people of Ballybeg and its vicinity who patronised The Harp that Once observed, as I have already informed you, a certain respectful habit of merely saluting the landlady when they entered, retiring immediately to the large room apportioned to them. They never lounged at the bar. It was not etiquette for them to do so. When, therefore, there entered out of the hot sunshine into our cool retreat two unmistakable labourers, and when, instead of repairing instantly to the public-room, they walked right up to the bar, you may imagine that our surprise was necessarily great. The "Good-bye"

was arrested on my lips, and I gazed aghast upon a pair of dangerous democrats, who were, perhaps, even now about to explain to Mrs. Murphy the doctrines of the Commune.

There was, however, one excuse which the common man might successfully allege for the otherwise unpardonable offence of approaching the bar reserved for agents, dispensary doctors, veterinary surgeons, and other local leaders of fashion. That excuse was the possession of News. Although I am happily devoid of the trait myself, I am bound to admit that there is a great deal of curiosity in an Irishman, and that an Irishwoman's thirst for a knowledge of trifles is insatiable. The man or the woman who is the first to run round with a piece of hitherto undivulged intelligence, has conferred on him or on her, for the time being, a social importance which is almost incalculable.

"Well, my men," said Mrs. Murphy, patiently waiting for an explanation of their presumption.

"We tûk the liberty, mum"—

"Yis," interrupted labourer the second, "me an' Carroll here we med free to"—

"It's a bit a news," continued the first, in no mood to be ousted from his position as chief spokesman.

"In the name of goodness, what is it?" asked Mrs. Murphy.

"I heard it as I was comin' from Timple Hill"—

"Me an' Carroll heard it," again interrupted number two, doggedly determined not to be robbed of his share of the honour and glory belonging to the purveyor of unwritten history.

"Well," said Mrs. Murphy, "you till us what it is, an' if Johnny interrupts, divil a dhrop of beer will either of you have."

Thus admonished, Johnny assumed an attitude of respectful attention, and Carroll proceeded with his version of the news.

"I heard it from the gate-keeper. The Meejor is missin' since sivin o'clock."

"How d'ye mean—missing?" I asked, naturally agitated by the information.

"He went out for a walk before breakfast, an' he's niver come back. They're sarchin' high up an' low down for 'um. Dhraggin' the ponds and baytin' the bûshes. But I'm afeerd the poor gintleman's sperritted away, an' there's but little chance of findin' him."

I had heard enough. At such a time my place was evidently at Temple Hill. Providence was favouring my cause. Twice already had the Fates thrust me into the *rôle* of Mary's natural protector.

Nodding to Mrs. Murphy and Mr. O'Loughlin, I left the house greatly exercised in my mind, but sure of my duty

and calm in the determination to carry out my purpose.

When I emerged from the cool precincts of The Harp that Once into the hot, still air outside, I found that the news had evidently got wind. Little groups of people were chattering away, lifting their eyes to Heaven and crossing themselves with undeniable fervour. An outside car, with four members of the Royal Irish Constabulary on it, drove past. I knew by the faces of the honest fellows that they were on business of unusual importance.

I spoke to no one. She whom I loved above all women, and with whom I had had one delightful interview, was in trouble. I might offer comfort and assistance.

Some cowardly instinct within me—and till that moment I did not believe that there was such a thing as a cowardly instinct in my nature—whispered the cruel suggestion—

"Suppose you are repulsed?"

"Perish the thought," I answered the traitor within me.

I took the middle of the road, and ran. The hedgerows and walls seemed to fly past me. Casual pedestrians probably thought I was mad. And an unfortunate trip over the "suggawn" attached to a pig's leg nearly sent me on my head.

But, casualties notwithstanding, I made excellent running, and within half-an-hour I was gazing up at the griffins that stood on the stone supports of the iron gate of Temple Hill.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BOREEN.

When the divine figure of Mary O'Connor lighted for a while the decaying halls of Castle Beg, I felt that my mother's drawing-room was unworthy to contain a being so radiant. As I stepped through the open gates of Temple Hill, and strode up the long wide avenue, my pace was hesitating, and I felt all at once that I had certain deficiencies of attire.

The young Masters O'Connor, thank Heaven, were not at home. They were at Eton. Stuck-up young fellows I called them, with hardly a word for the honest inhabitants of Ballybeg, and a sort of sniggering way with them that spoke but little for their breeding. I was dressed in

a shooting suit made of corduroy, with gaiters to below the knee, and a pair of thick Bluchers—the handiwork of the local shoemaker. I always wore spurs, which gave me a sporting air, and carried a riding whip, whether accompanied by Patsy or not.

These sartorial and other advantages notwithstanding, I felt that my garb was hardly that in which one should make a call at the house of the County Member. When love is in the heart, however, one does not stop long to consider the shape of one's coat or the materials of one's breeches.

I had often seen the avenue of Temple Hill through the interstices of the great iron gates. That view, however, was necessarily of an unsatisfactory character. The broad avenue that led to the house was half-a-mile in length. On either side a row of elms stood like soldiers drawn up in line. Their branches, interlaced above,

provided shade in the most sultry weather. The park that stretched on both sides afforded sustenance to herds of deer. At the top of the avenue one caught a glimpse of the house itself. It was a long three-storied building, with an imposing portico. It stood on a terrace, in which were cut flower-beds ablaze with the choicest growths of the summer. The stables, coach-houses, and other offices stood behind the house. And away behind that stretched Temple Wood—a sloping bank of foliage, which ended only when its shadow fell upon the quiet waters of the Rill. All for miles round belonged to the Major, and I sighed to think that, while my poor father on his impoverished and circumscribed inheritance was obliged to part with the very timber, his wealthy rival was able to keep a whole forest of trees on his estate.

When, at last, I reached the house, all

seemed still as the grave. The servants, I presumed, had joined in the search. I glanced cautiously at the windows, but caught no glimpse of that for which my heart was longing.

I approached the door, and rang the bell, abashed by the noise which it made in the bowels of the mansion.

Presently it was opened by a tall fellow in plush, with his hair greased to an extent which, I thought at the time, would be unbecoming in a duke.

"Well, young man?" said the haughty menial, staring at me with ill-bred indifference.

I could have trounced the British serf soundly, but, remembering I had an end to gain, I determined to try civility first, at all events.

It will not be credited to me as a crime, that I was unable at the moment to fix the title whereby I should address Major

O'Connor's wife. Although in my veins there coursed the blood of kings, my father's habits had kept me from mixing with that society to which, by birth and position, I belonged.

"Is my lady in?" I asked.

"D'ye mean Mrs. Ho'Connor?" asked the flunkey.

"No, I mean Mrs. *O*'Connor," said I, promptly setting him right in the matter of aspirates.

"She mebbe hin, and she mebbe hout," he replied.

"Mebbe," said I, mocking him—I always had a satirical turn —"mebbe you'll be so good as to find hout whether she is hin."

These fellows, however, can never tell when you are mocking them; and my Cockney interlocutor took my banter for politeness, and went off to inform his mistress of my arrival.

As he sauntered off with a smile on his vacuous face, I could not for the life of me help admiring his coolness. Here was his master lost, perhaps murdered—for, both as a landlord and a Justice of the Peace, he was frequently brought into collision with the people—the household generally was agitated, the police were out, the family greatly anxious and distressed, while he, great creature, moved through the commotion, tall, dignified, unconcerned, and smiling—a very hero in knee breeches.

He returned to the door, and looking at me, with his head on one side, and the sweet smile of conscious superiority playing about his face, he said—

"Pardon me—but wot name?"

"Mr. Ptolemy Daly," I answered, with an emphasis which showed I wasn't at all ashamed of it.

"Pardon me, but I didn't quite catch

it," he said, stooping down and putting his hand to his ear.

