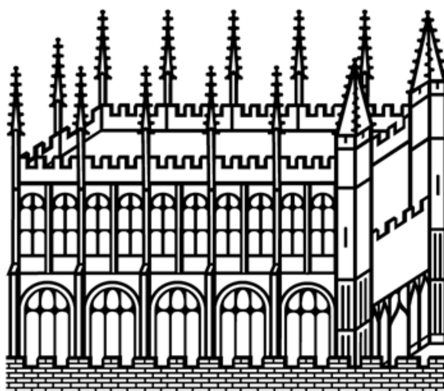

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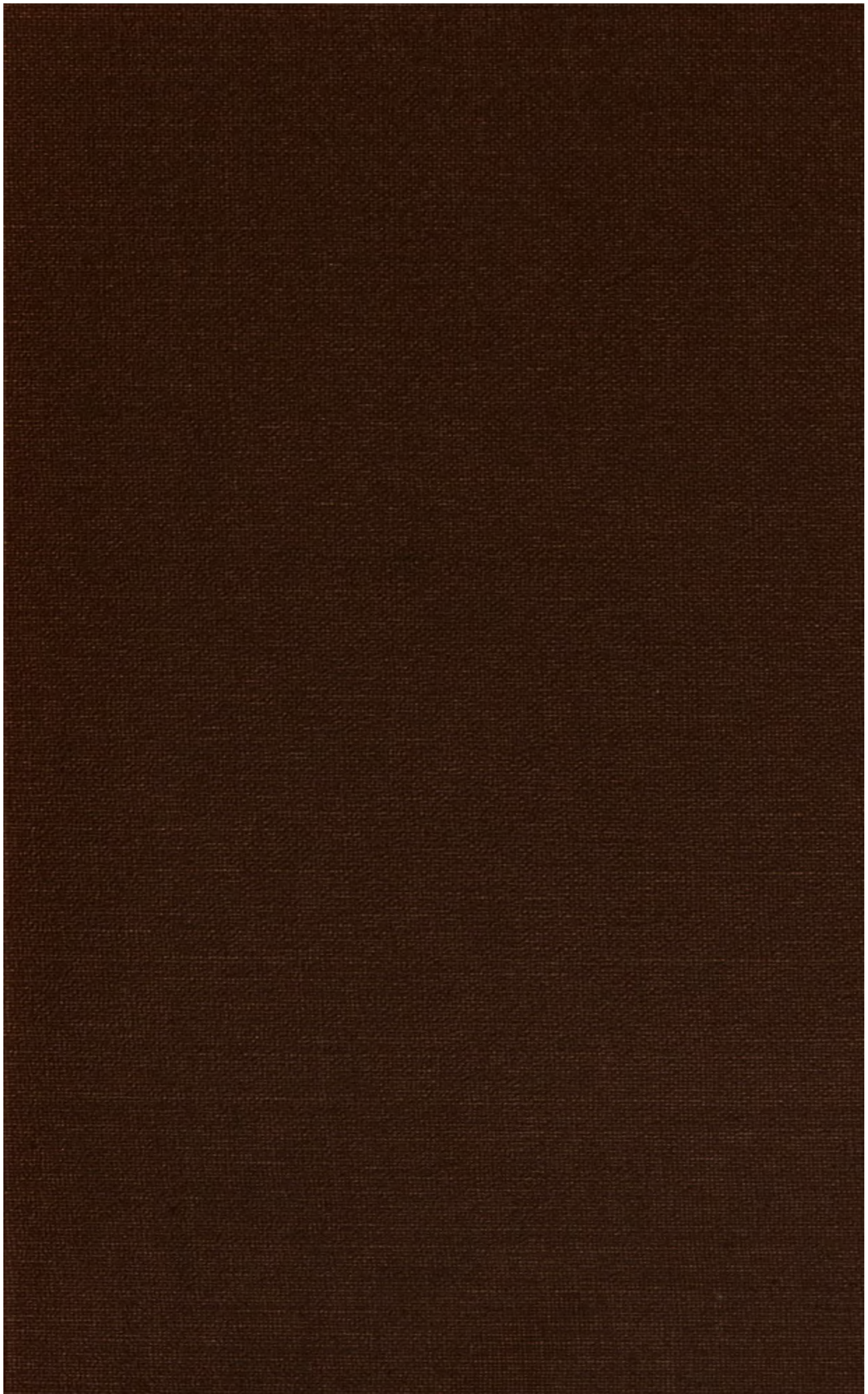

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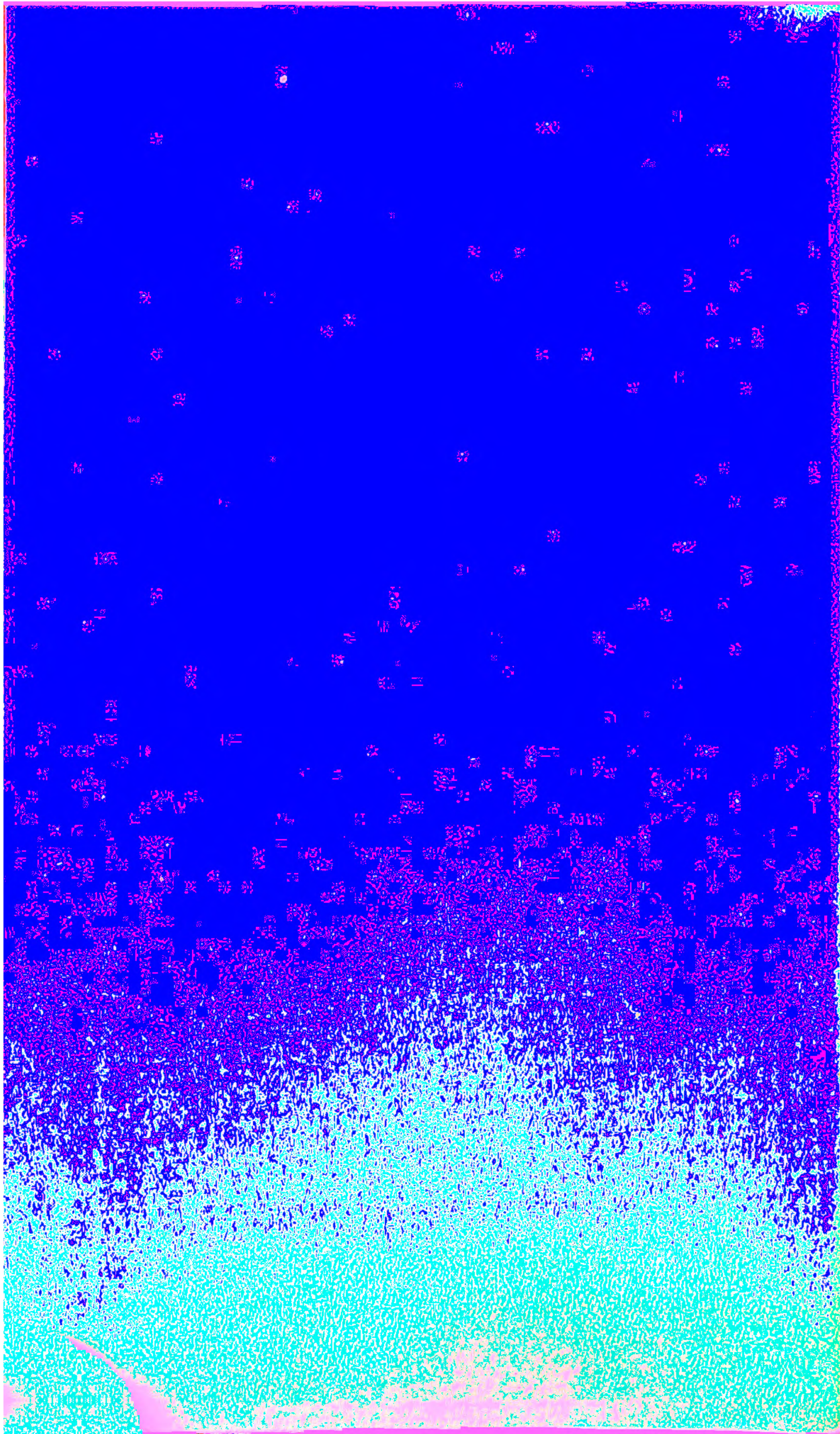
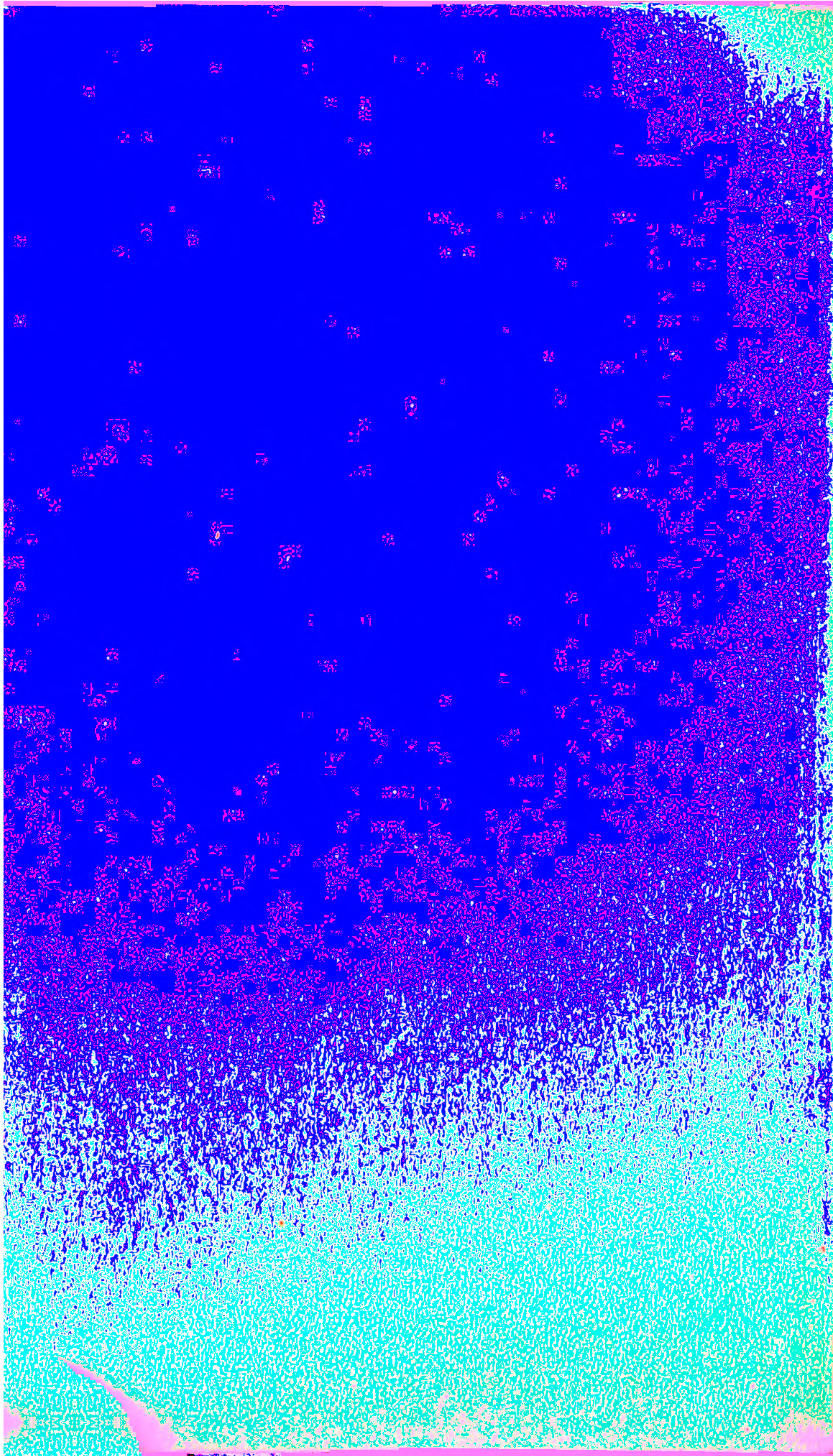




W. Harvey. F. Bacon.

PATRONAGE.

She endeavoured to go on, but her voice faltered — her colour changed. Rosamond, whose quick eye followed her sister's. —

Patronage Vol. 3. Page 83.

LONDON, PUBLISHED 1833, BY BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

PATRONAGE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

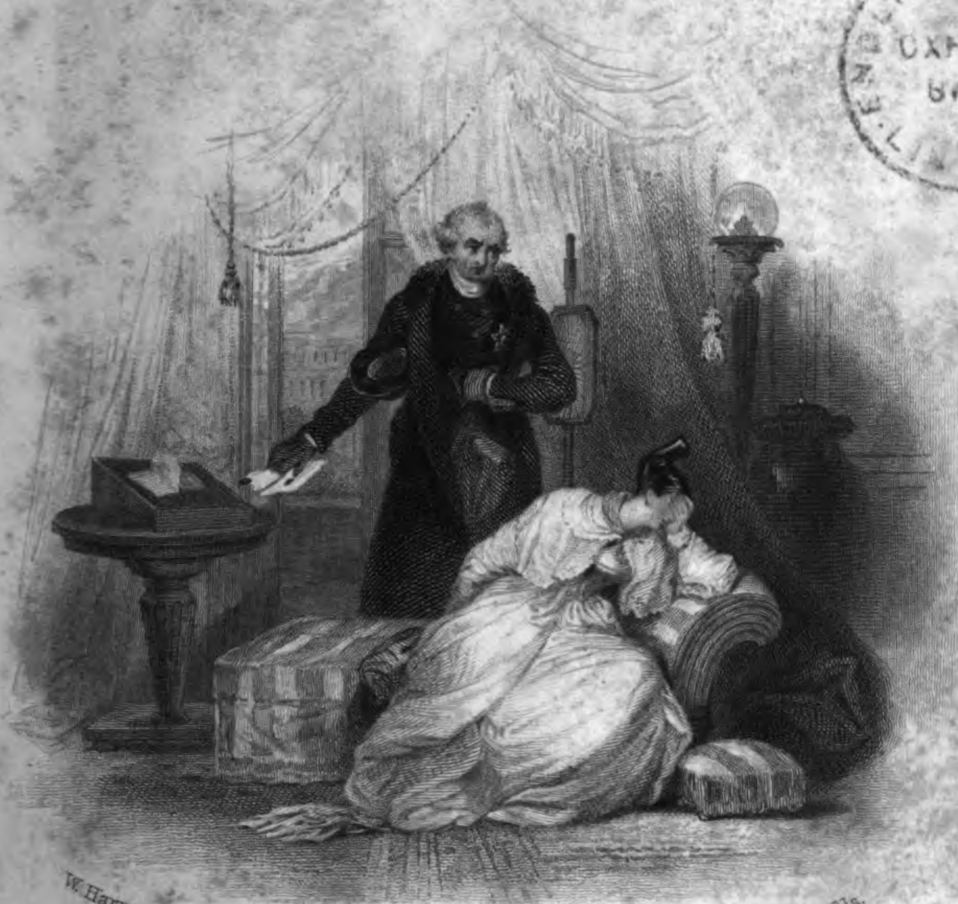
BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

VOL. III.

(INCLUDING COMIC DRAMAS.)

OXFORD



W. Harvey. C. Rolls.

"And a letter which I see in this same hand-writing, madam, if you please." — She gave it; — and then, unable to support herself longer, sunk upon a sofa: —

Vol. 3. page 67.

LONDON: BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND OTHER PROPRIETORS.
1833.

TALES AND NOVELS

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. XVI.

CONTAINING

PATRONAGE

AND

COMIC DRAMAS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR BALDWIN AND CRADOCK;

J. MURRAY; J BOOKER; WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT; SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL; SMITH, ELDER, AND CO.; E. HODGSON; HOULSTON AND SON; J. TEMPLEMAN; J. BAIN; R. MACKIE; RENSHAW AND RUSH; AND G. AND J. ROBINSON, LIVERPOOL.