"Faith, my good fellow," thinks I to myself, "if I had you out on the lawn here you'd soon catch it."

I was, however, determined at all costs to restrain my feelings, so I repeated my name for his edification. He sniggered as he repeated it; and I was puzzled to imagine why people should employ such stuck-up jackasses as servants. Our Noonan had as much in his little finger as this chap had in all his sleek and over-fed carcase. He, however, took my name to head-quarters, and I was relieved in a few minutes on receiving a gracious intimation from Mrs. O'Connor that she would see me.

I was shown through the hall, which was paved with marble, and was full of the most lovely pictures and statues as innocent of clothing as those described in

the "Groves of Blarney." I was then conducted to a drawing-room, all white and gold and blue satin. I never saw such a chamber. I felt it would be sacrilege to seat my corduroys on the chairs, so I remained standing until the door was open, and a somewhat stout, middle-aged lady came in, and hurrying up to me, said—

"You have come to tell me of my husband. Where is he?"

"No, my lady," I said; "I know nothing of him."

"Then why do you come here to distract me by raising false hopes?"

"Madame," I replied, "I have raised no hopes. I came here to offer you my poor services in searching for Major O'Connor."

"O, *thank* you, sir, so much. And pray lose no time."

I was not going to be put off thus, boy as I might be. I could be dignified and

determined, for all her Turkey carpets and her off-hand ways.

"I may respectfully mention, madame," I said, for I dropped the "my lady" after the first trial, "that yesterday I rescued your daughter from deadly peril."

"Oh, are *you* the young gentleman?" she asked, in a more kindly tone. "I'm sure none of us know how to thank you enough."

"The pleasure of doing Miss O'Connor a service is more than thanks," I replied gallantly, "and I only hope that the service which I performed in the case of the daughter I may be able to accomplish in the case of the husband."

"You are very good," said the lady, bowing.

"Not at all," I replied, quietly, for with all my dash and pluck I was as modest as a girl, and have often refused to accept credit where it has been really my due.

"I trust," continued I, after a pause, "that Miss Mary is quite well?"

"Quite, thanks," said the maternal O'Connor, in a rather cool tone I thought.

"No offence, I hope, ma'am?" said I.

"None, sir," she replied, in accents still more freezing. Could it be possible that the divinest of her sex had confessed the partiality that I had inspired, and that her mother disapproved her choice? At all events, the idea was a pleasant one to encourage.

"May I make so bold," I went on growing more courageous with every step, "as to ask you to tell Miss Mary that I inquired after her health, and hoped that she had not suffered by her adventure in the Glen?"

"I shall certainly deliver your message."

I bowed my thanks, and proceeded to change the subject.

"And now, concerning the Major, I

would like to ask a few questions which may assist me in my search."

The fact that I had rescued her daughter probably may have caused her to think more favourably of my merits. For the first time she offered me a chair, and seated herself on an ottoman near me.

"My husband," she said, "takes a walk before breakfast every morning. He goes out at seven o'clock, and returns at eight punctually."

"And this morning he did not return," continued I, with the air of a private detective. "In what direction did your husband go, madam?"

"He went out past the lodge and up the road. Since the lodge-keeper saw him go up the road no one has set eyes on him."

"Then," said I, with an air of conviction, "he cannot be far off. The Major is too well known, and there are too many

people about to permit of any other inference."

She looked more agitated when I tendered this opinion. If I had suggested his presence in a remote place, she would perhaps have taken it calmly. But to suppose him near and not at breakfast, was to suppose him dead—or, at the very least, sick and in prison—women, as I and a thousand others before me have had occasion to observe, being the most unaccountable of God's creatures.

"You *will* find him?" she asked, in pleading tones, and with just the suspicion of a tear in her eye.

"I will find him, or all that's left of him," I answered, in reassuring tones. I was placing the whole O'Connor family under obligations to me, and I verily felt my stature increasing. At the same time it occurred to me that the quest was by no

means a certain one, and that in any event two heads are better than one. I therefore added the following condition—that Mrs. O'Connor would permit one of the servants to accompany me, stipulating at the same time that it should not be the tall man in plush who presided over the hall door. This request was immediately granted. A stable boy named Finigan, armed with an oak sapling, was told off as my *aide-de-camp*.

I made my *adieux* to Mrs. O'Connor, and was conducted to the door by the lofty-minded flunkey, where I found the redoubtable Finigan waiting for me. Need I inform you who have experienced the tender passion that my eager eye glanced over every pane of glass in front of the house? And need I express to you the depth of my despair at seeing no face—no hand even, waving a handkerchief in token of esteem?

Finigan was a stupid fellow—and rather dogged in consequence. It is strange to observe that the less intellect an Irishman possesses, the less will he depend upon the intellect of others.

When we gained the road, I turned to the right, having first been assured by the lodge-keeper's wife that Mrs. O'Connor was correct in her information—namely, that the Major had gone up the road, and not down it.

It was now five o'clock in the afternoon, and we examined every hedge and ditch within the immediate vicinity of the gates, for I still stuck to my theory of the proximity of the Major or of the Major's corpse. The police, with customary and consistent feebleness of conception, had gone further a-field.

We spent an hour and a half in fruitless investigation, my labours rendered much more than disagreeable by continual dis-

putes with Finigan, who had theories of his own as to his master's whereabouts, and who, moreover, resented being placed under a captain to whom he owed no allegiance.

At half-past six we found ourselves three-quarters of a mile beyond Temple Hill, when something attracted my attention that caused me to exclaim excitedly—

"I have it."

"That's the tinth time ye've had it since we come out," said the never-satisfied Finigan.

"I don't care," said I, "if it were the hundred and tenth. I'm on the track *now*."

You have heard of instinct. I knew it instinctively that I had hit upon a clue. Instinct is subject to no logic, and if detectives were to wait for the formation of syllogisms before capturing a criminal, there wouldn't be a felon in gaol. Instinct told me originally that the Major was near.

Instinct told me now how near the Major *was*.

On the left-hand side of the road was a boreen—a long narrow lane leading between two ditches to a farm. The owner of the farm had been obliged to find other means of conveying his produce to the main road. A spring had forced itself above ground, and flowing down the lane, kept it always in a state of mud, and no one, as far as I knew, had been up the dismal by-way in my time. Indeed, the road entrance to the boreen had been stopped by the placing of bushes at the entrance. No one objected to the boreen being closed. The bushes were simply placed there to warn strangers that the lane led to nowhere.

I observed that two of the bushes had been removed, and that now there was an easy passage into the lane. Therefore it was that I said I had a clue, and therefore

it was, I suppose, that at first my attendant declined to follow me.

"And *why*, you scoundrel?" I asked.

"By rayson of the mud," he replied, as saucy as you please.

I lifted my riding whip and authoritatively ordered him to precede me through the recently effected gap. I followed close upon him, and on entering the boreen stooped down to examine the everlasting mud. I was right. Fresh marks of footprints were visible in the red soil. I pointed to them triumphantly, and bade my man follow.

We proceeded cautiously. The foliage over our heads was thick. There was a damp smell about everything. Rank weeds flourished on the banks at either side, and rats and other vermin, startled by our presence, darted or scuttled towards the ditch. Even the birds seemed to have forsaken the lonely lane, and but for the

footprints on its clayey surface, it might have been a place—

> Where no one comes,
> Or hath come since the making of the world.

I admit that, as I proceeded through this dark and pestilent no-thoroughfare, I felt very far from comfortable. There was something uncanny about the place. It was as though a horrible and secret crime had been committed here, and that God had set His curse upon it—shutting the light from it, banishing His favourite creatures from it, giving it over to rats and toads, and—

> Slimy things that crawl with legs.