1833.

C. BALDWIN, PRINTER, NEW BRIDGE-STREET.

CONCLUSION OF

PATRONAGE;

COMIC DRAMAS.

PATRONAGE.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

No less an event than Alfred's marriage, no event calling less imperatively upon her feelings, could have recovered lady Jane's sympathy for Caroline. But Alfred Percy, who had been the restorer of her fortune, her friend in adversity, what pain it would give him to find her, at the moment when he might expect her congratulations, quarrelling with his sister—that sister, too, who had left her home, where she was so happy, and Hungerford Castle, where she was adored, on purpose to tend lady Jane in sickness and obscurity!

Without being put exactly into these words, or, perhaps, into any words, thoughts such as these, with feelings of gratitude and affection, revived for Caroline in lady Jane's mind the moment she heard of Alfred's intended marriage.

"Good young man!—Excellent friend!—Well, tell me all about it, *my dear*."

It was the first time that her ladyship had said *my dear* to Caroline since the day of the fatal refusal.

Caroline was touched by this word of reconciliation—and the tears it brought into her eyes completely overcame lady Jane, who hastily wiped her own.

"So, my dear Caroline—where were we? Tell me about your brother's marriage—when is it to be?—How has it been brought about?—The last I heard of the Leicesters was the good dean's death—I remember pitying them very much——Were they not left in straitened circumstances, too? Will Alfred have any fortune with miss Leicester?—Tell me every thing—read me his letters."

To go back to Dr. Leicester's death. For some months his preferments were kept in abeyance. Many were named, or thought of, as likely to succeed him. The deanery was in the gift of the crown, and, as it was imagined that the vicarage was also at the disposal of government, applications had poured in, on all sides, for friends, and friends' friends, to the remotest link of the supporters of ministry——But—to use their own elegant phrase—the hands of government were tied.

It seems that in consequence of some parliamentary interest, formerly given opportunely, and in consideration of certain arrangements in his diocese, to serve persons whom ministers were obliged to oblige, a promise had long ago been given to bishop Clay that his recommendation to the deanery should be accepted on the next vacancy. The bishop, who had promised the living to his sister's husband, now presented it to Mr. Buckhurst Falconer, with the important addition of Dr. Leicester's deanery.

To become a dean was once the height of Buckhurst's ambition, that for which in a moment of elation he prayed, scarcely hoping that his wishes would ever be fulfilled: yet now that his wish was

accomplished, and that he had attained this height of his ambition, was he happy? No!—far from it; farther than ever. How could he be happy—dissatisfied with his conduct, and detesting his wife? In the very act of selling himself to this beldam, he abhorred his own meanness; but he did not know how much reason he should have to repent, till the deed was done. It was done in a hurry, with all the precipitation of a man who hates himself for what he feels forced to do. Unused to bargain and sale in any way, in marriage never having thought of it before, Buckhurst did not take all precautions necessary to make his sacrifice answer his own purpose. He could not conceive the avaricious temper and habits of his lady, till he was hers past redemption. Whatever accession of income he obtained from his marriage, he lived up to; immediately, his establishment, his expences, surpassed his revenue. His wife would not pay or advance a shilling beyond her stipulated quota to their domestic expences. He could not bear the parsimonious manner in which she would have had him live, or the shabby style in which she received his friends. He was more profuse in proportion as she was more niggardly; and whilst she scolded and grudged every penny she paid, he ran in debt magnanimously for hundreds. When the living and the deanery came into his possession, the second year's fruits had been eaten beforehand. Money he must have, and money his wife would not give—but a litigious agent suggested to him a plan for raising it, by demanding a considerable sum from the executors of the late Dr. Leicester, for what is

called *dilapidation.* The parsonage-house seemed to be in good repair; but to make out charges of dilapidation was not difficult to those who understood the business—and fifteen hundred pounds was the charge presently made out against the executors of the late incumbent. It was invidious, it was odious for the new vicar, in the face of his parishioners, of all those who loved and respected his predecessor, to begin by making such a demand—especially as it was well known that the late dean had not saved any of the income of his preferment, but had disposed of it amongst his parishioners as a steward for the poor. He had left his family in narrow circumstances. They were proud of his virtues, and not ashamed of the consequences. With dignity and ease they retrenched their expences; and after having lived as became the family of a dignitary of the church, on quitting the parsonage, the widow and her niece retired to a small habitation, suited to their altered circumstances, and lived with respectable and respected economy. The charge brought against them by the new dean was an unexpected blow. It was an extortion, to which Mrs. Leicester would not submit—could not without injury to her niece, from whose fortune the sum claimed, if yielded, must be deducted.

Alfred Percy, from the first moment of their distress, from the time of good Dr. Leicester's death, had been assiduous in his attentions to Mrs. Leicester; and by the most affectionate letters, and, whenever he could get away from London, by his visits to her and to his Sophia, had proved the warmth and

constancy of his attachment. Some months had now passed—he urged his suit, and besought Sophia no longer to delay his happiness. Mrs. Leicester wished that her niece should now give herself a protector and friend, who might console her for the uncle she had lost. It was at this period the *dilapidation charge* was made. Mrs. Leicester laid the whole statement before Alfred, declaring that for his sake, as well as for her niece's, she was resolute to defend herself against injustice. Alfred could scarcely bring himself to believe that Buckhurst Falconer had acted in the manner represented, with a rapacity, harshness, and cruelty, so opposite to his natural disposition. Faults Alfred well knew that Buckhurst had; but they were all, he thought, of quite a different sort from those of which he now stood accused. What was to be done? Alfred was extremely averse from going to law with a man who was his relation, for whom he had early felt, and still retained, a considerable regard: yet he could not stand by and see the woman he loved defrauded of nearly half the small fortune she possessed. On the other hand, he was employed as a professional man, and called upon to act. He determined, however, before he should, as a last resource, expose the truth and maintain the right in a court of justice, previously to try every means of conciliation in his power. To all his letters the new dean answered evasively and unsatisfactorily, by referring him to his attorney, into whose hands he said he had put the business, and he knew and wished to hear nothing more about it. The attorney, solicitor Sharpe, was impracticable—

Alfred resolved to see the dean himself; and this, after much difficulty, he at length effected. He found the dean and his lady tête-à-tête. Their raised voices suddenly stopped short as he entered. The dean gave an angry look at his servant as Alfred came into the room.

"Your servants," said Alfred, "told me that you were not at home, but I told them that I knew the dean would be at home to an old friend."

"You are very good—(said Buckhurst)—you do me a great deal of honour," said the dean.

Two different manners appeared in the same person: one natural—belonging to his former; the other assumed, proper, as he thought, for his present self, or rather for his present situation.

"Won't you be seated? I hope all our friends——"

Mrs. Buckhurst, or, as she was called, Mrs. Dean Falconer, made divers motions, with a very ugly chin, and stood as if she thought there ought to be an introduction. The dean knew it, but being ashamed to introduce her, determined against it. Alfred stood in suspension, waiting their mutual pleasure.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" repeated the dean.

Down plumped Mrs. Falconer directly, and taking out her spectacles, as if to shame her husband, by heightening the contrast of youth and age, deliberately put them on; then drawing her table nearer, settled herself to her work.

Alfred, who saw it to be necessary, determined to use his best address to conciliate the lady.

"Mr. Dean, you have never yet done me the honour to introduce me to Mrs. Falconer."

"I thought—I thought we had met before—since ——Mrs. Falconer, Mr. Alfred Percy."

The lady took off her spectacles, smiled, and adjusted herself, evidently with an intention to be more agreeable. Alfred sat down by her work-table, directed his conversation to her, and soon talked, or rather induced her to talk herself into fine humour. Presently she retired to dress for dinner, and "hoped Mr. Alfred Percy had no intention of running away —*she* had a well-aired bed to offer him."

The dean, though he cordially hated his lady, was glad, for his own sake, to be relieved from her fits of crossness; and was pleased by Alfred's paying attention to her, as this was a sort of respect to himself, and what he seldom met with from those young men who had been his companions before his marriage— they usually treated his lady with a neglect or ridicule which reflected certainly upon her husband.

Alfred never yet had touched upon his business, and Buckhurst began to think this was merely a friendly visit. Upon Alfred's observing some alteration which had been lately made in the room in which they were sitting, the dean took him to see other improvements in the house; in pointing out these, and all the conveniences and elegancies about the parsonage, Buckhurst totally forgot the *dilapidation suit;* and every thing he showed and said tended unawares to prove that the house was in the most perfect repair and best condition possible. Gradually, whatever solemnity and beneficed pomp there had at first appeared in the dean's manner, wore off, or was laid aside; and, except his being somewhat more cor-

pulent and rubicund than in early years, he appeared like the original Buckhurst. His gaiety of heart, indeed, was gone, but some sparkles of his former spirits remained.

"Here," said he, showing Alfred into his study, "here, as our good friend Mr. *Blank* said, when he showed us his study, '*Here* is *where* I read all day long—quite snug—and nobody's a bit the wiser for it.'"

The dean seated himself in his comfortable arm-chair.

"Try that chair, Alfred, excellent for sleeping in at one's ease."

"To rest the cushion and soft dean invite."

"Ah!" said Alfred, "often have I sat in this room with my excellent friend, Dr. Leicester!"

The new dean's countenance suddenly changed: but endeavouring to pass it off with a jest, he said, "Ay, poor good old Leicester, he sleeps for ever—that's one comfort—to me—if not to you." But perceiving that Alfred continued to look serious, the dean added some more proper reflections in a tone of ecclesiastical sentiment, and with a sigh of decorum—then rose, for he smelt that the *dilapidation suit* was coming.

"Would not you like, Mr. Percy, to wash your hands before dinner?"

"I thank you, Mr. Dean, I must detain you a moment to speak to you on business."

Black as Erebus grew the face of the dean—he had no resource but to listen, for he knew it would

come after dinner, if it did not come now; and it was as well to have it alone in the study, where nobody might be a bit the wiser.

When Alfred had stated the whole of what he had to say, which he did in as few and strong words as possible, appealing to the justice and feelings of Buckhurst—to the fears which the dean must have of being exposed, and ultimately defeated in a court of justice—" Mrs. Leicester," concluded he, " is determined to maintain the suit, and has employed me to carry it on for her."

" I should very little have expected," said the dean, " that Mr. Alfred Percy would have been employed in such a way against me."

" Still less should I have expected that I could be called upon in such a way against you," replied Alfred. " No one can feel it more than I do. The object of my present visit is to try whether some accommodation may not be made, which will relieve us both from the necessity of going to law, and may prevent me from being driven to the performance of this most painful professional duty."

" Duty! professional duty!" repeated Buckhurst: " as if I did not understand all those *cloak-words*, and know how easy it is to put them on and off at pleasure!"

" To some it may be, but not to me," said Alfred, calmly.

Anger started into Buckhurst's countenance: but conscious how inefficacious it would be, and how complely he had laid himself open, the dean answered, " You are the best judge, sir. But I trust—though

I don't pretend to understand the honour of lawyers —I trust as a gentleman, you will not take advantage against me in this suit, of any thing my openness has shown you about the parsonage."

"You trust rightly, Mr. Dean," replied Alfred, in his turn, with a look not of anger, but of proud indignation; "you trust rightly, Mr. Dean, and as I should have expected that one who has had opportunities of knowing me so well ought to trust."

"That's a clear answer," said Buckhurst. "But how could I tell?—so much *jockeying* goes on in every profession—how could I tell that a lawyer would be more conscientious than another man? But now you assure me of it—I take it upon your word, and believe it in your case. About the accommodation—*accommodation* means money, does not it?—frankly, I have not a shilling. But Mrs. Falconer is all *accommodation*. Try what you can do with her —and by the way you began, I should hope you would do a great deal," added he, laughing.

Alfred would not undertake to speak to his lady, unless the dean would, in the first instance, make some sacrifice. He represented that he was not asking for money, but for a relinquishment of a claim, which he apprehended not to be justly due: "And the only use I shall ever make of what you have shown me here is to press upon your feelings, as I do at this moment, the conviction of the injustice of that claim, which I am persuaded your lawyers only instigated, and that you will abandon."

Buckhurst begged him not to be persuaded of any such thing. The instigation of an attorney, he laugh-

ing said, was not in law counted the instigation of the devil—at law no man talked of feelings. In matters of property judges did not understand them, whatever figure they might make with a jury in criminal cases—with an eloquent advocate's hand on his breast.

Alfred let Buckhurst go on with his vain wit and gay rhetoric till he had nothing more to say, knowing that he was hiding consciousness of unhandsome conduct. Sticking firmly to his point, Alfred showed that his client, though gentle, was resolved, and that, without Buckhurst yielded, law must take its course—that though he should never give any hint, the premises must be inspected, and disgrace and defeat must follow.

Forced to be serious, fretted and hurried, for the half-hour bell before dinner had now rung, and the dean's stomach began to know canonical hours, he exclaimed, "The upshot of the whole business is, that Mr. Alfred Percy is in love, I understand, with miss Sophia Leicester, and this fifteen hundred pounds, which he pushes me to the bare wall to relinquish, is eventually as part of her fortune to become his. Would it not have been as fair to have stated this at once?"

"No—because it would not have been the truth."

"No!—You won't deny that you are in love with miss Leicester?"

"I am as much in love as man can be with miss Leicester; but her fortune is nothing to me, for I shall never touch it."

"Never touch it! Does the aunt—the widow—the cunning widow, refuse consent?"

"Far from it: the aunt is all the aunt of miss Leicester should be—all the widow of Dr. Leicester' ought to be. But her circumstances are not what they ought to be; and by the liberality of a friend, who lends me a house, rent free, and by the resources of my profession, I am better able than Mrs. Leicester is to spare fifteen hundred pounds: therefore, in the recovery of this money I have no personal interest at present. I shall never receive it from her."

"Noble! Noble!—just what I could have done myself—once! What a contrast!"

Buckhurst laid his head down upon his arms flat on the table, and remained for some moments silent—then, starting upright, "I'll never claim a penny from her—I'll give it all up to you! I will, if I sell my band for it, by Jove!"

"Oh! what has your father to answer for, who forced you into the church!" thought Alfred.

"My dear Buckhurst," said he, "my dear dean——"

"Call me Buckhurst, if you love me."

"I do love you, it is impossible to help it, in spite of——"

"All my faults—say it out—say it out—in spite of your conscience," added Buckhurst, trying to laugh.

"Not in spite of my conscience, but in favour of yours," said Alfred, "against whose better dictates you have been compelled all your life to act."

"I have so, but that's over. What remains to be

done at present? I am in real distress for five hundred pounds. Apropos to your being engaged in this dilapidation suit, you can speak to Mrs. Falconer about it. Tell her I have given up the thing; and see what she will do."

Alfred promised he would speak to Mrs. Falconer. "And, Alfred, when you see your sister Caroline, tell her that I am not in one sense such a wretch—quite, as she thinks me. But tell her that I am yet a greater wretch—infinitely more miserable than she, I hope, can conceive—beyond redemption—beyond endurance miserable." He turned away hastily in an agony of mind. Alfred shut the door and escaped, scarcely able to bear his own emotion.

When they met at dinner, Mrs. Dean Falconer was an altered person—her unseemly morning costume and well-worn shawl being cast aside, she appeared in bloom-coloured gossamer gauze, and primrose ribbons, a would-be-young lady. Nothing of that curmudgeon look, or old fairy cast of face and figure, to which he had that morning been introduced, but in their place smiles, and all the false brilliancy which rouge can give to the eyes, proclaimed a determination to be charming.