I concealed my nervousness from Finigan as completely as possible by changing our positions, and making him go first. Indeed, the poor fellow didn't half like it, and reminded me irresistibly of the simile in the "Ancient Mariner" of Coleridge—

> Like one that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread.

It seemed never ending, this lane. But we were still cheered—or alarmed, as in the case of my companion—by the sight of footprints always running ahead in the spongy soil.

At last we came to a spot where there was a clearing in the ditch, and gazed upon a sight but too frequently witnessed in my misjudged and downtrodden country, God bless her!

It was a dismantled and deserted cabin that had once, no doubt, been the happy home of a contented family. I care not whether the closing of the lane had anything to do with it, or whether choice led its inhabitants elsewhere, or whether, as is too frequently the case, its occupants had been cruelly thrust out into the world for some paltry non-compliance with the exhorbitant demands of a landlord. I care not, I say, what may have been the cause of

the sight I now witnessed—the picture was a sad one, in all conscience.

The poor mud walls, with here and there the grey stones embedded in them, were falling to pieces. The thatch was rotten with the rain, and covered with rank and deadly weeds. On its side, with a hole that let the light through, lay the family pot, round which, in happier days, the children had clustered to eat their breakfast of Indian meal porridge, or their dinner of flowery potatoes. A broken spade—mute evidence of a bad year—leaned against the wall. The pig-stye was empty. And not even a duckling was discoverable on the green pool which, for sanitary reasons, is almost always allowed to remain in front of an Irish cabin. The very dung-heap upon which, in better days, the children were wont to tumble, was scattered about in reckless profusion,

and the whole picture was one calculated to excite feelings of pity in the coldest bosom.

The unbidden tear sprang to my eye, and remembering the instructions of Father Corrigan, I said aloud—

"Behold here another illustration of the baneful influence of foreign domination. Alas! Ireland, my country, best and most beautiful in the world. When, oh! when will you take your proper place among the nations!"

A strange desire seized me to gaze inside. I went up to the aperture that in the before-mentioned happier days had served as a window.

At first I could distinguish nothing in the ill-lighted apartment. Presently my eyes became accustomed to the absence of illumination. The former tenants had evidently been sold up or had taken their goods and chattels with them. The room was empty.

Good heavens! No!

Squatting in the middle of it was a white-headed old man. A stick was passed under his knees, and both his hands and knees seemed to be fastened to it. A gag was in his mouth, and his eyes rolled wildly.

Almost fainting I staggered back from the window, and shouted to the stableman.

"Quick, Finigan! Help! It's the Major!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH A MINOR RESCUES A MAJOR.

THE savage malignity of the London Press when dealing with Ireland, or with anything that is Irish, has often been dwelt upon and denounced by the national organs, and I am sure with very good reason. It is sometimes said—but with no slightest shadow of evidence—that the bitterest things published about Ireland in the English newspapers are written by Irishmen. The crass ignorance displayed in the majority of these scathing attacks is, to my mind, sufficient proof against any such theory. Irishmen, it is true, lay some claim to the possession of imagination, and they make such a claim with every possible right. But I am bound to

admit that I have met English Pressmen whom, for the invention of events, I will back against all the Hibernians that ever lived.

Now, the incident which I am at this moment relating was surely one of the simplest imaginable. A gentleman is forcibly abducted, gagged, secured, and deposited in a dismantled hut, half way up an unused boreen. Crimes of a similar, and even more serious, nature are constantly perpetrated in the heart of English cities. The most melancholy boreen in my native land is infinitely more safe than Drury Lane, although the latter is under the constant surveillance of the police, while wanderers down any of the former have to trust exclusively to the proverbial gallantry of a chivalrous race. To illustrate the persistent mendacity and cunning cowardice of the English Press, I may mention that many years after the

slight inconvenience to which Major O'Connor was subjected, I had occasion to visit the Reading Room of the British Museum in Bloomsbury, London. I was consulting the files of a London newspaper of the very date of this chapter and the last, when I stumbled upon the heading, "Another Agrarian Outrage in Ireland." I read the paragraph, and found that the story, in which I took a part not altogether wanting in heroism, was duly narrated with an admixture of flat falsehoods and vigorous exaggerations which, to me who knew all about the affair, appeared simply appalling.

Setting aside the particular work which had brought me to this very fair collection of books of reference, I had brought to me half-a-dozen other London papers of the same date. In all of them I found the paragraph. In all of them the habitual sneer at Irish patriotism. In all of them the

usual criticism of the Irish police—a body of men which I hold to be as good-looking and as efficient as the Guards, and a great deal better behaved. The paragraph appeared under a variety of stimulating headings. Sometimes it was "Gross Outrage on an Irish Member." Again it read, "Outrage on an M.P. by Irishmen." Or, in another place it read, "Political Outrage." In all the accounts I discovered that my name had been studiously omitted, the reports merely saying that Major O'Connor had been discovered by one of his servants.

It is time that the newspapers should abandon folly of this kind. Ireland is more free from crime of all sorts than any country of the same size on the habitable globe. It is hard, however, to bear the continual sneers of a venal Press, and the tactics adopted by the newspapers of England may one day excite to dangerous ex-

hibition the very "Outrages" which are now invented, circulated, and, alas! believed.

As will appear hereafter, the unpleasant position in which the County Member was placed had as much to do with an agrarian outrage as the frequent combat in the Seven Dials, or the playful garotte near Highbury Barn. Meantime we must relieve the hon. and gallant gentleman from his by no means agreeable or dignified position.

Finigan pushed open the door, and I followed him into the deserted room. The feelings that I had experienced when viewing the outside of the abode returned to me with fourfold force as I gazed upon its miserable interior. The moisture trickled down the walls as though weeping for the absent ones—dead, perhaps, or banished to the wild prairies of America. On the stone flag which, standing under

the chimney, served as a grate, lay the last white embers of the last sods of turf which had helped to cook the last family meal. Upon the clay surface of the floor could still be seen the prints of human feet.

I turned from beholding all this deserted squalor to where the Major sat, and I am bound to say that he looked quite as miserable as his surroundings; and I am convinced that, if the Speaker of the House of Commons could have seen him at this moment, he would have forgotten all about his professional dignity and have laughed till his sides ached.

Meantime, Finigan, who had a delicacy in removing the gag—for even the unpleasant position of his master did not encourage him to take liberties with his face—had cut the ropes which bound the noble gentleman whom I had already come to consider as my father-in-law. When the Major's hands were free, and he stood

upright and wrathful before us, he soon managed himself to get rid of the gag.

For the first few moments after the removal of that ingenious wedge, I very seriously reflected whether or not I had by releasing the Major done any service to the cause of morality or religion.

"Our armies swore terribly in Flanders," cried my Uncle Toby, "but nothing to this." Gentlemen who profess war are almost as great at objurgation as at the sword exercise. I am told that the Iron Duke—who, as everybody knows, was an Irishman, which perhaps accounts for his bravery—very often accompanied an order with an oath. Warriors who have since that time occupied the proud position of Field Marshalling and Commanding-in-Chief Her Majesty's forces have displayed a similar proficiency in the use of the expletive, and the practice has become a time-

honoured rule, inseparable from any just idea of military discipline.

But nothing that I had ever read about, and nothing that I had ever heard (and my father had a pretty good stock of his own), at all approached the heights and depths of blasphemous denunciation to which the Major reached when he had removed from his mouth the simple wooden instrument which for something like ten hours had been retarding his utterance and stretching his jaws.