The dean was silent, and scarcely ate any thing; though the dinner was excellent, for his lady was skilled in the culinary department, and in favour of Alfred had made a more hospitable display than she usually condescended to make for her husband's friends. There were no other guests, except a young lady, companion to Mrs. Falconer. Alfred was as agreeable and entertaining as circumstances per-

mitted; and Mrs. Buckhurst Falconer, as soon as she got out of the dining-room, even before she reached the drawing-room, pronounced him to be a most polite and accomplished young man, very different indeed from the *common run*, or the usual style, of Mr. Dean Falconer's dashing bachelor beaux, who in her opinion were little better than brute bears.

At coffee, when the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, as Alfred was standing beside Mrs. Falconer, meditating how and when to speak of the object of his visit, she cleared the ground by choosing the topic of conversation, which at last fairly drove her husband out of the room. She judiciously, maliciously, or accidentally, began to talk of the proposal which she had heard a near relation of hers had not long since made to a near relation of Mr. Alfred Percy's—Mr. Clay, of Clay-hall, her nephew, had proposed for Mr. Alfred's sister, miss Caroline Percy. She was really sorry the match was not to take place, for she had heard a very high character of the young lady in every way, and her nephew was rich enough to do without fortune—not but what that would be very acceptable to all men—especially young men, who are now mostly all for money instead of all for love—except in the case of very first rate extraordinary beauty, which therefore making a woman a prey just as much one as the other, might be deemed a misfortune as great, though hardly *quite*, Mrs. Buckhurst said, as she had found a great fortune in her own particular case. The involution of meaning in these sentences rendering it not easy to be comprehended, the dean stood it pretty well, only stirring

his coffee, and observing that it was cold; but when his lady went on to a string of interrogatories about miss Caroline Percy—on the colour of her eyes and hair—size of her mouth and nose—requiring in short a complete full length portrait of the young lady, poor Buckhurst set down his cup, and pleading business in his study, left the field open to Alfred.

"Near-sighted glasses! Do you never use them, Mr. Percy?" said Mrs. Dean Falconer, as she thought Alfred's eyes fixed upon her spectacles, which lay on the table.

No—he never used them, he thanked her: he was rather far-sighted than short-sighted. She internally commended his politeness in not taking them up to verify her assertion, and put them into her pocket to avoid all future danger.

He saw it was a favourable moment, and entered at once into his business—beginning by observing that the dean was much out of spirits. The moment money was touched upon, the curmudgeon look returned upon the lady; and for some time Alfred had great difficulty in making himself heard: she poured forth such complaints against the extravagance of the dean, with lists of the debts she had paid, the sums she had given, and the vow she had made never to go beyond the weekly allowance she had at the last settlement agreed to give her husband.

Alfred pleaded strongly the expence of law, and the certainty, in his opinion, of ultimate defeat, with the being obliged to pay all the costs, which would fall upon the dean. The dean was willing to withdraw his claim—he had promised to do so, in the most

handsome manner; and therefore, Alfred said, he felt particularly anxious that he should not be distressed for five hundred pounds, a sum for which he knew Mr. Falconer was immediately pressed. He appealed to Mrs. Falconer's generosity. He had been desired by the dean to speak to her on the subject, otherwise he should not have presumed—and it was as a professional man, and a near relation, that he now took the liberty: this was the first transaction he had ever had with her, and he hoped he should leave the vicarage impressed with a sense of her generosity, and enabled to do her justice in the opinion of those who did not know her.

That was very little to her, she bluntly said—she acted only up to her own notions—she lived only for herself.

"And for her husband." Love, Alfred Percy said, he was assured, was superior to money in her opinion. "And after all, my dear madam, you set me the example of frankness, and permit me to speak to you without reserve. What can you, who have no reason, you say, to be pleased with either of your nephews, do better with your money, than spend it while you live, and for yourself, in securing happiness in the gratitude and affection of a husband, who, generous himself, will be peculiarly touched and attached by generosity?"

The words, *love, generosity, generous,* sounded upon the lady's ear, and she was unwilling to lose that high opinion which she imagined Alfred entertained of her sentiments and character. Besides, she was conscious that he was in fact nearer the truth than all the world

would have believed. Avaricious in trifles, and parsimonious in those every-day habits which brand the reputation immediately with the fault of avarice, this woman was one of those misers who can be generous by fits and starts, and who have been known to *give* hundreds of pounds, but never without reluctance would part with a shilling.

She presented the dean, her husband, with an order on her banker for the money he wanted, and Alfred had the pleasure of leaving his unhappy friend better, at least, than he found him. He rejoiced in having compromised this business so successfully, and in thus having prevented the litigation, ill-will, and disgraceful circumstances, which, without his interference, must have ensued.

The gratitude of Mrs. Leicester and her niece was delightful. The aunt urged him to accept what he had been the means of saving, as part of her niece's fortune; but this he absolutely refused, and satisfied Mrs. Leicester's delicacy, by explaining, that he could not, if he would, now yield to her entreaties, as he had actually obtained the money from poor Buckhurst's generous repentance, upon the express faith that he had no private interest in the accommodation.

"You would not," said Alfred, "bring me under the act against raising money upon false pretences?"

What Alfred lost in money he gained in love. His Sophia's eyes beamed upon him with delight. The day was fixed for their marriage, and at Alfred's suggestion, Mrs. Leicester consented, painful as it was, in some respects, to her feelings, that they should be married by the dean in the parish church.

Alfred brought his bride to town, and as soon as they were established in their own house, or rather in that house which Mr. Gresham insisted upon their calling their own, lady Jane Granville was the first person to offer her congratulations.—Alfred begged his sister Caroline from lady Jane, as he had already obtained his father's and mother's consent. Lady Jane was really fond of Caroline's company, and had forgiven her, as well as she could; yet her ladyship had no longer a hope of being *of use* to her, and felt that even if any other offer were to occur—and none such as had been made could ever more be expected—it would lead only to fresh disappointment and altercation; therefore she, with the less reluctance, relinquished Caroline altogether.

Caroline's new sister had been, from the time they were first acquainted, her friend, and she rejoiced in seeing all her hopes for her brother's happiness accomplished by this marriage. His Sophia had those habits of independent occupation which are essential to the wife of a professional man, and which enable her to spend cheerfully many hours alone, or at least without the company of her husband. On his return home every evening, he was sure to find a smiling wife, a sympathizing friend, a cheerful fireside.—She had musical talents—her husband was fond of music; and she did not lay aside the accomplishments which had charmed the lover, but made use of them to please him whom she had chosen as her companion for life. Her voice, her harp, her utmost skill, were ready at any moment; and she found far more delight in devoting her talents to him than she had ever felt in

exhibiting them to admiring auditors. This was the domestic use of accomplishments to which Caroline had always been accustomed; so that joining in her new sister's occupations and endeavours to make Alfred's evenings pass pleasantly, she felt at once as much *at home* as if she had been in the country; for the mind is its own place, and domestic happiness may be naturalized in a capital city.

At her brother's house, Caroline had an opportunity of seeing a society that was new to her, that of the professional men of the first eminence both in law and medicine, the men of science and of literature, with whom Alfred and Erasmus had been for years assiduously cultivating acquaintance. They were now happy to meet at Alfred's house, for they liked and esteemed him, and they found his wife and sister sensible, well-informed women, to whom their conversation was of real amusement and instruction; and who, in return, knew how to enliven their leisure hours by female sprightliness and elegance. Caroline now saw the literary and scientific world to the best advantage: not the amateurs, or the mere *show* people, but those who, really excelling and feeling their own superiority, had too much pride, and too little time to waste upon idle flattery, or what to them were stupid, uninteresting *parties*. Those who refused to go to lady Spilsbury's, or to lady Angelica Headingham's, or who were seen there, perhaps, once or twice in a season as a great favour and honour, would call three or four evenings every week at Alfred's.

The first news, the first hints of discoveries, inven-

tions, and literary projects, she heard from time to time discussed. Those men of talents, who she had heard were to be seen at *conversaziones*, or of whom she had had a glimpse in fine society, now appeared in a new point of view, and to the best advantage; without those pretensions and rivalships with which they sometimes are afflicted in public, or those affectations and singularities, which they often are supposed to assume, to obtain notoriety among persons inferior to them in intellect and superior in fashion. Instead of playing, as they sometimes did, a false game to amuse the multitude, they were obliged now to exert their real skill, and play fair with one another.

Sir James Harrington tells us, that in his days the courtiers, who played at divers games in public, had a way of exciting the admiration and amazement of the commoner sort of spectators, by producing heaps of golden counters, and seeming to stake immense sums, when all the time they had previously agreed among one another, that each guinea should stand for a shilling, or each hundred guineas for one: so that in fact two modes of calculation were used for the initiated and uninitiated; and this exoteric practice goes on continualiy to this hour among literary performers in the intellectual as well as among courtiers in the fashionable world.

Besides the pleasure of studying celebrated characters, and persons of eminent merit, at their ease and at her own, Caroline had now opportunities of seeing most of those objects of rational curiosity, which with lady Jane Granville had been prohibited

as—*mauvais ton.* With men of sense she found it was not *mauvais ton* to use her eyes for the purposes of instruction or entertainment.

With Mrs. Alfred Percy she saw every thing in the best manner; in the company of well-informed guides, who were able to point out what was essential to be observed; ready to explain and to illustrate; to procure for them all those privileges and advantages as spectators, which common gazers are denied, but which liberal and enlightened men are ever not only ready to allow, but eager to procure for intelligent unassuming females.

Among the gentlemen of learning, talents, and eminence in Alfred's own profession, whom Caroline had the honour of seeing at her brother's were Mr. Friend, the *friend* of his early years at the bar; and that great luminary, who in a higher orbit had cheered and guided him in his ascent. The chief justice was in a station, and of an age, where praise can be conferred without impropriety, and without hurting the feelings of delicacy or pride. He knew how to praise—a difficult art, but he excelled in it. As Caroline once, in speaking of him, said, "Common compliments, compared to praise from him, are as common coin compared to a medal struck and appropriated for the occasion."

About this time Mr. Temple came to tell Alfred, that a ship had been actually ordered to be in readiness to carry him on his intended embassy; that Mr. Shaw had recovered; that Cunningham Falconer had no more excuses or pretences for delay; despatches, the last lord Oldborough said he should ever receive

from him as envoy, had now arrived, and Temple was to have set out immediately; but that the whole embassy had been delayed, because lord Oldborough had received a letter from count Altenberg, giving an account of alarming revolutionary symptoms, which had appeared in the capital, and in the provinces, in the dominions of his sovereign. Lord Oldborough had shown Mr. Temple what related to public affairs, but had not put the whole letter into his hands. All that he could judge from what he read was, that the count's mind was most seriously occupied with the dangerous state of public affairs in his country. "I should have thought," added Mr. Temple, "that the whole of this communication was entirely of a political nature, but that in the last page which lord Oldborough put into my hand, the catch-words at the bottom were *Countess Christina.*"

Alfred observed, "that, without the aid of Rosamond's imagination to supply something more, nothing could be made of this. However, it was a satisfaction to have had direct news of count Altenberg."

The next day Mr. Temple came for Alfred. Lord Oldborough desired to see him.

"Whatever his business may be, I am sure it is important and interesting," said Mr. Temple; "by this time I ought to be well acquainted with lord Oldborough—I know the signs of his suppressed emotion, and I have seldom seen him put such force upon himself to appear calm, and to do the business of the day, before he should yield his mind to what pressed on his secret thoughts."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHEN Alfred arrived, lord Oldborough was engaged with some gentlemen from the city about a loan. By the length of time which the negotiators staid, they tried Alfred's patience; but the minister sat with immovable composure, till they knew their own minds, and till they departed. Then, the loan at once dismissed from his thoughts, he was ready for Alfred.

"You have married, I think, Mr. Alfred Percy, since I saw you last—I congratulate you."

His lordship was not in the habit of noticing such common events; Alfred was surprised and obliged by the interest in his private affairs which this congratulation denoted.

"I congratulate you, sir, because I understand you have married a woman of sense. To marry a fool—to form or to have any connexion with a fool," continued his lordship, his countenance changing remarkably as he spoke, "I conceive to be the greatest evil, the greatest curse, that can be inflicted on a man of sense."

He walked across the room with long, firm, indignant strides—then stopping short, he exclaimed, "*Lettres de cachet!*—Dangerous instruments in bad hands!—As what are not?—But one good purpose they answered—they put it in the power of the head of every noble house to disown, and to deprive of the liberty to disgrace his family, any member who

should manifest the will to commit desperate crime or desperate folly."

Alfred was by no means disposed to join in praise even of this use of a *lettre de cachet*, but he did not think it a proper time to argue the point, as he saw lord Oldborough was under the influence of some strong passion. He waited in silence till his lordship should explain himself farther.

His lordship unlocked a desk, and produced a letter.

"Pray, Mr. Percy—Mr. Alfred Percy—have you heard any thing lately of the marchioness of Twickenham?"

"No, my lord."

Alfred, at this instant, recollected the whisper which he had once heard at chapel, and he added, "Not of late, my lord."

"There," said lord Oldborough, putting a letter into Alfred's hands—"there is the sum of what I have heard."

The letter was from the duke of Greenwich, informing lord Oldborough that an unfortunate discovery had been made of *an affair* between the marchioness of Twickenham and a certain captain Bellamy, which rendered an immediate separation necessary.

"So!" thought Alfred, "my brother Godfrey had a fine escape of this fair lady!"

"I have seen her once since I received that letter, and I never will see her again," said lord Oldborough: "that's past—all that concerns her is past and irremediable. Now as to the future, and to what

concerns myself. I have been informed—how truly, I cannot say—that some time ago a rumour, a suspicion of this intrigue was whispered in what they call the fashionable world."

"I believe that your lordship has been truly informed," said Alfred; and he then mentioned the whisper he had heard at the chapel.

"Ha!—Farther, it has been asserted to me, that a hint was given to the marquis of Twickenham of the danger of suffering that—what is the man's name?—Bellamy, to be so near his wife; and that the hint was disregarded."

"The marquis did very weakly or very wickedly," said Alfred.

"All wickedness is weakness, sir, you know: but to our point. I have been assured that the actual discovery of the intrigue was made to the marquis some months previous to the birth of his child—and that he forbore to take any notice of this, lest it might affect the legitimacy of that child. After the birth of the infant—a boy—subsequent indiscretions on the part of the marchioness, the marquis would make it appear, gave rise to his first suspicions. Now, sir, these are the points, of which, as my friend, and as a professional man, I desire you to ascertain the truth. If the facts are as I have thus heard, I presume no divorce can be legally obtained."

"Certainly not, my lord."

"Then I will direct you instantly to the proper channels for information."

Whilst lord Oldborough wrote directions, Alfred assured him he would fulfil his commission with all the discretion and celerity in his power.

"The next step," continued lord Oldborough—"for, on such a subject, I wish to say all that is necessary at once, that it may be banished from my mind—your next step, supposing the facts to be ascertained, is to go with this letter—my answer to the duke of Greenwich. See him—and see the marquis. In matters of consequence have nothing to do with secondary people—deal with the principals. Show in the first place, as a lawyer, that their divorce is unattainable—next, show the marquis that he destroys his son and heir by attempting it. The duke, I believe, would be glad of a pretext for dissolving the political connexion between me and the Greenwich family. He fears me, and he fears the world: he dares not abandon me without a pretence for the dissolution of friendship. He is a weak man, and never dares to act without a pretext; but show him that a divorce is not necessary for his purpose—a separation will do as well——Or without it, I am ready to break with him at council, in the House of Lords, on a hundred political points; and let him shield himself as he may from the reproach of desertion, by leaving the blame of quarrel on my impracticability, or on what he will, I care not—so that my family be saved from the ignominy of divorce."

As he sealed his letter, lord Oldborough went on in abrupt sentences.

"I never counted on a weak man's friendship——I can do without his grace——Woman! Woman! The same—ever since the beginning of the world!"

Then turning to Alfred to deliver the letter into his hand, "Your brother, major Percy, sir—I think I recollect——He was better in the West Indies."

"I was just thinking so, my lord," said Alfred.

"Yes—better encounter the plague than a fool."

Lord Oldborough had never before distinctly adverted to his knowledge of his niece's partiality for Godfrey, but his lordship now added, "Major Percy's honourable conduct is not unknown: I trust honourable conduct never was, and never will be, lost upon me.——This to the duke of Greenwich—and this to the marquis.——Since it was to be, I rejoice that this captain Bellamy is the gallant.——Had it been your brother, sir—could there have been any love in the case—not, observe, that I believe in love, much less am I subject to the weakness of remorse—but a twinge might have seized my mind—I might possibly have been told that the marchioness was married against her inclination——But I am at ease on that point—my judgment of her was right.——You will let me know, in one word, the result of your negotiation without entering into particulars—divorce, or no divorce, is all I wish to hear."

Alfred did not know all the circumstances of the marchioness of Twickenham's marriage, nor the peremptory manner in which it had been insisted upon by her uncle, otherwise he would have felt still greater surprise than that which he now felt, at the stern unbending character of the man. Possessed as lord Oldborough was by the opinion that he had at the time judged and acted in the best manner possible, no after-events could make him doubt the justice of his own decision, or could at all shake him in his own estimation.

Alfred soon brought his report. "In one word—no divorce, my lord."

"That's well—I thank you, sir."

His lordship made no farther inquiries—not even whether there was to be a *separation.*

Alfred was commissioned by the duke of Greenwich to deliver a message, which, like the messages of the gods in Homer, he delivered verbatim, and without comment: "His grace of Greenwich trusts lord Oldborough will believe, that notwithstanding the unfortunate circumstances, which dissolved in some degree the family connexion, it was the farthest possible from his grace's wish or thoughts to break with lord Oldborough, as long as private feelings, and public principles, could be rendered by any means compatible."

Lord Oldborough smiled in scorn—and Alfred could scarcely command his countenance.

Lord Oldborough prepared to give his grace the opportunity, which he knew he desired, of differing with him on principle: his lordship thought his favour and power were now sufficiently established to be able to do without the duke of Greenwich, and his pride prompted him to show this to his grace and to the world. He carried it with a high hand for a short time; but even whilst he felt most secure, and when all seemed to bend and bow before his genius and his sway, many circumstances and many persons were combining to work the downfall of his power.

One of the first slight circumstances which shook his favour was a speech he had made to some gentleman about the presentation of the deanery to Buckhurst Falconer. It had been supposed by many, who knew the court which commissioner Falconer paid to

lord Oldborough, that it was through his lordship's interest that this preferment was given to the son; but when some person, taking this for granted, spoke of it to his lordship, he indignantly disclaimed all part in the transaction, and it is said that he added, "Sir, I know what is due to private regard as a man —and as a minister what must be yielded to parliamentary influence; but I never could have advised the bestowing ecclesiastical benefice and dignity upon any one whose conduct was not his first recommendation."

This speech, made in a moment of proud and perhaps unguarded indignation, was repeated with additions, suppressions, variations, and comments. Any thing will at court serve the purpose of those who wish to injure, and it is inconceivable what mischief was done to the minister by this slight circumstance. In the first place, the nobleman high in office, and the family connexions of the nobleman who had made the exchange of livings, and given the promise of the deanery to bishop Clay, were offended beyond redemption—because they were in the wrong. Then, all who had done, or wished to do, wrong in similar instances, were displeased by reflection or by anticipation. But lord Oldborough chiefly was injured by misrepresentation in the quarter where it was of most consequence to him to preserve his influence. It was construed by the highest authority into disrespect, and an imperious desire to encroach on favour, to control prerogative, and to subdue the mind of his sovereign. Insidious arts had long been secretly employed to infuse these ideas; and when once the

jealousy of power was excited, every trifle confirmed the suspicion which lord Oldborough's uncourtier-like character was little calculated to dispel. His popularity now gave umbrage, and it was hinted that he wished to make himself the *independent* minister of the people.

The affairs of the country prospered, however, under his administration; there was trouble, there was hazard in change. It was argued, that it was best to wait at least for some reverse of fortune in war, or some symptom of domestic discontent, before an attempt should be made to displace this minister, formidable by his talents, and by the awe his commanding character inspired.

The habit of confidence and deference for his genius and integrity remained, and to him no difference for some time appeared, in consequence of the secret decay of favour.

Commissioner Falconer, timid, anxious, restless, was disposed by circumstances and by nature, or by second nature, to the vigilance of a dependent's life; accustomed to watch and consult daily the barometer of court favour, he soon felt the coming storm; and the moment he saw prognostics of the change, he trembled, and considered how he should best provide for his own safety before the hour of danger arrived. Numerous libels against the minister appeared, which lord Oldborough never read, but the commissioner, with his best spectacles, read them all; for he well knew and believed what the sage Selden saith, that " though some make slight of libels, yet you may see by them how the wind sets."

After determining by the throwing up of these straws which way the wind set, the commissioner began with all possible skill and dexterity to trim his boat. But dexterous trimmer though he was, and "prescient of change," he did yet not foresee from what quarter the storm would come.

Count Altenberg's letters had unveiled completely the envoy Cunningham Falconer's treachery as far as it related to his intrigues abroad, and other friends detected some of his manœuvres with politicians at home, to whom he had endeavoured to pay court, by betraying confidence reposed in him respecting the Tourville papers. Much of the mischief Cunningham had done this great minister still operated, unknown to his unsuspicious mind: but sufficient was revealed to determine lord Oldborough to dismiss him from all future hopes of his favour.

"Mr. Commissioner Falconer," he began one morning, the moment the commissioner entered his cabinet, "Mr. Commissioner Falconer," in a tone which instantly dispelled the smile at entrance from the commissioner's countenance, and in the same moment changed his whole configurature. "My confidence is withdrawn from your son, Mr. Cunningham Falconer—for ever—and not without good reason—as you may—if you are not aware of it already—see, by those papers."

Lord Oldborough turned away, and asked his secretaries for his red box, as he was going to council.

Just as he left his Cabinet, he looked back, and said, "Mr. Falconer, you should know, if you be not already apprised of it, that your son Cunningham is on his

road to Denmark. You should be aware that the journey is not made by my desire, or by his majesty's order, or by any official authority; consequently he is travelling to the court of Denmark at his own expence or yours—unless he can prevail upon his grace of Greenwich to defray his ambassadorial travelling charges, or can afford to wait for them till a total change of administration—of which, sir, if I see any symptoms to-day in council," added his lordship, in the tone of bitter irony; "I will give you fair notice—for fair dealing is what I practise."

This said, the minister left the commissioner to digest his speech as he might, and repaired to council, where he found every thing apparently as smooth as usual, and where he was received by all, especially by the highest, with perfect consideration.

Meantime commissioner Falconer was wretched beyond expression—wretched in the certainty that his son, that he himself, had probably lost, irrecoverably, one excellent patron, before they had secured, even in case of change, another. This premature discovery of Cunningham's intrigues totally disconcerted and overwhelmed him; and, in the bitterness of his heart, he cursed the duplicity which he had taught and encouraged still more by example than by precept. But Cunningham's duplicity had more and closer folds than his own. Cunningham, conceited of his diplomatic genius, and fearful of the cautious timidity of his father, did not trust that father with the knowledge of all he did, or half of what he intended; so that the commissioner, who had thought himself at the bottom of every thing, now found that

he, too, had been cheated by his son with false confidences; and was involved by him in the consequences of a scheme, of which he had never been the adviser. Commissioner Falconer knew too well, by the experience of Cumberland and others, the fate of those who suffer themselves to be lured on by second-hand promises; and who venture, without being publicly acknowledged by their employers, to undertake any diplomatic mission. Nor would Cunningham, whose natural disposition to distrust was greater than his father's, have sold himself to any political tempter without first signing and sealing the compact, had he been in possession of his cool judgment, and had he been in any other than the desperate circumstances in which he was placed. His secret conscience whispered that his recall was in consequence of the detection of some of his intrigues, and he dreaded to appear before the haughty, irritated minister. Deceived also by news from England that lord Oldborough's dismission or resignation could not be distant, Cunningham had ventured upon this bold stroke for an embassy.

On lord Oldborough's return from council, the commissioner finding, from his secret informants, that every thing had gone on smoothly, and being overawed by the confident security of the minister, began to doubt his former belief; and, in spite of all the symptoms of change, was now inclined to think that none would take place. The sorrow and contrition with which he next appeared before lord Oldborough were, therefore, truly sincere; and when he found himself alone once more with his lordship, earnest

was the vehemence with which he disclaimed his unworthy son, and disavowed all knowledge of the transaction.

"If I had seen cause to believe that you had any part in this transaction, sir, you would not be here at this moment: therefore, your protestations are superfluous—none would be accepted if any were necessary."

The very circumstance of the son's not having trusted the father completely saved the commissioner, from this time, from utter ruin: he took breath; and presently—oh, weak man! doomed never to know how to deal with a strong character—fancying that his intercession might avail for his son, and that the pride of lord Oldborough might be appeased, and might be suddenly wrought to forgiveness, by that tone and posture of submission and supplication used only by the subject to offended majesty, he actually threw himself at the feet of the minister.

"My gracious lord—a pardon for my son!"

"I beseech you, sir!" cried lord Oldborough, endeavouring to stop him from kneeling—the commissioner sunk instantly on his knee.

"Never will the unhappy father rise till his son be restored to your favour, my lord."

"Sir," said lord Oldborough, "I have no favour for those who have no sense of honour: rise, Mr. Falconer, and let not the father degrade himself for the son—*unavailingly*."

The accent and look were decisive—the commissioner rose. Instead of being gratified, his patron seemed shocked, if not disgusted: far from being

propitiated by this sacrifice of dignity, it rendered him still more averse; and no consolatory omen appearing, the commissioner withdrew in silence, repenting that he had abased himself. After this some days and nights passed with him in all the horrors of indecision—Could the minister weather the storm or not?—should Mr. Falconer endeavour to reinstate himself with lord Oldborough, or secure in time favour with the duke of Greenwich?—Mrs. Falconer, to whom her husband's groans in the middle of the night at last betrayed the sufferings of his mind, drew from him the secret of his fears and meditations. She advised strongly the going over, decidedly, and in time, but secretly, to the Greenwich faction.

The commissioner knew that this could not be done secretly. The attention of the minister was now awake to all his motions, and the smallest movement towards his grace of Greenwich must be observed and understood. On the other hand, to abide by a falling minister was folly, especially when he had positively withdrawn his favour from Cunningham, who had the most to expect from his patronage. Between these opposite difficulties, notwithstanding the urgent excitations of Mrs. Falconer, the poor commissioner could not bring himself to decide, till the time for action was past.

Another blow came upon him for which he was wholly unprepared—there arrived from abroad accounts of the failure of a secret expedition; and the general in his despatches named colonel John Falconer as the officer to whose neglect of orders he principally attributed the disappointment. It appeared

that orders had been sent to have his regiment at a certain place at a given hour. At the moment these orders came, colonel John Falconer was out on a shooting party without leave. The troops of course, on which the general had relied, did not arrive in time, and all his other combinations failed from this neglect of discipline and disobedience of orders. Colonel Falconer was sent home to be tried by a court martial.

"I pity you, sir," said lord Oldborough, as commissioner Falconer, white as ashes, read in his presence these despatches—"I pity you, sir, from my soul: here is no fault of yours—the fault is mine."

It was one of the few faults of this nature which lord Oldborough had ever committed. Except in the instance of the Falconer family, none could name any whom his lordship had placed in situations for which they were inadequate or unfit. Of this single error he had not foreseen the consequences; they were more important, more injurious to him and to the public than he could have calculated or conceived. It appeared now as if the Falconer family were doomed to be his ruin. That the public knew, in general, that John Falconer had been promoted by ministerial favour, lord Oldborough was aware; but he imagined that the peculiar circumstances of that affair were known only to himself and to commissioner Falconer's family. To his astonishment he found, at this critical moment, that the whole transaction had reached the ear of majesty, and that it was soon publicly known. The commissioner, with protestations and oaths, declared that the secret had

never, by his means, transpired—it had been divulged by the baseness of his son Cunningham, who betrayed it to the Greenwich faction. They, skilled in all the arts of undermining a rival, employed the means that were thus put into their power with great diligence and effect.

It was observed at levee, that the sovereign looked coldly upon the minister. Every courtier whispered that lord Oldborough had been certainly much to blame. Disdainful of their opinions, lord Oldborough was sensibly affected by the altered eye of his sovereign.

"What! After all my services!—At the first change of fortune!"

This sentiment swelled in his breast; but his countenance was rigidly calm, his demeanour towards the courtiers and towards his colleagues more than usually firm, if not haughty.

After the levee, he demanded a private audience.

Alone with the king, the habitual influence of this great minister's superior genius operated. The cold manner was changed, or, rather, it was changed involuntarily. From one "not used to the language of apology," the frank avowal of a fault has a striking effect. Lord Oldborough took upon himself the whole blame of the disaster that had ensued, in consequence of his error, an error frequent in other ministers, in him, almost unprecedented.

He was answered with a smile of royal raillery, that the peculiar family circumstances which had determined his lordship so rapidly to promote that officer must, to all fathers of families and heads of

houses, if not to statesmen and generals, be a sufficient and home apology.

Considering the peculiar talent which his sovereign possessed, and in which he gloried, that of knowing the connexions and domestic affairs, not only of the nobility near his person, but of private individuals remote from his court, lord Oldborough had little cause to be surprised that this secret transaction should be known to his majesty. Something of this his lordship, with all due respect, hinted in reply. At the termination of this audience, he was soothed by the condescending assurance that whilst the circumstances of the late unfortunate reverse naturally created regret and mortification, no dissatisfaction with his ministerial conduct mixed with these feelings; on the contrary, he was assured that fear of the effect a disappointment might have on the mind of the public, in diminishing confidence in his lordship's efforts for the good of the country, was the sentiment which had lowered the spirits and clouded the brow of majesty.

His lordship returned thanks for the gracious demonstration of these sentiments—and bowing respectfully withdrew. In the faces and behaviour of the courtiers, as in a glass, he saw reflected the truth. They all pretended to be in the utmost consternation; and he heard of nothing but "apprehensions for the effect on the public mind," and "fears for his lordship's popularity." His secretary, Mr. Temple, heard, indeed, more of this than could reach his lordship's ear directly; for, even now, when they thought they foresaw his fall, few had sufficient courage to

hazard the tone of condolence with lord Oldborough, or to expose the face of hypocrisy to the severity of his penetrating eye. In secret every means had been taken to propagate in the city the knowledge of all the circumstances that were unfavourable to the minister, and to increase the dissatisfaction which any check in the success of our armies naturally produces. The tide of popularity, which had hitherto supported the minister, suddenly ebbed; and he fell, in public opinion, with astonishing rapidity. For the moment all was forgotten, but that he was the person who had promoted John Falconer to be a colonel, against whom the cry of the populace was raised with all the clamour of national indignation. The Greenwich faction knew how to take advantage of this disposition. It happened to be some festival, some holiday, when the common people, having nothing to do, are more disposed than at any other time to intoxication and disorder. The emissaries of designing partisans mixed with the populace, and a mob gathered round the minister's carriage, as he was returning home late one day—the same carriage, and the same man, whom, but a few short weeks before, this populace had drawn with loud huzzas, and almost with tears of affection. Unmoved of mind, as he had been when he heard their huzzas, lord Oldborough now listened to their execrations, till from abuse they began to proceed to outrage. Stones were thrown at his carriage. One of his servants narrowly escaped being struck. Lord Oldborough was alone—he threw open his carriage-door, and sprang out on the step.