It is useless to attempt to convey by means of the approved, and, if I may say so, silly, method adopted by the novelists to give any notion of the intensity of Major O'Connor's outburst. He double-blanked everybody. He double-blanked himself for a double-blanked fool. He blanked Finigan for not finding him sooner. And I believe he was just about to blank me,

but he saw probably that he had already somewhat neglected the ordinary rules of civility. I certainly took no care to erase from my countenance an expression of surprise and annoyance. He stopped the torrent of objurgation—or shall I say that he damned it—and holding his hand out with every appearance of friendliness, he said—

"Egad, young fellow, I had almost forgotten my manners. You're the guardian angel of the O'Connors."

"Very little of the angel about me," I replied.

"Glad to hear it, sir—glad to hear it. Men that resemble angels are apt to be namby-pamby. But now, tell me—how are they at the house, and have they caught the villains?"

"Mrs. O'Connor," replied I, "is naturally distressed, though I said much to reassure her."

He turned to his servant.

"You run home, Finigan. Tell them that I'm all right, but that I must go to the police barracks before I see them."

Finigan turned and fled.

"And now, sir," I asked, in somewhat of a filial tone, "who has been guilty of this outrage?"

I will, with the reader's permission, make no attempt, by means of blanks or other expedients, to give any notion of Major O'Connor's language when he alluded to his assailants.

"I know no more than you do," he replied.

"What!" I exclaimed, in the utmost surprise.

"I was standing just below the boreen, looking over the hedge into Moore's field, and recognising a harrow which, I am sure belongs to the Hill Farm, when I received a stunning blow on the back of my head,

I fell forward, and, before I could say 'Jack Robinson,' my eyes were tightly bandaged, and the infernal gag was between my teeth."

"The scoundrels!" I exclaimed, in tones of deepest sympathy and remorse.

"You may well call them scoundrels," he replied, adding from his catalogue a string of still more stirring epithets, with the most unwholesome adjectives in or out of the dictionary prefixed to them.

"And how many do you suppose there were?" inquired I.

"About half-a-dozen, I should think," he answered.

We had by this time left the miserable enclosure, and were proceeding up the boreen, which in the evening light achieved a degree of melancholy compared with which its earlier aspect was absolute liveliness. The rustling of a leaf—the croak of a frog—the stirring of the ditch-

water as a frightened rat took to it—these sounds but served to intensify the unhallowed silence of the place.

"If there had been less than half-a-dozen, I believe I'd have got the best of the villains, for I kicked and struggled for dear life."

"You guessed you were in the boreen?" I said.

"Instinctively. I knew they couldn't carry me anywhere else without being observed."

"And didn't you recognise any of their voices?" I asked.

"I might have if any of 'em had spoken—but the villains were too cunning. They were as silent as the grave to which I had every reason to believe they were carrying me."

"And the bandage," I asked—"how was that removed?"

"It got loosened I suppose, by the con-

tinued action of my forehead, which I wrinkled till I thought my head would burst. It fell over my neck at last."

I had noticed him taking a white cloth from about his neck when his hands were loosed. He now drew it from his pocket. It was a large glass-cloth, quite clean, but without initials or any other indication of ownership.

"This may be evidence to convict some of the rascals," he said, putting it back into his pocket.

"And what," said I, feeling deeply interested in the case—"what could have been their motive?"

"Their motive!" he replied, quickening his pace. "When you know as much as I do about the procedure of Irish tenants, you won't ask me for their motive. Have I not built habitable cottages for them, and asked them to live in comfort instead of in squalor—isn't that motive enough?

Have I not reduced their rents in bad times, and sent them food from my own larder—what greater motive do you want than that? Haven't I taught them how to cultivate the soil, and lent them the latest inventions to do it with—do you see no motive in that? Haven't I treated them like human beings instead of like miserable dependents—can an ungrateful treacherous villain of an Irishman have a more righteous motive than that?"

I felt the red blood rushing to my cheeks, and I longed to answer him. But Prudence whispered "No." For the present, and for the sake of her who had suddenly become so unutterably precious to me, I would remain silent concerning the virtues of my calumniated fellow countrymen.

"But they shall have their maws full of it now," he went on, with an angry frown on his face. "I'll leave Temple Hill. I'll

live in London both in and out of the Session. I'll give them an agent that shall rack-rent and harry and evict. They have sown the wind. By Heaven, they shall reap the whirlwind."

While he was in such a mood as this it was clearly worse than useless to argue. We strode in silence through the mud of the darkening lane.

The worthy officer perhaps felt that in my silence there was a rebuke. He was, after all, a good-hearted man. And he commenced again in kindly tones—

"However," he said, "my anger against these fellows should not make me forget my indebtedness to you."

I explained that the undertaking of the search was a mere duty; the success of my effort a lucky chance.

"Nothing of the sort," he said, for he saw that my modesty was likely to induce me to do myself an injustice—"nothing

of the sort. I've taken a fancy to you. Your father's a gentleman, begad, though he's a trifle choleric and pig-headed."

"Sir!" I said, in a tone of stern reproach.

"I mean no offence," he continued, "but upon my soul he *is* pig-headed, you know, and won't let a man do him a kindness when he has a mind to. You're a smart young fellow. How would you like to serve the Queen—how would you like a commission?"

"My ambition soars somewhat higher."

He looked sharply at me. The Major did not know of a higher. But he had the heart neither of a patriot nor of a lover.

"You know best, of course. *I* should have thought, however, that to a brave and well-made young Irishman the chance would be welcome."

I did not answer. I was repeating to

myself the words of a song which I had heard my father sing—

Oh, if I was the Imperoor of Roosha to command,
Or Julius Caysar, or the Lord Liftinant of the land,
I'd give the crown from aff my head, my people from this knee,
I'd give my goold and silver and my Royal Artilleree,
I'd go to bed a beggar, and rise at break of dawn,
If at my side and for my bride I'd find the Colleen Bawn.

Ah! Mary O'Connor! You were my Colleen Bawn, and had my heart and my whole nature in your sweet keeping, and here I was walking and talking with your father without the courage to ask for your hand. Here he was acknowledging his indebtedness, praising my person and my courage, and asking me to put a name on the reward I wished above all other guerdon. Alas! and not for the first time, my native modesty put a seal on my lips.

We had now got to the opening of the boreen, from which Finigan had cleared all the bushes to make an open path for the master.

A *posse* of the Royal Irish Constabulary, coming from up the road where they had been searching for the lost man, stood at attention as we emerged from the shadow of the lane, and looked not a little surprised at us. Placing ourselves in charge of the sub-inspector, we proceeded to Ballybeg to report events more fully.

As we reached the outskirts of the village, little groups approached to meet us, bowing with great humility, and showering fervent "God bless you's!" upon us.

How little in harmony was the police barrack in Ballybeg with the unpleasant object with which it was built. It was a whitewashed building, with a newly-thatched roof. On the window-sills stood boxes painted green, in which flourished the proud geranium or shrank the gentle mignonette. The front of the house was covered with wisteria, ivy, and other

creepers. Two forms stood outside, upon which in happier times the police, unbelted and with their jackets open, smoked the pipe of peace.

Major O'Connor entered, and I waited for him outside. Indeed, with great kindness and condescension, he had asked me to accompany him home, in order that his wife and children might return thanks to me.

While the Major was inside I occupied my time in conversing with one of the police, and you may guess that I was merciless in my banter, and suggested that they should immediately enrol me in their ranks. I was proceeding in this strain of agreeable raillery, much to the delight of the man, when I was touched gently on the shoulder. I turned round and confronted Mrs. Murphy of The Harp that Once.

Faith, the widow looked charming—there's no mistake about that. She wore

the long blue cloak which is so becoming to her countrywomen, and had a small garden-hat on her head, beneath which her plump cheeks glowed, and her big black eyes sparkled like diamonds.

She curtseyed as I turned towards her.

"Where did ye find his anner, Masther Ptolemy?"

I told her.

"High hangin' to the villains that ill-thrated him," said she.

"Amen," said I.

"Tell me now," she asked, with a certain hesitation in her manner which I could not understand, "did his anner rekonise any av the blackguards?"

"How could he," said I in my superior way—"how could he when his eyes were bandaged?"

"Thrue for ye indeed; how cud he? But," she added, sounding me, "he moight have heard their voices?"

"He *might*," I replied; "but he didn't. You seem interested, Mrs. Murphy."

"Interested, is it? I shud hope I am interested. To think that a pack of lazy, idle vagabonds should go an' ill-thrate a foine gintleman like the Mimber. Throth, av I cotched hould av wan a' thim it 'ud be a sorry day for 'um."

Honest soul! I fully believed her as she curtseyed once more, thanked me for my information, and disappeared in the gloaming.

Shortly afterwards the Major stepped out from the barracks, and we walked along the white dusty road towards Temple Hill. I had prayed fervently that my father should not by some ill chance appear upon the scene, and Heaven, always kind to the young and innocent, answered my petition.

How my heart beat as I approached the Major's place. I had been brave enough that day in all conscience. If there had

been lions in that lane I believe I should have adventured forth to rescue my would-be patron—the one who might some day hold a nearer, a more sacred, relationship. But, the day's excitement at an end, I hesitated and trembled. I could face the lions. But to face Mary O'Connor—the only girl I ever loved—the only girl I ever might, could, would, or should love, as I called Heaven to witness a hundred times —to face *her*, I say, required a quality of courage in which I was deficient. My knees trembled. I was conscious that my face burned, and I felt that I was answering Major O'Connor's questions at random.

"You must be very hungry, my man," he said, attributing my agitation to anything but the right cause.

I admitted that a trifle of animal food would not be unacceptable.

I could see that the Major was rather

annoyed at finding the lodge empty. He would have liked the menials inhabiting that substantial little building to have turned out and welcomed him. He, however, turned it off with a laugh.

"I suppose they're scouring the country for my remains," he said, gaily.

The same absence of excitement was apparent all along the avenue. Although the news of the master's deliverance must have reached the house, no servant turned out to do him homage. All was as silent and lonely as when I visited the place early in the day.

The door was opened by the gorgeous and imperturbable creature who had offended me in the morning. His countenance was reassuring. On its expressionless surface there was no sign of disaster, domestic or imperial.

"Where's your mistress?" were the first words of the master.

"In the droring-room, sir, with Miss Kate."

"Has Finigan returned?"

"Wich he 'ave been hin, sir, and 'ave gone hout agin."

"This way, Mr. Daly," said the Major, leading me across the marble passage to the drawing-room.

Did I hear sobs as we approached the door?

Alas! yes. Sobs, too, in which I, hopeless and undone, must join.

Mrs. O'Connor lay back on the voluminous pillows of the sofa. Her daughter Kate was plying her with sal-volatile and other approved remedies for female disorders, while she herself showed evident traces of recent tears.

"What, in the name of Heaven, is all this?" shouted the Major, in tones of anger and alarm.

The answer was a chorus of sobs from

the women. In any crisis—notwithstanding the praises that have been written of them—women are the most unpractical and selfish creatures in the world.

"Are you all mad? Speak, somebody. Where's Mary?"

That was a question which, I need scarcely say, I would have like to ask myself.

Kate rose from her place at Mrs. O'Connor's feet, and, rushing towards her father, threw her arms round his neck and sobbed bitterly.

I felt awkward in the presence of this domestic tragedy, and I feel sure that the master of the house would have burst out into one of his series of objurgations, had not Kate handed him a note, which he read. As he perused the document the veins swelled on his forehead, and his face became white, red, and purple by turns.

He clenched his left hand, and the little white document trembled in his right.

It fell from his hand. I stooped to pick it up, and was restoring it to him.

"You may read," he gasped, sinking into the nearest chair.

I read in a pretty feminine scrawl:—

"DEAR MOTHER,

"I have run away with one whom I love better than life. Do not follow me, as before you receive this I shall be married. You will find papa in the cabin near the end of Loanen Boreen.

"Your affectionate daughter,

"MARY."

The room suddenly began to swim round and round. I had not tasted food it will be recollected, for many hours. I was faint with hunger. And this cruel blow settled me.

I gasped for air.

I stretched my hands for support, and muttering in an accent of broken-hearted regret the one word "Mary!" I fell suddenly to the floor like a dead thing.

CHAPTER X.

LOVE'S YOUNG AWAKENING.

TREACHERY and ingratitude are by superior historical analysts attributed to the Irish as qualities very prominent in their nature. Speaking from a long experience of my countrymen, I can only say that the superior historical analysts display a crass ignorance which one too often discovers in superior persons. The vices of treachery and ingratitude *are* common in my unfortunate country. But they are illustrated not by the genuine native. The daily exhibition of them is freely undertaken by the Scotch and English settlers, and by those renegade Hibernians who have abandoned creed and country alike for a humiliating gift of Saxon gold.

Major O'Connor's ancestors, such as they were, had acquired English patronage and English money for that which, in other times, would have secured for them a happy exit through the drop. Consequently the worthy member felt a contempt, founded, I fancy, partly upon fear and partly upon remorse, for those who clung to the national faith and the national policy. He looked down upon those who looked down upon him. A traitor to his country and his conscience, he could only banish a comparison with the faithful by affecting to believe in his own impeccability.

How comes it that I speak thus harshly of one whom I had just placed under the deepest obligations—one whose favourite daughter I had been the means of rescuing from deadly peril—one who had made me extended offers of patronage and of pelf?

You shall hear.

When I came to myself I found that I

was still lying on the drawing-room floor. My eyes slowly opened—a sickly feeling that was half hunger and half mental distress seemed to paralyse me. I looked helplessly round. Not a hand was stretched to assist me. Not a word of sympathy or encouragement was offered me. Making a supreme effort, I struggled to my feet. Pale, discomfited, and anticipating I knew not what, I gazed imploringly from face to face.

"You have forgotten yourself, young fellow," said the Major in a gruff voice.

"I—I think I fainted," I replied, not at all seeing the drift of his accusation.

"You called my daughter by her christian name," he went on, in tones still less sympathetic.

God help me! I scarcely knew what to reply, and so, with a simplicity which is, I am happy to say, one of my characteristics, I faltered—

"I loved her, sir."

Alas! had I been a man of the world, a man about town, a *roué*, a *blasé* debauchee, devoid of heart and dead to shame, I dare-say I might have framed some explanation which would have gratified these Irish recipients of English gold. As it was, I merely blurted out, without thought of shame to myself or thought of dishonour to them, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

I infer that the residents at Temple Hill could not have been accustomed to hearing much of the truth, for the little bit of it that I told them created the greatest possible commotion and indignation.

"Did you *ever?*" shrieked Mrs. O'Connor, in the utmost horror.

"The idea!" said Miss Kate, turning her nose up—an operation which she should have been the last in the world to attempt,

for nature had saved her all trouble in the matter.

The Major himself, forgetting the presence of ladies, indulged in his favourite habit, and blanked me and double-blanked me until he became purple in the face.

This was perhaps the very best thing that the gallant officer could have done. It gave me time to recover my thoughts, and when he gave me what I believe he feebly considered the *coup de grâce*, I was ready with my retort.

"If you're hungry," he said, "I'll order something for you in the servants' hall. I must request you to leave the presence of the ladies. Love *my* daughter, indeed! What next, I should like to know!"

I faced the enemy, and conscious that some little colour flickered on my pallid cheek, I made answer, as well as I can recollect, in the following bitter words—

"If," said I, "the person who, without your permission, has become your son-in-law, has been in the habit of feeding in your servants' hall, let me assure you that I, who hoped with permission to aspire to the honour of your daughter's hand, have no care to mingle with your menials."