"Whose life is it you seek?" cried he, in a voice

which obtained instant silence. "Lord Oldborough's? Lord Oldborough stands before you. Take his life who dares—a life spent in your service. Strike! but strike openly. You are Englishmen, not assassins."

Then, turning to his servants, he added, in a calm voice, "Home—slowly. Not a man here will touch you. Keep your master in sight. If I fall, mark by what hand."

Then stepping down into the midst of the people, he crossed the street to the flagged pathway, the crowd opening to make way for him. He walked on with a deliberate firm step; the mob moving along with him, sometimes huzzaing, sometimes uttering horrid execrations in horrid tones. Lord Oldborough, perserving absolute silence, still walked on, never turned his head, or quickened his pace, till he reached his own house. Then, facing the mob, as he stood waiting till the door should be opened, the people, struck with his intrepidity, with one accord joined in a shout of applause.

The next instant, and before the door was opened, they cried, "Hat off!—Hat off!"

Lord Oldborough's hat never stirred. A man took up a stone.

"Mark that man!" cried lord Oldborough.

The door opened. "Return to your homes, my countrymen, and bless God that you have not any of you to answer this night for murder!"

Then entering his house, he took off his hat, and gave it to one of his attendants. His secretary, Temple, had run down stairs to meet him, inquiring what was the cause of the disturbance.

"Only," said lord Oldborough, "that I have served the people, but never bent to them."

"Curse them! they are not worth serving. Oh! I thought they'd have taken my lord's life that minute," cried his faithful servant Rodney. "The sight left my eyes. I thought he was gone for ever. Thank God! he's safe. Take off my lord's coat—I can't—for the soul of me. Curse those ungrateful people!"

"Do not curse them, my good Rodney," said lord Oldborough, smiling. "Poor people, they are not ungrateful, only mistaken. Those who mislead them are to blame. The English are a fine people. Even an English mob, you see, is generous, and just, as far as it knows."

Lord Oldborough was sound asleep this night, before any other individual in the house had finished talking of the dangers he had escaped.

The civil and military courage shown by the minister in the sudden attack upon his character and person were such as to raise him again at once to his former height in public esteem. His enemies were obliged to affect admiration. The Greenwich party, foiled in this attempt, now disavowed it. News of a victory effaced the memory of the late disappointment. Stocks rose—addresses for a change of ministry were quashed—addresses of thanks and congratulation poured in—lord Oldborough gave them to Mr. Temple to answer, and kept the strength of his attention fixed upon the great objects which were essential to the nation and the sovereign he served.

Mr. Falconer saw that the storm had blown over, the darkness was past—lord Oldborough, firm and

superior, stood bright in power, and before him the commissioner bent more obsequious, more anxious than ever. Anxious he might well be—unhappy father! the life, perhaps, of one of his sons, his honour, certainly, at stake—the fortune of another—his existence ruined! And what hopes of propitiating him, who had so suffered by the favour he had already shown, who had been betrayed by one of the family, and disgraced by another. The commissioner's only hope was in the recollection of the words, "I pity you from my soul, sir," which burst from lord Oldborough even at the moment when he had most reason to be enraged against colonel Falconer. Following up this idea, and working on the generous compassion of which but for this indication he would not have supposed the stern lord Oldborough to be susceptible, the commissioner appeared before him every day the image of a broken-hearted father. In silence lord Oldborough from time to time looked at him; and by these looks, more than by all the promises of all the great men who had ever spoken to him, Mr. Falconer was reassured; and, as he told Mrs. Falconer, who at this time was in dreadful anxiety, he felt certain that lord Oldborough would not punish him for the faults of his sons—he was satisfied that his place and his pension would not be taken from him—and that, at least in fortune, they should not be utterly ruined. In this security the commissioner showed rather more than his customary degree of strength of mind, and more knowledge of lord Oldborough's character than he had upon most other occasions evinced.

Things were in this state, when, one morning, after the minister had given orders that no one should be admitted, as he was dictating some public papers of consequence to Mr. Temple, the duke of Greenwich was announced. His grace sent in a note to signify that he waited upon lord Oldborough by order of his majesty; and that, if this hour were not convenient, he begged to have the hour named at which his grace could be admitted. His grace was admitted instantly. Mr. Temple retired—for it was evident this was to be a secret conference. His grace of Greenwich entered with the most important solemnity—infinitely more ceremonious than usual, he was at last seated, and, after heavy and audible sighs, still hesitated to open his business. Through the affected gloom and dejection of his countenance lord Oldborough saw a malicious pleasure lurking, whilst, in a studied exordium, he spoke of the infinite reluctance with which he had been compelled, by his majesty's express orders, to wait upon his lordship on a business the most painful to his feelings. As being a public colleague—as a near and dear connexion—as a friend in long habits of intimacy with his lordship, he had prayed his majesty to be excused; but it was his majesty's pleasure: he had only now to beg his lordship to believe, that it was with infinite concern, &c. Lord Oldborough, though suffering under this circumlocution, never condescended to show any symptom of impatience; but allowing his grace to run the changes on the words and forms of apology, when these were exhausted, his lordship simply said, that "his majesty's pleasure of course precluded all necessity for apology."

His grace was vexed to find lord Oldborough still unmoved—he was sure this tranquillity could not long endure: he continued, "A sad business, my lord—a terrible discovery—I really can hardly bring myself to speak——"

Lord Oldborough gave his grace no assistance.

"My private regard," he repeated.

A smile of contempt on lord Oldborough's countenance.

"Your lordship's hitherto invulnerable public integrity——"

A glance of indignation from lord Oldborough.

"*Hitherto* invulnerable!—your grace will explain."

"Let these—these fatal notes—letters—unfortunately got into the hands of a leading, impracticable member of opposition, and by him laid——Would that I had been apprised, or could have conceived it possible, time enough to prevent that step; but it was done before I had the slightest intimation—laid before his majesty——"

Lord Oldborough calmly received the letters from his grace.

"My own handwriting, and private seal, I perceive."

The duke sighed—and whilst lord Oldborough drew out, opened, and read the first letter in the parcel, his grace went on—"This affair has thrown us all into the greatest consternation. It is to be brought before parliament immediately—unless a resignation should take place—which we should all deplore. The impudence, the inveteracy of that fellow, is astonishing—no silencing him. We might hush up the affair if his majesty had not been ap-

prised; but where the interest of the service is concerned, his majesty is warm."

"His majesty!" cried lord Oldborough: "His majesty could not, I trust, for a moment imagine these letters to be mine?"

"But for the hand and seal which I understood your lordship to acknowledge, I am persuaded his majesty could not have believed it."

"Believed! My king!—did he believe it?" cried lord Oldborough. His agitation was for a moment excessive, uncontrollable. "No! that I will never credit, till I have it from his own lips." Then commanding himself, "Your grace will have the goodness to leave these letters with me till to-morrow."

His grace, with infinite politeness and regret, was under the necessity of refusing this request. His orders were only to show the letters to his lordship, and then to restore them to the hands of the member of opposition, who had laid them before his majesty.

Lord Oldborough took off the cover of one of the letters, on which was merely the address and seal. The address was written also at the bottom of the letter enclosed, therefore the cover could not be of the least importance. The duke could not, lord Oldborough said, refuse to leave this with him.

To this his grace agreed—protesting that he was far from wishing to make difficulties. If there was any thing else he could do—any thing his lordship would wish to have privately insinuated or publicly said——

His lordship, with proud thanks, assured the duke he did not wish to have any thing privately insinuated;

and whatever it was necessary to say or do publicly, he should do himself, or give orders to have done. His lordship entered into no farther explanation. The duke at last was obliged to take his leave, earnestly hoping and trusting that this business would terminate to his lordship's entire satisfaction.

No sooner was the duke gone than lord Oldborough rang for his carriage.

"Immediately—and Mr. Temple, instantly."

Whilst his carriage was coming to the door, in the shortest manner possible lord Oldborough stated the facts to his secretary, that letters had been forged in his lordship's name, promising to certain persons promotion in the army—and navy—gratification—and pensions. Some were addressed to persons who had actually obtained promotion, shortly after the time of these letters; others contained reproaches for having been ill-used. Even from the rapid glance lord Oldborough had taken of these papers, he had retained the names of several of the persons to whom they were addressed—and the nature of the promotion obtained. They were persons who could have had no claim upon an honest minister. His lordship left a list of them with Mr. Temple—also the cover of the letter, on which was a specimen of the forged writing and the private seal.

"I am going to the king. In my absence, Mr. Temple, think for me—I know you feel for me. The object is to discover the authors of this forgery."

"My lord, may I consult with Mr. Alfred Percy?"

"Yes—with no other person."

It was not lord Oldborough's day for doing business

with the king. He was late—the king was going out to ride. His majesty received the minister as usual; but notwithstanding the condescension of his majesty's words and manner, it was evident to lord Oldborough's penetration that there was a coldness and formality in the king's countenance.

"I beg I may not detain your majesty—I see I am late," said lord Oldborough.

"Is the business urgent, my lord?"

"No, sir; for it concerns principally myself: it can, therefore, wait your majesty's leisure at any hour your majesty may appoint."

The king dismounted instantly.

"This moment, my lord, I am at leisure for any business that concerns your lordship."

The king returned to the palace—lord Oldborough followed, and all the spectators on foot and horseback were left full of curiosity.

Notwithstanding the condescension of his majesty's words and manner, and the polite promptitude to attend to any business that concerned his lordship, it was evident to lord Oldborough's penetration that there was an unusual coldness and formality in the king's countenance and deportment, unlike the graciousness of his reception when satisfied and pleased. As soon as the business of the day had been gone through, lord Oldborough said he must now beg his majesty's attention on a subject which principally concerned himself. The king looked as one prepared to hear, but determined to say as little as possible.

Lord Oldborough placed himself so as to give the

king the advantage of the light, which he did not fear to have full on his own countenance.

"Sir, certain letters, signed with my name, and sealed with my seal, have, I am informed, been laid before your majesty."

"Your lordship has been rightly informed."

"I trust—I hope that your majesty——"

At the firm assertion, in the tone with which lord Oldborough pronounced, I *trust*—his majesty's eye changed—and moved away from lord Oldborough's, when he, with respectful interrogation of tone, added, "I *hope* your majesty could not believe those letters to be mine."

"Frankly, my lord," said the king, "the assertions, the insinuations of no man, or set of men, of any rank or weight in my dominions, could by any imaginable means have induced me to conceive it possible that such letters had been written by your lordship. Not for one moment could my belief have been compelled by any evidence less strong than your lordship's hand-writing and seal. I own, I thought I knew your lordship's seal and writing; but I now see that I have been deceived, and I rejoice to see it."

"I thank your majesty. I cannot feel surprise that a forgery and a counterfeit which, at first view, compelled my own belief of their being genuine, should, for a moment, have deceived you, sir; but, I own, I had flattered myself that my sovereign knew my heart and character yet better than my seal and signature."

"Undoubtedly, my lord."

"And I should have hoped that, if your majesty

had perused those letters, no assertions could have been necessary, on my part, to convince you, sir, that they could not be mine. I have now only to rejoice that your majesty is undeceived; and that I have not intruded unnecessarily with this explanation. I am fully sensible, sir, of your goodness, in having thus permitted me to make, as early as possible, this assertion of my innocence. For the proofs of it, and for the detection of the guilty, I am preparing; and I hope to make these as clear to you, sir, as your majesty's assurance of the pleasure you feel in being undeceived is satisfactory—consolatory to me," concluded lord Oldborough, with a bow of profound yet proud respect.

"My lord," said the king, "I have no doubt that this affair will redound to your honour, and *terminate to your lordship's entire satisfaction.*"

The very phrase used by the duke of Greenwich.

"As to myself, your lordship can have no farther anxiety; but I wish your lordship's endeavours to detect and bring proofs home to the guilty may be promptly successful—for the gratification of your own feelings, and the satisfaction of the public mind, before the matter should be brought forward in parliament."

His majesty bowed, and as lord Oldborough retired, he added some gracious phrases, expressive of the high esteem he felt for the minister, and the interest he had always, and should always take, in whatever could contribute to his public and private—*satisfaction*—(again).

To an eye and ear less practised in courts than this minister's all that had been said would have been

really satisfactory: but lord Oldborough discerned a secret embarrassment in the smile, a constraint in the manner, a care, an effort to be gracious in the language, a caution, a rounding of the periods, a recurrence to technical phrases of compliment and amity, a want of the free fluent language of the heart; language which, as it flows, whether from sovereign or subject, leaves a trace that the art of courtier or of monarch cannot imitate. In all attempts at such imitation, there is a want, of which vanity and even interest is not always sensible, but which feeling perceives instantly. Lord Oldborough felt it—and twice, during this audience, he was on the point of offering his resignation, and twice, exerting strong power over himself, he refrained.

He saw plainly that he was not where he had been in the king's confidence; that his enemies had been at work, and, in some measure, had succeeded; that suspicions had been infused into the king's mind. That his king had doubted him, his majesty had confessed—and lord Oldborough discerned that there was no genuine joy at the moment his majesty was undeceived, no real anxiety for his honour, only the ostensible manifestation suitable to the occasion—repeatable—or recordable.

Still there was nothing of which he could complain; every expression, if written down or repeated, must have appeared proper and gracious from the sovereign to his minister; and for that minister to resign at such a moment, from pride or pique, would have been fatal to the dignity, perhaps to the integrity, of his character.

Lord Oldborough reasoned thus as he stood in the presence of the king, and compelled himself, during the whole audience, and to the last parting moment, to preserve an air and tone of calm, respectful self-possession.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DURING lord Oldborough's absence, his faithful secretary had been active in his service. Mr. Temple went immediately to his friend Alfred Percy. Alfred had just returned fatigued from the courts, and was resting himself, in conversation with his wife and Caroline.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Alfred," said Mr. Temple, "but I must take you away from these ladies to consult you on particular business."

"Oh! let the particular business wait till he has rested himself," said Mrs. Percy, "unless it be a matter of life and death."

"Life and death!" cried lady Frances Arlington, running in at the open door—"Yes, it is a matter of life and death!—Stay, Mr. Temple! Mr. Percy! going the moment I come into the room—Impossible!"

"Impossible it would be," said Mr. Temple, "in any other case; but—"

> "'When a lady's in the case,
> You know all other things give place,'"

cried lady Frances. "So, positively, gentlemen, I

stop the way. But, Mr. Temple, to comfort you—for I never saw a man, gallant, or ungallant, look so impatient—I shall not be able to stay above a moment ——Thank you, Mrs. Percy, I can't sit down—Mrs. Crabstock, the crossest of Crabstocks and stiffest of pattern-women, is in the carriage waiting for me. Give me joy—I have accomplished my purpose, and without lady Jane Granville's assistance—obtained a permit to go with lady Trant, and made her take me to lady Angelica's last night. Grand conversazione!—Saw the German baron! Caught both the profiles—have 'em here—defy you not to smile. Look," cried her ladyship, drawing out of her *reticule* a caricature, which she put into Caroline's hand; and, whilst she was looking as it, lady Frances went on speaking rapidly. "Only a sketch, a scrawl in pencil, while they thought I was copying a Sonnet to Wisdom—on the worst bit of paper too, in the world—old cover of a letter I stole from lady Trant's *reticule* while she was at cards. Mr. Temple, you shall see my *chef-d'œuvre* by and by; don't look at the reverse of the medal, pray. Did not I tell you, you were the most impatient man in the world?"

It was true that Mr. Temple was at this instant most impatient to get possession of the paper, for on the back of that cover of the letter, on which the caricature was drawn, the hand-writing of the direction appeared to him——He dared scarcely believe his eyes—his hopes.

"Mrs. Crabstock, my lady," said the footman, "is waiting."