"Silence, sir!" shouted O'Connor.

"Silence yourself, sir!" I replied. "You and your upstart family have accepted favours from me, and now repudiate me. I can guess who your daughter has eloped with. I'm a presumptuous boy, forsooth, and he is—a hedge schoolmaster. He's of the right religion, though, and I wish you joy of him."

"You're an impudent fellow, sir," said the Major, boiling over with suppressed rage.

"And so are *you*, sir—a very impudent fellow, and, I may add, a very ungrateful fellow. I only wish I had left you in the

boreen. If Mrs. O'Connor had only seen you there, I'm sure"—

"Send him out of the house, Major," interrupted Mrs. O'Connor.

"*Do* pa!" seconded the ingenuous Kate.

Papa, thus pressed by the amiable women of the household, pulled the bell, and the overbearing menial whose manner had already afforded me amusement, while it inflicted pain, came into the room.

"Show this gentleman out of the house —*and show him out the back way.*"

The redoubtable British warrior thus attempted to add insult to injury. He reckoned, however, without his host. My answer to him was about the least-gratifying speech I had got to make. Bowing with mock humility to the entire family circle, I said—

"I can easily understand that the presence of a stranger may check that natural

outburst of grief consequent on the disgrace which has to-day fallen on your illustrious house, and may even interfere with such steps as you may be contemplating for the capture of the unfortunate fugitives."

"Heartless monster!" volunteered Mrs. O'Connor, deeply affected.

"Mean-spirited cad!" added Miss Kate, with a spitefulness in her accent which only a vindictive woman could command.

"Let the young fool go on," said the Major, affecting for the first time an air of the utmost unconcern, though beneath his poor pretence the least competent student of human nature could see that he was writhing from the effect of my animadversions.

"The young fool," said I, with the utmost *sang froid*, "has very little more to say—and that little shall be an expression

of thanks. You have just told this overgrown but underbred English menial to show me out the back way. I suppose I must go down the back stairs. I assure you that it will afford me the greatest pleasure to go down by the same means that you and your family got up."

The blow told. He glared at me, and but for the presence of the ladies would, I believe, have struck me. Indeed, I had counted on the moral support offered by their presence before I ventured on this last shot of mine. Because, if ever there was an Irish family that owed its position to backstairs influence, it was the O'Connors of Temple Hill.

"Begone!" he shouted.

"I'm going, Major—I'm going. Remember me to the young people when you write. And assure them that if I had known what an exceedingly ill-mannered

old man you are, I'd have left you to your fate in the boreen to which your daughter consigned you."

I followed the lofty menial from the drawing-room, and was duly conducted to the back-door. The grinning idiot opened it with a mock dignity which made me burn for revenge.

"You'll find it a shotter way 'ome."

"If I had my will I'd send you a very much shorter way home," I said.

"I dessay," he retorted; "but 'pon hhonour, now, it was too dem ridik'lus a young clod-'opper makin' hup to henny of *our* young leddies."

I could stand a trifle—not *much*, but a trifle—from the father of her whom, but a few short minutes ago, I believed that I loved above all things earthly. There was no reason in the world why I should stand the gibes of a low serving-man. So I drew my riding whip and struck him a

sharp blow across the face before he had time to divine my intention. He staggered back, for I had put all my strength into it, and I, flinging him a fond good-bye, fled into the darkening shadows of the evening.

CHAPTER XI.

REACTION.

I HAVE dwelt at considerable length upon this love episode of mine, because in the history of my life, and more particularly in the history of my opinions, it has a relative importance not easy to over-estimate. In every true Irishman the patriotic sentiment is latent. Sometimes by natural growth it becomes developed and active; more often it is educed by circumstances, in which case I hold it is more reliable, because more fierce.

The inhuman conduct of the O'Connors was the episode which gave my political sentiments a reality and a life. Here was an example which I personally felt. I could not sympathise with my father's ab-

horrence of Saxon rule, for that was merely founded in an inherent dislike to the settlement of just debts. But in the overbearing manners of the County Member, and in the absurd *hauteur* of his upstart family, I discovered the view which those with English sympathies take of us. Mine was a reasonable hatred, and as I strode towards the gates of the hated place it grew every moment fiercer and more fierce.

Heaven knows I had been diffident enough, and had concealed a passion which a less modest man would have expressed. Eventually the secret had been wrung from me, and I had fallen to the ground with the pain of utterance. Even then I had only breathed her name, coupling it with no expression of devotion. It was the groan given by the dying hope of a love-sick boy. Supposing I *had* addressed this hectoring bully, and asked him for

the hand of his daughter—what proceeding could be more natural? Except that we could claim a longer and more unsullied descent; except that no member of our family had ever been attainted; except that we had never suffered the anathema of a national religion, nor accepted the doctrines of an alien faith—we met as equals, and on common ground. It is true I had no adequate provision made for me. But surely, to a man of the Major's undoubted wealth that should scarcely be an impediment. Besides which, I was young and ambitious. There was no such thing as putting bounds to the possibilities of a young and gifted Irishman like myself. Had he himself not as good as promised to make me an officer in the Army? If I was good enough for the Queen's commission, I was, I hope, good enough for his daughter's hand.

All through the annals of the history of

Irish patriotism, it will be found that unavailing or disappointed love has had a great deal to do with the education of those who, greatly daring, would strike a blow for freedom. Every passion that I had felt for Mary now turned into hatred for the Saxon sentiment of superiority which had robbed me of her, and hatred for England would of course achieve its highest illustration in an active love for Ireland.

I grieve to say—because, as Father Corrigan afterwards informed me, the feeling was sinful—that the heartless conduct of Mary was insufficient to quench the regard which I felt for her; and so an increasing affection for Ireland flourished side by side with a sentiment which was not exactly love, perhaps, but which might be described as that softened and hallowed sentiment which one feels for the dead.

I cannot better illustrate the condition

of my mind than by the insertion of a little poem which I composed at this juncture, and which, although not free from the defects inseparable from juvenile poetry, possesses a merit of its own rarely absent in effusions which come hot from a crushed heart. The poem was afterwards set to music by that celebrated Irish composer Daniel O'Reilly, and was sung with great success by that gifted Irish songstress Miss O'Flynn at a charity entertainment given in the Ancient Concert Rooms, Dublin, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Archbishop.

Here it is:—

MY TWO LOVES.

When darkness surrounds me, when night holds my heart,
  When my spirit is toss'd upon Doubt's stormy sea,
What upholds my sad soul, bidding terror depart?—
  My love of my country; my love, Love, of thee.

When danger invites me to struggle and strife,
  When I rush into battle, to fall or be free,
What strengthens my arm and gives zest to my life?—
  My love of my country; my love, Love, of thee.

When Death hovers o'er me with pinions of black,
And beckons me far from the land and the sea,
What nerves me to stifle a wish to be back?—
My love of my country; my love, Love, of thee.

For the frivolous, for the cynical, and, above all, for the satirical, I am aware that this present chapter of my reminiscences can have but little interest. I may hope to gain the sympathy of a gentle lover or two. And, perchance, some exiled countryman of mine—a stranger in a strange land—may see the story of one whose misfortunes resemble his own, and,

Seeing, may take heart again.

It was a weary walk that from Temple Hill to Castle Beg, and, with my weight of trouble, ten times more weary than ever before. I dare not tell my father of my adventure, or of my love. I dare not trust my mother, as she would, in all probability, confide the narrative to the author of my being. In my present disturbed

state of mind I did not care to encounter Father Corrigan. So, in order that I might gain some idea as to my general appearance, and perhaps hear the truth about Miss O'Connor's flight, I made straight for The Harp that Once.

Mrs. Murphy received me with open arms. I mean figuratively, of course. For, with the characteristic bashfulness and reserve of an Irishman, I had, up to that time, never embraced a woman—except my own mother.