"I know, sir," said lady Frances: "so, Caroline,

you won't see the likeness. Very well; if I can't get a compliment, I must be off. When you draw a caricature, I won't praise it. Here! Mr. Temple, one look, since you are dying for it."

"One look will not satisfy me," cried Mr. Temple, seizing the paper: "your ladyship must leave the drawing with us till to-morrow."

"*Us—must.* Given at our court of St. James's. Lord Oldborough's own imperative style."

"Imperative! no; humbly I beseech your ladyship, thus humbly," cried Mr. Temple, kneeling in jest, but keeping in earnest fast hold of the paper.

"But why—why? Are you acquainted with lady Angelica. I did not know you knew her."

"It is excellent!—It is admirable!—I cannot let it go. This hand that seized it long shall hold the prize."

"The man's mad! But don't think I'll give it to you—I would not give it to my mother: but I'll lend it to you, if you'll tell me honestly why you want it."

"Honestly—I want to show it to a particular friend, who will be delighted with it."

"Tell me who, this minute, or you shall not have it."

"Mrs. Crabstock, my lady, bids me say, the duchess——"

"The duchess—the deuce!—if she's come to the duchess, I must go. I hope your man, Mrs. Percy, won't tell Mrs. Crabstock he saw this gentleman kneeling."

"Mrs. Crabstock's getting out, my lady," said the footman, returning.

"Mr. Temple, for mercy's sake, get up."

"Never till your ladyship gives the drawing."

"There! there! let me go—audacious!"

"Good morning to you, Mrs. Percy—Good bye, Caroline——Be at lady Jane's to-night, for I'm to be there."

Her ladyship ran off, and met Mrs. Crabstock on the stairs, with whom we leave her to make her peace as she pleases.

"My dear Temple, I believe you are out of your senses," said Alfred: "I never saw any man so importunate about a drawing that is not worth a straw—trembling with eagerness, and kneeling!—Caroline, what do you think Rosamond would have thought of all this!"

"If she knew the whole, she would have thought I acted admirably," said Mr. Temple. "But come, I have business."

Alfred took him into his study, and there the whole affair was explained. Mr. Temple had brought with him the specimen of the forgery to show to Alfred, and, upon comparing it with the handwriting on the cover of the letter on which the caricature was drawn, the similarity appeared to be strikingly exact. The cover, which had been stolen, as lady Frances Arlington said, from lady Trant's *reticule*, was directed to captain Nuttall. He was one of the persons to whom forged letters had been written, as appeared by the list which lord Oldborough had left with Mr. Temple. The secretary was almost certain that his lordship had never written with his own hand to any captain Nuttall; but this he could ask

the moment he should see lord Oldborough again. It seemed as if this paper had never been actually used as the cover of a letter, for it had no post-mark, seal, or wafer. Upon farther inspection, it was perceived that a *t* had been left out in the name of *Nuttall;* and it appeared probable that the cover had been thrown aside, and a new one written, in consequence of this omission. But Alfred did not think it possible that lady Trant could be the forger of these letters, because he had seen some of her ladyship's notes of invitation to Caroline, and they were written in a wretched cramped hand.

"But that cramped hand might be feigned to conceal the powers of penmanship," said Mr. Temple.

"Well! granting her ladyship's talents were equal to the mere execution," Alfred persisted in thinking she had not abilities sufficient to invent or combine all the parts of such a scheme. "She might be an accomplice, but she must have had a principal—and who could that principal be?"

The same suspicion, the same person, came at the same moment into the heads of both gentlemen, as they sat looking at each other.

"There is an intimacy between them," said Alfred. "Recollect all the pains lady Trant took for Mrs. Falconer about English Clay—they——"

"Mrs. Falconer! But how could she possibly get at lord Oldborough's private seal—a seal that is always locked up—a seal never used to any common letter, never to any but those written by his own hand to some private friend, and on some very particular occasion? Since I have been with him I have not seen him use that seal three times."

"When and to whom, can you recollect?" said Alfred.

"I recollect!—I have it all!" exclaimed Mr. Temple, striking the table—"I have it! But, lady Frances Arlington—I am sorry she is gone."

"Why! what of her?—Lady Frances can have nothing more to do with the business."

"She has a great deal more, I can assure you—but without knowing it."

"Of that I am certain, or all the world would have known it long ago: but tell me how."

"I recollect, at the time when I was dangling after lady Frances—there's good in every thing—just before we went down to Falconer-court, her ladyship, who, you know, has always some reigning fancy, was distracted about what she called *bread-seals*. She took off the impression of seals with bread—no matter how, but she did—and used to torment me—no, I thought it a great pleasure at the time—to procure for her all the pretty seals I could."

"But, surely, you did not give her lord Oldborough's?"

"I!—not I!—how could you imagine such a thing?"

"You were in love, and might have forgotten consequences."

"A man in love may forget every thing, I grant—except his fidelity. No, I never gave the seal; but I perfectly recollect lady Frances showing it to me in her collection, and my asking her how she came by it."

"And how did she?"

"From the cover of a note which the duke, her uncle, had received from lord Oldborough; and I, at the time, remembered his lordship's having written it to the duke of Greenwich on the birth of his grandson. Lord Oldborough had, upon a former occasion, affronted his grace by sending him a note sealed with a wafer—this time his lordship took special care, and sealed it with his private *seal of honour*."

"Well! But how does this bring the matter home to Mrs. Falconer?" said Alfred.

"Stay—I am bringing it as near home to her as possible. We all went down to Falconer-court together; and there I remember lady Frances had her collection of bread-seals, and was daubing and colouring them with vermilion—and Mrs. Falconer was so anxious about them—and lady Frances gave her several—I must see lady Frances again directly, to inquire whether she gave her, among the rest, lord Oldborough's—I'll go to lady Jane Granville's this evening on purpose. But had I not better go this moment to lady Trant?"

Alfred advised, that having traced the matter thus far, they should not hazard giving any alarm to lady Trant or to Mrs. Falconer, but should report to lord Oldborough what progress had been made.

Mr. Temple accordingly went home, to be in readiness for his lordship's return. In the mean time the first exaltation of indignant pride having subsided, and his cool judgment reflecting upon what had passed, lord Oldborough considered that, however satisfactory to his own mind might be the feeling of

his innocence, the proofs of it were necessary to satisfy the public; he saw that his character would be left doubtful, and at the mercy of his enemies, if he were in pique and resentment hastily to resign, before he had vindicated his integrity. "*If* your proofs be produced, my lord!"—these words recurred to him, and his anxiety to obtain these proofs rose high; and high was his satisfaction the moment he saw his secretary, for by the first glance at Mr. Temple's countenance he perceived that some discovery had been made.

Alfred, that night, received through Mr. Temple his lordship's request, that he would obtain what farther information he could relative to the private seal, in whatever way he thought most prudent. His lordship trusted entirely to his discretion—Mr. Temple was engaged with other business.

Alfred went with Caroline to lady Jane Granville's, to meet lady Frances Arlington; he entered into conversation, and by degrees brought her to his point, playing all the time with her curiosity, and humouring her childishness, while he carried on his cross-examination.

At first she could not recollect any thing about making the seals he talked of. "It was a fancy that had passed—and a past fancy," she said, "was like a past love, or a past beauty, good for nothing but to be forgotten." However, by proper leading of the witness, and suggesting time, place, and circumstance, he did bring to the fair lady's mind all that he wanted her to remember. She could not conceive what interest Mr. Percy could take in the matter—

it was some jest about Mr. Temple, she was sure. Yes, she did recollect a seal with a Cupid riding a lion, that Mr. Temple gave her just before they went to Falconer-court—was that what he meant?

"No—but a curious seal——" (Alfred described the device.)

"Lord Oldborough's! Yes, there was some such odd seal." But it was not given to her by Mr. Temple—she took that from a note to her uncle, the duke of Greenwich.

Yes—that, Alfred said, he knew; but what did her ladyship do with it?

"You know how I got it! Bless me, you seem to know every thing I do and say. You know my affairs vastly well—you act the conjuror admirably—pray, can you tell me who I am to marry?"

"That I will—when your ladyship has told me to whom you gave that seal."

"That I would, and welcome, if I could recollect—but I really can't. If you think I gave it to Mr. Temple, I assure you, you are mistaken—you may ask him."

"I know your ladyship did not give it to Mr. Temple—but to whom did you give it?"

"I remember now—not to any gentleman, after all—you are positively out. I gave it to Mrs. Falconer."

"You are certain of that, lady Frances Arlington?"

"I am certain, Mr. Alfred Percy."

"And how can you prove it to me, lady Frances?"

"The easiest way in the world—by asking

Mrs. Falconer. Only I don't go there now much since Georgiana and I have quarrelled—but what can make you so curious about it?"

"That's a secret."—At the word *secret,* her attention was fixed.—"May I ask, if your ladyship would know the seal again if you saw it?—Is this any thing like the impression?" (showing her the seal on the forged cover.)

"The very same that I gave Mrs. Falconer, I'll swear to it—I'll tell you how I know it particularly. There's a little outer rim here, with points to it, which there is not to the other. I fastened my bread-seal into an old setting of my own, from which I had lost the stone. Mrs. Falconer took a fancy to it, among a number of others, so I let her have it. Now I have answered all your questions—answer mine—Who am I to marry?"

"Your ladyship will marry whoever—your ladyship *pleases.*"

"That was an ambiguous answer," she observed; "for that she *pleased* every body." Her ladyship was going to run on with some farther questions, but Alfred pretending that the oracle was not permitted to answer more explicitly, left her completely in the dark as to what his meaning had been in this whole conversation.

He reported progress to lord Oldborough—and his lordship slept as soundly this night as he did the night after he had been attacked by the mob.

The next morning the first person he desired to see was Mr. Falconer—his lordship sent for him into his cabinet.

"Mr. Commissioner Falconer, I promised to give you notice whenever I should see any probability of my going out of power."

"Good Heaven! my lord," exclaimed the commissioner, starting back. The surprise, the consternation were real—lord Oldborough had his eye upon him to determine that point.

"Impossible, surely!—I hope——"

His hope flitted at the moment to the duke of Greenwich—but returned instantly: he had made no terms—had missed his time. If lord Oldborough should go out of office—his place, his pension, gone—utter ruin.

Lord Oldborough marked the vacillation and confusion of his countenance, and saw that he was quite unprepared.

"I hope—Merciful Powers! I trust——I thought your lordship had triumphed over all your enemies, and was firmer in favour and power than ever. What can have occurred?"

Without making any answer, lord Oldborough beckoned to the commissioner to approach nearer the window where his lordship was standing, and then suddenly put into his hand the cover with the forged handwriting and seal.

"What am I to understand by this, my lord?" said the bewildered commissioner, turning it backwards and forwards. "Captain Nuttall!—I never saw the man in my life. May I ask, my lord, what I am to comprehend from this?"

"I see, sir, that you know nothing of the business."

The whole was explained by lord Oldborough succinctly. The astonishment and horror in the poor commissioner's countenance and gestures, and still more, the eagerness with which he begged to be permitted to try to discover the authors of this forgery, were sufficient proofs that he had not the slightest suspicion that the guilt could be traced to any of his own family.

Lord Oldborough's look, fixed on the commissioner, expressed what it had once before expressed—"Sir, from my soul, I pity you!"

The commissioner saw this look, and wondered why lord Oldborough should pity *him* at a time when all his lordship's feelings should naturally be for himself.

"My lord, I would engage we shall discover—we shall trace it."

"I believe that I have discovered—that I have traced it," said lord Oldborough; and he sighed.

Now that sigh was more incomprehensible to the commissioner than all the rest, and he stood with his lips open for a moment, before he could utter, "Why then resign, my lord?"

"That is my affair," said lord Oldborough. "Let us, if you please, sir, think of yours; for, probably, this is the only time I shall ever more have it in my power to be of the least service to you."

"Oh! my lord—my lord, don't say so!" said the commissioner, quite forgetting all his artificial manner, and speaking naturally: "the last time you shall have it in your power!—Oh! my dear lord, don't say so!"

"My dear sir, I must—it gives me pain—you see it does."

"At such a time as this to think of me instead of yourself! My lord, I never knew you till this moment—so well."

"Nor I you, sir," said lord Oldborough. "It is the more unfortunate for us both, that our connexion and intercourse must now for ever cease."

"Never, never, my lord, if you were to go out of power to-morrow—which Heaven, in its mercy and justice, forbid! I could never forget the goodness —I would never desert—in spite of all interest—I should continue—I hope your lordship would permit me to pay my duty—all intercourse could never cease."

Lord Oldborough saw, and almost smiled at the struggle between the courtier and the man—the confusion in the commissioner's mind between his feelings and his interest. Partly his lordship relieved, and partly he pained Mr. Falconer, by saying, in his firm tone, "I thank you, Mr. Falconer; but all intercourse must cease. After this hour, we meet no more. I beg you, sir, to collect your spirits, and to listen to me calmly. Before this day is at an end, you will understand why all farther intercourse between us would be useless to your interest, and incompatible with my honour. Before many hours are past, a blow will be struck which will go to your heart—for I see you have one—and deprive you of the power of thought. It is my wish to make that blow fall as lightly upon you as possible."

"Oh! my lord, your resignation would indeed be

a blow I could never recover. The bare apprehension deprives me at this moment of all power of thought; but still I hope——"

"Hear me, sir, I beg, without interruption: it is my business to think for you. Go immediately to the duke of Greenwich, make what terms with him you can—make what advantage you can of the secret of my approaching resignation—a secret I now put in your power to communicate to his grace, and which no one yet suspects—I having told it to no one living but to yourself. Go quickly to the duke—time presses—I wish you success—and a better patron than I have been, than my principles would permit me to be. Farewell, Mr. Falconer."

The commissioner moved towards the door when lord Oldborough said "*Time presses;*" but the commissioner stopped—turned back—could not go: the tears—real tears—rolled down his cheeks——Lord Oldborough went forward, and held out his hand to him—the commissioner kissed it, with the reverence with which he would have kissed his sovereign's hand; and bowing, he involuntarily backed to the door, as if quitting the presence of majesty.

"It is a pity that man was bred a mere courtier, and that he is cursed with a family on none of whom there is any dependence," thought lord Oldborough, as the door closed upon the commissioner for ever.

Lord Oldborough delayed an hour purposely to give Mr. Falconer advantage of the day with the duke of Greenwich: then ordered his carriage, and drove to—Mrs. Falconer's.

Great was her surprise at the minister's entrance. —"Concerned the commissioner was not at home."

"My business is with Mrs. Falconer."

"My lord—your lordship—the honour and the pleasure of a visit——Georgiana, my dear."

Mrs. Falconer nodded to her daughter, who most unwillingly, and as if dying with curiosity, retired.

The smile died away upon Mrs. Falconer's lips as she observed the stern gravity of lord Oldborough's countenance. She moved a chair towards his lordship—he stood, and leaning on the back of the chair, paused, as he looked at her.

"What is to come?—Cunningham, perhaps," thought Mrs. Falconer; "or perhaps something about John. When will he speak?—I can't—I must—— I am happy to see your lordship looking so well."

"Is Mrs. Falconer acquainted with lady Trant?"

"Lady Trant—yes, my lord."

"Mercy! Is it possible!—No, for her own sake she would not betray me," thought Mrs. Falconer.

"Intimately?" said lord Oldborough.

"Intimately—that is, as one's intimate with every body of a certain sort—one visits—but no farther—I can't say I have the honour——"

Mrs. Falconer was so distracted by seeing lord Oldborough searching in his pocket-book for a letter, that in spite of all her presence of mind, she knew not what she said; and all her presence of countenance failed, when lord Oldborough placed before her eyes the cover directed to Captain Nuttall.

"Can you guess how this came into lady Trant's possession, madam?"