The excellent lady was, indeed, exceptionally flattering and attentive, and as the usual group, consisting of Aiken the dispensary doctor, Davin the vet, and Radley the agent, were standing about the bar, the good woman very considerately invited me into her little parlour.

"Will you walk into my parlour?"
Said the spider to the fly.

And in walked the fly, with all the alacrity

and innocence for which that insect is so justly remarkable.

"You're lookin' mortial pale, Masther Ptolemy, an' ill."

"I am ill, Mrs. Murphy," I answered, sinking into a chair. "And I think there have been enough goings on in Ballybeg to-day to make anybody ill."

"Thrue for ye," she said. "I niver heerd tell ev such a thing as lavin' the poor Meejor as good as dead in the boreen."

"There's worse than *that!*" said I gloomily.

"Worse than *that!*" she replied, in accents of unaffected astonishment. "What in the world can be worse than that? The house isn't on fire anyhow, or we'd see it."

"Worse than that?" I answered, in tones still more gloomy, and shaking a head that was throbbing like mad.

"Then, faith, I give it up," she said, in a puzzled and despairing manner, "an' its

meself wud grieve to hear of anything hap'nin to the Meejor, for sorra a betther man braythes in the whole county."

"Miss Mary has eloped," I said shortly.

"Arrah, ye don't mane to tell me so," she said, though even in my then state of agitation I imagined that the intelligence did not occasion her that astonishment which it was calculated to excite.

She proceeded—

"And, now, who the divvle is the lucky man?" she inquired.

"Faith," said I, "that's a question I thought of asking *you*."

"Divvle a know, I know," she replied, with apparent sincerity.

"What d'ye think of O'Loughlin?" I asked.

"O'Loughlin! sure you're makin' fun ev me. Miss Mary ud luk higher nor O'Loughlin. Now, if it had been yerself, Masther Ptolemy"—

"Don't, for goodness sake," I interrupted; "you torture me."

"Heaven presarve ye for a sweet young gintleman, an' betther luck next time."

The very fact of relieving my mind made me feel better, and taking leave of my plump hostess, I retired. Passing through the little hall of the hostelry, I looked into the public room, and there, crouching round the turf fire, I saw the redoubtable Rory and about half-a-dozen as evil-visaged men as I ever saw in Ballybeg. I had no time for reflection, and made the best of my way home.

Fortunately there was one of father's orgies in progress at Castle Beg, and I should therefore avoid meeting my revered parent.

My mother stopped me as I passed through the kitchen.

"Where on earth have you been, Ptolemy?" she inquired with maternal solicitude.

I kissed her on the forehead, and briefly responded—

"Major hunting."

Then, tired, miserable and hungry, I strode off to my own room.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BALLYBEG MIRACLES.

I HAVE now traced with what minuteness I may the immediate and harrowing causes of my actively embracing national politics. Other circumstances conspired to urge me on towards a glorious or a disastrous goal. The child of Circumstance, I am but too willing to record all that I owe to this common parentage.

One of these circumstances was the death of Mrs. Daly, which occurred in July.

The death of my poor mother left me more melancholy than the loss of my love. And I regret to say that it led to the most serious differences between myself and my father, for that godless man insisted on having a Wake, so that while my mother's

body lay in state in the drawing-room, the dining-room was a scene of riot and disorder. What was done with impunity by the master was enacted with equal spirit by Noonan and the other menials in the kitchen, and for three days Castle Beg was no fit place for a Christian to live in.

During those three days I spent the most of my time with Father Corrigan, to whom I at length confided the story of my love. The worthy priest not only afforded me spiritual consolation, but congratulated me on having escaped from the hands of a heretic. This excellent man of God, moreover, with true instinct, discovered that the Major's conduct had fanned into a flame the small spark of patriotism which burned within me, and like a devoted minister of the Gospel as he was, he lent me for perusal such volumes as he thought calculated to add fuel to the flame.

But not merely in the tomes containing

the history of Ireland's past grievances did I discover the necessity for active opposition to the cowardly and tyrannous government of England. I found that our present wrongs were every whit as grievous as our former ones. I was enabled to trace every particular disaster to a particular Saxon cause. And I learned to regard with mingled contempt and loathing the superior force that enslaved us. Was there a failure in the potato crop: here was an evident result of English interference or of English neglect. Was Indian meal raised to starvation prices : here was a proof of the Saxon wish to crush us. Was butter dear : then we knew that English money was buying that which was intended for our own sustenance.

For the acquirement of these facts in political economy, and for other facts like them, I am indebted to a national newspaper with which Father Corrigan kept me

regularly supplied—a paper which circulated not only all over Ireland, but which was sent in thousands to America, keeping alive in the New World fond recollections of the Old Country.

This paper was called *The Sunburst.*

A few words with reference to this remarkable organ—an organ which I regret to say has been maligned by orators inside the House of Commons and outside it, because, forsooth, it has chosen to shame the devil by uttering, with no uncertain sound, the national sentiment. The *Sunburst* was the property of a few gentlemen who had been in gaol for various offences, but chiefly for being members of, or lending their support to, societies organised for the calm and unimpassioned discussion of Irish grievances. The staff consisted of men of genius. The possession of genius was indeed the only qualification required by the editor. Genius is unpurchasable, and,

therefore, the services of these patriots were not bought, but were freely and cheerfully rendered by men who were ready to give, not merely their copy, but their lives for the national cause. They all looked forward to the dawn of a brighter day; to a day when Ireland should arise from the ashes in which—a political Cinderella—she had been squatting for centuries; to a day when, touched by the magic wand of liberty, the rags of dependence and misfortune should disappear, to be replaced by the priceless robe of Equality and Wealth; to a day when with haughty mien and bright defiant countenance, she should take her place among her sisters—resplendent in her incomparable beauty, and adorned with unpurchasable gems.

To the dawn of such a day did the ardent spirits who wrote for the *Sunburst* look forward with eager yearning. With eager yearning those of them who still

remain at this moment look forward to that day. Their brilliant corruscations in the national organ did much to hasten the consummation for which they devoutly wished. I am bound to say that some of the finest poetry I ever read in my life appeared in the columns of the *Sunburst*. A great deal of it was written by a gentlewoman who played the part of Lady Morgan with great effect in the metropolis, and whose poetry was calculated to arouse feelings of indignation in the most torpid or most craven soul. Being myself—as the reader already knows—a poet of some small pretensions, I was naturally most attracted by these compositions. The gifted poetess signed herself "Sappho." Years afterwards, when I was presented to her in her own drawing-room in Lower Baggot Street, I discovered in her one who, though divinely beautiful, had gifts of mind which threw into the shade even the splendour of her presence.

Irish fiction finds no ready sale in the English market, and yet I remember how my blood was stirred and my soul fired as I read through the moving pages of "The Saxon Ghoul; or, the Martyrs of Ballinderry"—a romance by that eminent Celtic scholar and tried Irish patriot, Con Doherty. Of the leading articles I may speak in equally glowing terms. The writers ventured upon flights of rhetoric of which a dull English reader cannot have the slightest conception. Every leader was a written oration—a very psalm of David set in the vulgar garb of prose. Gifted beings! As I read your fervid address to a sympathising nation; as I recited with the unbridled enthusiasm of youth the lyrics of the new Sappho, and dwelt enraptured

> Upon the rise
> And long roll of the Hexameter;

as I experienced the thrill which your leading articles were calculated to impart;

and as I perused with pent-up feelings the awful revelations of your romances—how little did I think that soon I should be one of your brilliant band, that my pen should be unsheathed in the national cause, that to me even would be afforded the opportunity of becoming famous as a literary exponent of the Irish Cause.

But I anticipate.