"I protest, my lord," her voice trembling, in spite of her utmost efforts to command it, "I don't know —nor can I conceive——"

"Nor can you conceive by whom it was written, madam?"

"It appears—it bears a resemblance—some likeness—as far as I recollect—but it is so long since I have seen your lordship's own hand—and hands are so like—sometimes—and I am so bad a judge—every hand, all fashionable hands, are so like."

"And every seal like every seal?" said lord Oldborough, placing the counterfeit seal before Mrs. Falconer. "I recommend it to you, madam, to waste no farther time in evasion; but to deliver to me the counterpart of this seal, the impression of my private seal, which you had from lady Frances Arlington."

"A mere bread-seal! Her ladyship surely has not said—I really have lost it—if I ever had it—I declare your lordship terrifies me so, by this strange mode——"

"I recommend it to you once more, madam, and for the last time I earnestly recommend it to you, to deliver up to me that seal, for I have sworn to my belief that it is in your possession; a warrant will in consequence be issued, to seize and search your papers. The purport of my present visit, of which I should gladly have been spared the pain, is to save you, madam, from the public disgrace of having a warrant executed. Do not faint, madam, if you can avoid it, nor go into hysterics; for if you do, I must retire, and the warrant must be executed. Your best course is to open that desk, to give me up the

seal, to make to me at this instant a full confession of all you know of this transaction. If you do thus, for your husband's sake, madam, I will, as far as I can consistently with what is due to myself, spare you the shame of an arrest."

Mrs. Falconer, with trembling hands, unlocked the desk, and delivered the seal.

"And a letter which I see in this same handwriting, madam, if you please."

She gave it; and then, unable to support herself longer, sunk upon a sofa: but she neither fainted nor screamed—she was aware of the consequences. Lord Oldborough opened the window to give her air. She was relieved by a burst of tears, and was silent—and nothing was heard but her sobs, which she endeavoured to suppress in vain. She was more relieved on looking up by one glance at lord Oldborough's countenance, where she saw compassion working strongly.

But before she could take any advantage of it, the expression was changed, the feeling was controlled: he was conscious of its weakness—he recollected what public justice, and justice to his own character, required—he recollected all the treachery, the criminality, of which she had been guilty.

"Madam, you are not now in a condition, I see, to explain yourself farther—I will relieve you from my presence: my reproaches you will never hear; but I shall expect from you, before one hour, such an avowal in writing of this whole transaction, as may, with the written confession of lady Trant, afford the

proofs which are due to my sovereign, and to the public, of my integrity."

Mrs. Falconer bowed her head, covered her face, clasped her hands in agony: as lord Oldborough retired, she sprang up, followed to throw herself at his feet, yet without knowing what she could say.

"The commissioner is innocent!—If you forsake him, he is undone—all, all of us, utterly ruined! Oh! Georgiana! Georgiana! where are you? speak for me!"

Georgiana was in an inner apartment, trying on a new robe *à la Georgienne.*

"Whatever you may wish farther to say to me, madam," said lord Oldborough, disengaging himself from her, and passing decidedly on, before Georgiana appeared, "you will put in writing, and let me have within this hour—or never."

Within that hour commissioner Falconer brought for lord Oldborough the paper his wife had drawn up, but which he was obliged to deliver to Mr. Temple; for lord Oldborough had so ordered, and his lordship persevered in refusing to see him more. Mrs. Falconer's paper was worded with all the art and address of which she was mistress, and all the pathos she could command—lord Oldborough looked only for facts—these he marked with his pencil, and observed where they corroborated and where they differed from lady Trant's confession, which Mr. Temple had been charged to obtain during his lordship's visit to Mrs. Falconer. The greater part of the night lord Oldborough and Mr. Alfred Percy

were employed arranging these documents, so as to put the proofs in the clearest and shortest form, to be laid before his majesty the succeeding day.

It appeared that Mrs. Falconer had been first tempted to these practices by the distress for money into which extravagant entertainments, or, as she stated, the expences incident to her situation—expences which far exceeded her income—had led her. It was supposed, from her having kept open house at times for the minister, that she and the commissioner had great influence; she had been applied to—presents had been offered, and she had long withstood. But, at length, lady Trant acting in concert with her, they had been supplied with information by a clerk in one of the offices, a relation of lady Trant, who was a vain, incautious youth, and, it seems, did not know the use made of his indiscretion: he told what promotions he heard spoken of—what commissions were making out. The ladies prophesied, and their prophecies being accomplished, they gained credit. For some time they kept themselves behind the scenes—and many, applying to A. B., and dealing with they did not know whom, paid for promotions which would have come unpaid for; others paid, and were never promoted, and wrote letters of reproach—captain Nuttall was among these, and he it was, who, finding himself duped, first stirred in the business; and by means of an active member of opposition, to whom he made known his secret grievance, brought the whole to light.

The proofs arranged (and lord Oldborough never slept till they were perfected), he reposed tranquilly. The next day, asking an audience of his majesty, he simply laid the papers on his majesty's table, observing that he had been so fortunate as to succeed in tracing the forgery, and that he trusted these papers contained all the necessary proofs.

His lordship bowed and retired instantly, leaving his majesty to examine the papers alone.

The resolution to resign his ministerial station had long been forming in lord Oldborough's mind. It was not a resolution taken suddenly in pride or pique, but after reflection, and upon strong reasons. It was a measure which he had long been revolving in his secret thoughts. During the enthusiasm of political life, the proverbial warnings against the vanity of ambition, and the danger of dependence on the favour of princes, had passed on his ear but as a schoolboy's lesson: a phrase "to point a moral, or adorn a tale." He was not a reading man, and the maxims of books he disregarded or disbelieved; but in the observations he made for himself he trusted: the lessons he drew from life were never lost upon him, and he acted in consequence of that which he believed, with a decision, vigour, and invariability, seldom found even among philosophers. Of late years he had, in real life, seen striking instances of the treachery of courtiers, and had felt some symptoms of insecurity in the smile of princes. Fortune had been favourable to him—she was fickle—he determined to quit her before she should change. Ambition, it is true, had tempted him—he had risen to her highest pinnacle:

he would not be hurled from high—he would descend voluntarily, and with dignity. Lord Oldborough's habits of thought were as different as possible from those of a metaphysician: he had reflected less upon the course of his own mind than upon almost any other subject; but he knew human nature practically; disquisitions on habit, passion, or the sovereign good, were unread by him, nor, in the course of his life, had he ever formed a system, moral or prudential; but the same penetration, the same *longanimity*, which enabled him to govern the affairs of a great nation, gave him, when his attention turned towards himself, a foresight for his own happiness. In the meridian of life, he had cherished ambition, as the only passion that could supply him with motive strong enough to call great powers into great action. But of late years he had felt something, not only of the waywardness of fortune, but of the approaches of age—not in his mind, but in his health, which had suffered by his exertions. The attacks of hereditary gout had become more violent and more frequent. If he lived, these would, probably, at seasons, often incapacitate him from his arduous ministerial duties: much, that he did well, must be ill done by deputy. He had ever reprobated the practice of leaving the business of the nation to be done by clerks and underlings in office. Yet to this the minister, however able, however honest, must come at last, if he persist in engrossing business and power beyond what an individual can wield. Love for his country, a sense of his own honour, integrity, and consistency, here combined to determine this great minister to retire while it was yet time—to secure, at once, the dignity

and happiness of the evening of life. The day had been devoted to good and high purposes—that was enough—he could now, self-satisfied and full of honour, bid adieu to ambition. This resolution, once formed, was fixed. In vain even his sovereign endeavoured to dissuade him from carrying it into execution.

When the king had examined the papers which lord Oldborough had laid before him, his majesty sent for his lordship again, and the moment the minister entered the cabinet, his majesty expressed his perfect satisfaction in seeing that his lordship had, with so little trouble, and with his usual ability, got to the bottom of this affair.

What was to be done next?—The duke of Greenwich was to be summoned. His grace was in astonishment when he saw the papers which contained lord Oldborough's complete vindication, and the crimination of Mrs. Falconer. Through the whole, as he read on, his grace had but one idea, viz. " commissioner Falconer has deceived me with false intelligence of the intended resignation." Not one word was said by lord Oldborough to give his grace hope of that event—till the member of opposition by whom the forged letters had been produced—till all those who knew or had heard any thing of the transaction were clearly and fully apprised of the truth. After this was established, and that all saw lord Oldborough clear and bright in honour, and, at least apparently, as firm in power as he had ever been, to the astonishment of his sovereign his lordship begged permission to resign.

Whatever might have been the effect of misrepre-

sentation to lower lord Oldborough's favour, at the moment when he spoke of retiring, his king recollected all his past services—all that must, in future, be hazarded and lost in parting with such a minister —so eminent in abilities, of such tried integrity, of such fidelity, such attachment to his person, such a zealous supporter of royalty, such a favourite with his people, so successful as well as so able a minister! Never was he so much valued as at this moment. All his sovereign's early attachment returned in full strength and warmth.

"No, my lord, you must not—you will not leave me."

These simple words, spoken with the warmth of the heart, touched lord Oldborough more than can be told. It was difficult to resist them, especially when he saw tears in the eyes of the monarch whom he loved.

But his resolution was taken. He thanked his majesty, not with the commonplace thanks of courtiers, but with his whole heart and soul he thanked his majesty for this gracious condescension—this testimony of approbation—these proofs of sensibility to his attachment, which paid—overpaid him, in a moment, for the labours of a life. The recollection of them would be the glory, the solace of his age—could never leave his memory while life lasted—would, he thought, be present to him, if he should retain his senses, in his dying moment. But he was, in the midst of this strong feeling, firm to the resolution his reason had taken. He humbly represented, that he had waited for a favourable time when the

affairs of the country were in a prosperous train, when there were few difficulties to embarrass those whom his majesty might name to succeed to his place at the head of administration: there were many who were ambitious of that station—zeal, talents, and the activity of youth, were at his majesty's command. For himself, he found it necessary for his health and happiness to retire from public business; and to resign the arduous trust with which he had been honoured.

"My lord, if I must accept of your resignation, I must—but I do it with regret. Is there any thing your lordship wishes—any thing you will name for yourself or your friends, that I can do, to show my sense of your services and merit?"

"For myself, your majesty's bounty has left me nothing to wish."

"For your friends, then, my lord?—Let me have the satisfaction of obliging you through them."

Nothing could be more gracious or more gratifying than the whole of this parting audience. It was lord Oldborough's last audience.

The news of his resignation, quickly whispered at court, was not that day publicly known or announced. The next morning his lordship's door was crowded beyond example in the memory of ministers. Mr. Temple, by his lordship's order, announced as soon as possible the minister's having resigned. All were in astonishment—many in sorrow: some few—a very few of the most insignificant of the crowd, persons incapable of generous sympathy, who thought they could follow their own paltry interests unnoticed—

left the room, without paying their farewell respects to this great minister—minister now no more.

The moment he appeared, there was sudden silence. All eyes were fixed upon him, every one pressing to get into the circle.

"Gentlemen, thank you for these marks of attention—of regard. Mr. Temple has told you—you know, my friends, that I am a man without power."

"We know," answered a distinguished gentleman, "that you are lord Oldborough. With or without power, the same in the eyes of your friends, and of the British nation."

Lord Oldborough bowed low, and looked gratified. His lordship then went round the circle with an air more cheerful, more free from reserve, than usual; with something in his manner more of sensibility, but nothing less of dignity. All who merited distinction he distinguished by some few appropriate words, which each remembered afterwards, and repeated to their families and friends. He spoke or listened to each individual with the attention of one who is courting, not quitting, popularity. Free from that restraint and responsibility which his public and ministerial duties had imposed upon him, he now entered into the private concerns of all, and gave his parting assistance or counsel. He noted all grievances—registered all promises that ought to be recommended to the care of his successor in office. The wishes of many, to whom he had forborne to give any encouragement, he now unexpectedly fulfilled and surpassed. When all were satisfied, and

had nothing more to ask or to hope from him, they yet delayed, and parted from lord Oldborough with difficulty and regret.

A proof that justice commands more than any other quality the respect and gratitude of mankind. Take time and numbers into the calculation, and all discover, in their turn, the advantage of this virtue. This minister, a few regretted instances excepted, had shown no favour, but strict justice, in his patronage.

All lord Oldborough's requests for his friends were granted—all his recommendations attended to: it was grateful to him to feel that his influence lasted after his power had ceased. Though the sun had apparently set, its parting rays continued to brighten and cheer the prospect.

Under a new minister, Mr. Temple declined accepting of the embassy which had been offered to him. Remuneration suitable to his services, and to the high terms in which lord Oldborough had spoken of his merit, was promised; and without waiting to see in what form, or manner, this promise would be accomplished, the secretary asked and obtained permission to accompany his revered master to his retirement. Alfred Percy, zealous and ardent in lord Oldborough's service, the more this great man's character had risen upon his admiration, had already hastened to the country to prepare every thing at Clermont-park for his reception. By his orders, that establishment had been retrenched; by AlfredPercy's activity it was restored. Services, which the richest nobleman in the land could not have purchased, or

the highest have commanded, Alfred was proud to pay as a voluntary tribute to a noble character.

Lord Oldborough set out for the country at a very early hour in the morning, and no one previously knew his intentions, except Mr. Temple. He was desirous to avoid what it had been whispered was the design of the people, to attend him in crowds through the streets of the metropolis.

As they drove out of town lord Oldborough recollected that in some account, either of the duke of Marlborough, or the duke of Ormond's leaving London, after his dismission from court, it is said, that of all those whom the duke had served, all those who had courted and flattered him in the time of his prosperity and power, none showed any gratitude or attachment, excepting one page, who appeared at the coach-door as his master was departing, and gave some signs of genuine sorrow and respect.

"I am fortunate," said lord Oldborough, "in having few complaints to make of ingratitude. I make none. The few I might make," continued his lordship, who now rewarded Mr. Temple's approved fidelity, by speaking to him with the openness and confidence of friendship, "the few I might make have been chiefly caused by errors of my own in the choice of the persons I have obliged. I thank Heaven, however, that upon the whole I leave public life not only with a good conscience, but with a good opinion of human nature. I speak not of courtiers—there is nothing of nature about them—they are what circumstances make them. Were I to live my life over again, the hours spent with courtiers are those which

I should most wish to be spared; but by a statesman, or a minister, these cannot be avoided. For myself, in resigning my ministerial office, I might say, as Charles the Fifth, when he abdicated, said to his successor, 'I leave you a heavy burthen; for since my shoulders have borne it, I have not passed one day exempt from disquietude.'

"But from the first moment I started in the course of ambition, I was aware that tranquillity must be sacrificed; and to the last moment I abided by the sacrifice. The good I had in view, I have reached—the prize at which I aimed, I have won. The glory of England was my object—her approbation my reward. Generous people!—If ever I bore toil or peril in your cause, I am rewarded, and never shall you hear me say that 'the unfruitful glories please no more.' The esteem of my sovereign!—I possess it. It is indefeasibly mine. His favour, his smiles, are his to give, or take away. Never shall he hear from me the *wailings* of disappointed ambition."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Caroline took advantage of the opportunity of returning home with her brother Alfred, when he went to the country to prepare Clermont-park for the reception of lord Oldborough. And now she saw her home again with more than wonted delight. Every thing animate and inanimate seemed to smile upon her, every heart rejoiced at her return; and she en-

joyed equally the pleasure of loving, and of being beloved by, such friends. She had been amused and admired during her residence in London; but a life of dissipation she had always thought, and now she was convinced from experience, could never suit her taste or character. She would immediately have resumed her former occupations, if Rosamond would have permitted; but Rosamond took entire possession of her at every moment when her father or mother had not claimed their prior right to hear and to be heard.