Though my fatal love was the first cause of a moping habit in which my patriotism took root, just as flowers will blossom on a dung-heap; though my poor mother's death and Father Corrigan's instructions helped to hasten the maturity of the passion; though my father's intemperate habits, which, since the funeral, had increased with wonderful strides, had superinduced a longing to be away from home, the immediate circumstance which impelled my taking the final step was Supernatural.

Pray, my gentle reader, reserve that sneer for the mere invention of an English fiction-monger, and listen to the relation of that which, upon the honour of an Irish gentleman, I solemnly declare to be the simple truth. The narrative to the Catholic reader will appear by no means extraordinary. The heretic mind may, however, find some difficulty in accepting it. In the event of any reader feeling disposed to reject my testimony, I beg to refer him to Father Corrigan, who is, I am happy to believe, still alive, and is living somewhere near Knock, in the County Mayo. Mrs. Kavanagh, the holy man's housekeeper, is still with him, and she, I am sure, will also bear witness to the general accuracy of my statement, if requested to do so.

In order that the evidence may appear more worthy of credence, I will quote from my diary. From the date of the

document it will be seen that months had passed since my love affair, although I regret to say that I had by no means got over a feeling which was quite unworthy of me.

EXTRACT FROM MY DIARY.

"*Oct.* 15, *Night.* Father drunk again. I have just left the dining-room disgusted. Have bathed my head to take away the foul fumes of tobacco smoke. Indulged in two tumblers of punch in order to induce sleep. They have commenced to sing the 'Cruiskeen Lawn,' and Napper Tandy is howling in the stable. He always does when that lyric is sung. I feel inclined to howl myself. My father and his guests have no idea of either time or tune. And they are too far gone to care for any of my compositions, or I would go down and give them 'The Little Pig that Pays the Rint.' I will close my diary for to-night, and go to bed.

"*Oct.* 16, *Morning.* I can hardly say whether the event which transpired but one hour ago is true or untrue. And yet it was too real. Had it occurred at night I might possibly have put it down as a vision or the result of a disordered digestion. But in broad daylight, with my faculties all awake, and my eyes wide open, I must set down exactly what I recollect of the affair, and then ask Father Corrigan about it. Father McGrath is no doubt a sensible man, he has, however, but a small belief in visions, and might strive to turn into ridicule that which is as precious to me as spiritual consolation. It was about six in the morning. It was grey dawn, but everything in my bed-room was not only visible, but distinct. My eyes were directed towards a little book-case which hung opposite me, and I was more particularly regarding a volume of poems bound in green—a

collection of lyrics from the *Sunburst*, entitled 'Shackles and Shamrocks,' being chiefly from the pen of that gifted poetess 'Sappho.' Suddenly I became conscious in an undefined way that I was not alone, and that the other presence was not opposite me, but at the side of me. At first I feared to turn my head. But an awful fascination compelled me. I looked. There were three figures standing between me and the window. Two of them were angels. That I could tell at once, because they resembled the images in the chapel. They were dressed in long blue robes trimmed with gold. They carried palm-branches in their hands, had bare feet, and rather florid complexions. Round the heads of the angels were glories, and they smiled at me so reassuringly that my fear vanished. Between these two inhabitants of Heaven stood a young man of singularly intelligent face. He wore light

trousers, Hessian boots, a cutaway coat, his arms were folded across his breast, and he had a mingled air of sadness and defiance on his face. I knew at once by the portraits which I had seen that Robert Emmett stood in the room with me. He looked at me, and said, in a sweet, firm voice—'Ptolemy, Ireland hath need of thee!' I closed my eyes in a sort of holy ecstasy. When I opened them the angels and the martyr had gone.

"*Oct.* 16, *Evening*.—I have seen Father Corrigan, who earnestly believes in the reality of the appearance, and who will to-night occupy my room instead of myself."

I have now given in the words of my own diary an account of this extraordinary and blessed revelation. Father Corrigan slept the following night in my room at Castle Beg, and at about the same hour he

beheld the same vision. There were indeed some trifling differences in the matter of costume, but change of raiment, one may suppose, is as common in celestial regions as in regions terrestrial. Thus the angels who appeared to Father Corrigan were dressed in shining white garments with silver borders, and they had golden diadems on their heads. Emmett also wore tassels to his Hessian boots, which he had not on the occasion when I saw him. He was, however, without the seals which depended from his fob on the previous night. In addressing Father Corrigan his words were, "Ireland hath need of Ptolemy!"—a change which, of course, would be required in addressing a third person, though practically the sentence was the same which he had uttered to me. The priest, who was perhaps a more acute observer than myself, also noticed a red mark across the patriot's throat. To those who

have read the appalling story of Ireland's wrongs, I need not say what *that* meant.

On the following night Mrs. Kavanagh occupied the bed, and observed, with some trifling alterations, the same vision, and had confided to her the same message. If, therefore, it is possible to support a fact by independent testimony, the Castle Beg revelations are as firmly established as any historical event whatever.

Although this circumstance was calculated to give me a great deal of local popularity—and, to tell the truth, I was thereafter regarded as a saint, and almost worshipped as I walked through the streets—it was not unattended with inconvenience. Father Corrigan was an enthusiast in religion as well as in politics, and, indiscreetly, as I think, preached on the subject on the very next Sunday, adducing from ecclesiastical history many well-attested instances of miraculous cures

effected on those who had repaired to the scene of the vision.

The faithful took his reverence's hint, and for weeks after the lawn was crowded with a ragged and unsightly crew from all parts of the country—seeking admission, if you please, to my sleeping apartment. My father, who was a man with a devil of a temper, would have driven the mob forth, assisted by Noonan. When, however, he discovered that one half of them were blind, the other half of them lame, and all of them quite unaccustomed to soap and water, he magnanimously forbore, and shut himself up in the dining-room with a jar of potheen.

This is a serious subject, and I trust that my readers will treat it in a proper spirit. It was, of course, impossible to admit all the applicants to my bed-room. Those, however, who were willing to pay a small sum were allowed to visit the

scene. Half of the sum went to Father Corrigan—that is to say, to the Church—and half went to me to pay for the damage done to the contents of the apartment. The poor people took away the plaster from the walls, and applied it to their eyes where they were blind, to their legs in cases where they were lame, and generally to those parts of the body which were diseased.

In all cases—save one—where the mortar or plaster was applied, an immediate and miraculous cure was effected. The case in which no cure was effected was that of an Orangeman from Armagh, who had been struck dumb three years before for shouting, "To hell with the Pope!"

To me the most important of the arrivals were not these dirty and bedraggled loafers, but a party of live lords and ladies from London, who sought admission to what was now sacred as a shrine. These pilgrims had no ailments, but were personally

conducted by an ecclesiastical dignitary—a convert from the English Church. They left a very decent sum of money for the maintenance of the Roman Catholic religion in our parts. Heaven send us more such converts, say I!

When the excitement attending these receptions died away, and when the miraculous power of the mortar evaporated—or rather, I should say, when every available grain of mortar had been picked from the walls—I had time to reflect on the message which I had received from the lips of the murdered martyr, Robert Emmett. It was a call not to be disregarded.

Henceforth, my country, I devote myself, body and soul, to thy cause!

I had saved a trifle of money. I announced to my father, who was in a semi-maudlin condition, that I was determined

to seek distinction in the metropolis. He wept and blessed me.

I was followed to the coach by a sorrowing crowd, prominent among whom was Mrs. Murphy. Even Father McGrath, who was no favourite of mine, attended to give me his blessing. Father Corrigan accompanied me a few miles on the road. As the coach drove off, Noonan burst into a howl of irrepressible distress. And, truth to tell, there was not a dry eye in the assembly.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by REMINGTON & Co., 134, New Bond Street, W.