"Caroline, my dear, don't flatter yourself that you shall be left in peace——See!—she is sitting down to write a letter, as if she had not been away from us these six months——You must write to lady Jane Granville!—Well, finish your gratitude quickly—and no more writing, reading, or drawing, this day; you must think of nothing but talking, or listening to me."

Much as she loved talking in general, Rosamond now so far preferred the pleasure of hearing, that, with her eyes fixed on Caroline, her countenance varying with every variety of Caroline's expression, she sat perfectly silent all the time her sister spoke. And scarcely was her voice heard, even in exclamation. But, during the pauses of narrative, when the pause lasted more than a minute, she would say, "Go on, my dear Caroline, go on. Tell us something more."

The conversation was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Mr. Temple—and Rosamond did not immediately find her fluency of speech increase. Mr. Temple had seized the first moment that duty

and gratitude to his master and friend permitted to hasten to the Hills, nor had lord Oldborough been unmindful of his feelings. Little as his lordship was disposed to think of love affairs, it seems he recollected those of his secretary; for, the morning after their arrival at Clermont-park, when he proffered his services, lord Oldborough said, that he had only to trouble Mr. Temple to pay a visit for him, if it would not be disagreeable, to his old friend Mr. Percy. "Tell him that I know his first wish will be to come to show me that it is the man, not the minister, for whom he had a regard: tell him this proof of his esteem is unnecessary. He will wish to see me for another reason: he is a philosopher—and will have a philosophical curiosity to discover how I exist without ambition. But of that he cannot yet form a judgment—nor can I: therefore, if he pleases, let his visit be delayed till next week. I have some papers to arrange, which I should wish to show him, and I cannot have them sooner in readiness. If you, Mr. Temple, can contrive to pass this week at Mr. Percy's, let me not detain you. There is no fear," added he, smiling, "that in solitude I should be troubled by the spectre which haunted the minister in Gil Blas in his retirement."

Never was man happier than Mr. Temple, when he found himself in the midst of the family circle at the Hills, and seated beside Rosamond, free from all cares, all business, all intrigues of courtiers, and restraints of office; no longer in the horrors of attendance and dependence, but with the promise of a competent provision for life—with the consciousness of

its having been honourably obtained; and, to brighten all, the hope, the delightful hope, of soon prevailing on the woman he loved to become his for ever.

Alfred Percy had been obliged to return directly to London, and for once in his life Mr. Temple profited by the absence of his friend. In the small house at the Hills, Alfred's was the only room that could have been spared for him; and in this room, scarcely fourteen feet square, the ex-secretary found himself lodged more entirely to his satisfaction than he had ever been in the sumptuous apartments of the great. The happy are not fastidious as to their accommodations; they never miss the painted ceiling, or the long arcade, and their slumbers require no bed of down. The lover's only fear was, that this happy week would pass too swiftly; and, indeed, time flew unperceived by him, and by Rosamond. One fine day, after dinner, Mrs. Percy proposed, that instead of sitting longer in the house, they should have their dessert of strawberries in some pleasant place in the lawn or wood. Rosamond eagerly seconded this proposal, and whispered, "Caroline's bower."

Thither they went. This bower of Caroline, this favourite spot, Rosamond, during her sister's absence, had taken delight in ornamenting, and it did credit as much to her taste as to her kindness. She had opened a view on one side to a waterfall among the rocks; on the other, to a winding path descending through the glen. Honeysuckle, rose, and eglantine, near the bower, were in rich and wild profusion; all these, the song of birds, and even the smell of the new-mown grass, seemed peculiarly delightful to

Mr. Temple. Of late years, he had been doomed to close confinement in a capital city; but all his tastes were rural, and, as he said, he feared he should expose himself to the ridicule Dr. Johnson throws on those "who talk of sheep and goats, and who babble of green fields."

Mr. Percy thought Dr. Johnson was rather too intolerant of rural description, and of the praises of a country life, but acknowledged that he quite agreed with him in disliking pastorals—excepting always that beautiful drama, "The Gentle Shepherd." Mr. Percy said, that, in his opinion, a life purely pastoral must, if it could be realised, prove as insufferably tiresome in reality as it usually is found to be in fiction. He hated Delias and shepherdesses, and declared that he should soon grow tired of any companion with whom he had no other occupation in common but "*tending a few sheep.*" There was a vast difference, he thought, between pastoral and domestic life. His idea of domestic life comprised all the varieties of literature, exercise, and amusement for the faculties, with the delights of cultivated society.

The conversation turned from pastoral life and pastorals to Scotch and English ballads and songs. Their various merits of simplicity, pathos, or elegance, were compared and discussed. After the Reliques of Ancient Poetry had been sufficiently admired, Rosamond and Caroline mentioned two modern compositions, both by the same author, each exquisite in its different style of poetry—one beautiful, the other sublime. Rosamond's favourite was the Exile of

Erin; Caroline's, the Mariners of England. To justify their tastes, they repeated the poems. Caroline fixed the attention of the company on the flag, which has

> "Braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze,"

when suddenly her own attention seemed to be distracted by some object in the glen below. She endeavoured to go on, but her voice faltered—her colour changed. Rosamond, whose quick eye followed her sister's, instantly caught a glimpse of a gentleman coming up the path from the glen. Rosamond started from her seat, and clasping her hands, exclaimed, "It is! It *is* he!—It is count Altenberg!"

They had not recovered from their astonishment when count Altenberg stood before them. To Mr. Percy, to Mrs. Percy, to Rosamond, to each he spoke, before he said one word to Caroline. But one look had said all, had spoken, and had been understood.

That he was not married she was certain—for that look said he loved her—and her confidence in his honour was secure. Whatever had delayed his return, or had been mysterious in his conduct, she felt convinced that he had never been to blame.

And on his part did he read as distinctly the truth in her countenance?—Was the high colour, the radiant pleasure in that countenance unmarked? The joy was so veiled by feminine modesty, that he doubted, trembled, and if at last the rapid feelings ended in hope, it was respectful hope. With deference the most marked, mingled with dignity, ten-

derness, and passion, he approached Caroline. He was too delicate, too well-bred, to distress her by distinguishing her more particularly; but as he took the seat, which she left for him beside her mother, the open and serene expression of her eye, with the soft sound of her voice, in the few words she answered to what he said, were enough to set his heart at ease. The sight of Mr. Temple had at first alarmed the count, but the alarm was only momentary. One glance at Rosamond re-assured him.

Ideas, which it requires many words to tell, passed instantaneously with the rapidity of light. After they were seated, some minutes were spent in common-place questions and answers, such as those which Benjamin Franklin would wisely put all together, into one formula, to satisfy curiosity. Count Altenberg landed the preceding day—had not stopped to see any one in England—had not even heard of lord Oldborough's resignation—had proceeded directly to the Hills—had left his equipage at a town a few miles distant—thought he had been fully master of the well-known road, but the approach having been lately changed, he had missed his way.

This settled, to make room for a more interesting explanation, Mr. Temple had the politeness to withdraw. Rosamond had the humanity, and Caroline the discretion, to accompany him in his walk.

Count Altenberg then said, addressing himself to Mr. Percy, on whose regard he seemed to have reliance, and to Mrs. Percy, whom he appeared most anxious to interest in his favour, "You certainly, sir, as a man of penetration, and a father; you,

madam, as a mother, and as a lady, who must have been accustomed to the admiration of our sex, could not avoid seeing, when I was in this country before, that I felt the highest admiration, that I had formed the strongest attachment for your daughter—miss Caroline Percy."

Mr. and Mrs. Percy both acknowledged that they thought count Altenberg had shown some preference for Caroline; but as he had never declared his attachment, they had not felt themselves justified in inferring more from his attentions than his general good opinion. A change in his manner, which they observed shortly before they quitted Hungerford Castle, had impressed them with the idea that he had no such views as they had once been led to imagine, and their never having heard any thing from him since had confirmed them in this belief.

"Painful—exquisitely painful, as it was to me," said count Altenberg, "I felt myself bound in honour to leave you in that error, and at all hazards to myself to suffer you to continue under that persuasion, as I was then, and have been till within these few days, in dread of being obliged to fulfil an engagement, made without my concurrence or knowledge, and which must for ever have precluded me from indulging the first wish of my heart. The moment, literally the moment I was at liberty, I hastened hither, to declare my real sentiments, and to solicit your permission to address your daughter. But before I can expect that permission, before I can hope for your approbation of my suit—an approbation which, I am well aware, must depend entirely upon

your opinion of my character—I must, to explain whatever may have appeared unintelligible in my conduct, be permitted to make you fully acquainted with the circumstances in which I have been placed."

Beginning with the history of his father's letters and his own, respecting the projected marriage with the countess Christina, he related, nearly as follows, all that passed, after his having, in obedience to his father's summons, returned home. He found contracts drawn up and ready for his signature—the friends of both families apprised of the proposed alliance, and every thing actually prepared for his marriage. Remonstrances with his father were vain. The old count said that it was impossible to break off the match, that his honour and the honour of his house was pledged. But independently of all promises, he considered the accomplishment of this marriage as most desirable and advantageous: with all the vehemence of affection, and all the force of parental authority, he charged his son to fulfil his engagements. The old count was a fond but an imperious father; a good but an ambitious man. It was his belief that love is such a transient passion, that it is folly to sacrifice to its indulgence any of the solid and permanent interests of life. His experience at courts, and his observation on the gallantries of young princes and nobles, had taught him to believe that love is not only a transient, but a variable and capricious feeling, easily changing its object, and subsisting only by novelty. All that his son said of his attachment to Caroline, of the certainty of its permanence, and of its being essential to the happi-

ness of his life, the father heard but as the common language of every enamoured youth. He let his son speak without interruption, but smiled incredulous, and listened only as to the voice of one in the paroxysm of a passion, which, however violent, would necessarily subside. Between the fits, he endeavoured to control the fever of his mind, and as a spell repeated these words, "Albert! see the young countess Christina—but once—I ask no more."

Albert, with the respect due to a father, but with the firmness due to himself, and with all the courage which love only could have given to oppose the authority and affection of a parent, refused to ratify the contract that had been prepared, and declined the proposed interview. He doubted not, he said, that the lady was all his father described—beautiful, amiable, and of transcendant talents; he doubted not her power to win any but a heart already won. He would enter into no invidious comparisons, nor bid defiance to her charms—his own choice was made, he was sure of his constancy, and he thought it not only the most honourable course, but the most respectful to the lady Christina, ingenuously at once, and without having any interview with her, or her friends, to state the truth—that the treaty had been commenced by his father without his knowledge, and carried on under total ignorance of an attachment he had formed in England. The father, after some expressions of anger and disappointment, was silent, and appeared to acquiesce. He no longer openly urged the proposed interview, but he secretly contrived that it should take place. At a masked ball at court, count Albert en-

tered into conversation with a Minerva, whose majestic air and figure distinguished her above her companions, whose language, thoughts, and sentiments, perfectly sustained the character which she assumed. He was struck with admiration by her talents, and by a certain elevation of thought and sentiment, which, in all she said, seemed the habitual expression of a real character, not the strained language of a feigned personage. She took off her mask—he was dazzled by her beauty. They were at this moment surrounded by numbers of her friends and of his, who were watching the effect produced by this interview. His father, satisfied by the admiration he saw in count Albert's countenance, when they both took off their, masks approached and whispered, "the countess Christina." Count Altenberg grew pale, and for a moment stood in silent consternation. The lady smiled with an air of haughty superiority, which in some degree relieved him, by calling his own pride to his aid, and by convincing him that tenderness, or feminine timidity, which he would have most dreaded to wound, were not the characteristics of her mind. He instantly asked permission to pay his respects to her at her father's palace the ensuing day. She changed colour—darted a penetrating glance at the count; and after an incomprehensible and quick alternation of pleasure and pain in her countenance, she replied, that "she consented to grant count Albert Altenberg that interview which he and their mutual friends desired." She then retired with friends from the assembly.

In spite of the haughtiness of her demeanor, it had

been obvious that she had desired to make an impression upon count Albert; and all who knew her agreed that she had never on any occasion been seen to exert herself so much to shine and please. She shone, but had not pleased. The father, however, was content; an interview was promised—he trusted to the charms and talents of the countess—he trusted to her flattering desire to captivate, and with impatience and confidence he waited for the event of the succeeding day. Some intervening hours, a night of feverish and agonizing suspense, would have been spared to count Albert, had he at this time known any thing of an intrigue—an intrigue which an artful enemy had been carrying on, with design to mortify, disgrace, and ruin his house. The plan was worthy of him by whom it was formed—M. de Tourville—a person, between whom and count Albert there seemed an incompatibility of character, and even of manner; an aversion openly, indiscreetly shown by the count, even from his boyish years, but cautiously concealed on the part of M. de Tourville, masked in courtly smiles and a diplomatic air of perfect consideration. Fear mixed with M. de Tourville's dislike. He was aware that if count Albert continued in confidence with the hereditary prince, he would, when the prince should assume the reins of government, become, in all probability, his prime minister, and then adieu to all M. de Tourville's hopes of rising to favour and fortune. Fertile in the resources of intrigue, gallant and political, he combined them, upon this occasion, with exquisite address. When the countess Christina was first

presented at court, he had observed that the prince was struck by her beauty. M. de Tourville took every means that a courtier well knows how to employ, to flatter the taste by which he hoped to profit. In secret he insinuated into the lady's ear that she was admired by the prince. M. de Tourville knew her to be of an aspiring character, and rightly judged that ambition was her strongest passion. When once the hope of captivating the prince had been suggested to her, she began to disdain the proposed alliance with the house of Altenberg; but she concealed this disdain, till she could show it with security: she played her part with all the ability, foresight, and consummate prudence, of which ambition, undisturbed by love, is capable. Many obstacles opposed her views: the projected marriage with count Albert Altenberg—the certainty that the reigning prince would never consent to his son's forming an alliance with the daughter of a subject. But the old prince was dying, and the lady Christina calculated that till his decease she could protract the time appointed for her marriage with count Albert. The young prince might then break off the projected match, prevail upon the emperor to create her a princess of the empire, and then, without derogating from his rank, or giving offence to German ideas of propriety, he might gratify his passion, and accomplish the fulness of her ambition. Determined to take no counsel but her own, she never opened her scheme to any of her friends, but pursued her plan secretly, in concert with M. de Tourville, whom she considered but as a humble instrument devoted to her service. He all

the while considering her merely as a puppet, played by his art, to secure at once the purposes of his interest and of his hatred. He thought he foresaw that count Albert would never yield his intended bride peaceably to his prince—he knew nothing of the count's attachment in England—the lady Christina was charming—the alliance highly advantageous to the house of Altenberg—the breaking off such a marriage, and the disappointment of a passion which he thought the young countess could not fail to inspire, would, as M. de Tourville hoped, produce an irreparable breach between the prince and his favourite. On count Albert's return from England, symptoms of alarm and jealousy had appeared in the prince, unmarked by all but by the countess Christina, and by the confidant, who was in the secret of his passion.

So far M. de Tourville's scheme had prospered, and from the character of the hereditary prince, it was likely to succeed in its ultimate view. He was a prince of good dispositions, but wanting in resolution and civil courage: capable of resisting the allurements of pleasure for a certain time, but soon weary of painful endurance in any cause; with a taste for virtue, but destitute of that power to bear and forbear, without which there is no virtue: a hero, when supported by a stronger mind, such as that of his friend, count Albert; but relaxing and sinking at once, when exposed to the influence of a flatterer, such as M. de Tourville: subject to exquisite shame and self-reproach, when he had acted contrary to his own idea of right; yet, from the very same weakness

that made him err, disposed to be obstinate in error. M. de Tourville argued well from his knowledge of his character that the prince, enamoured as he was of the charms of the fair Christina, would not long be able to resist his passion; and that, if once he broke through his sense of honour, and declared that passion to the destined bride of his friend, he would ever afterwards shun and detest the man whom he had injured. All this M. de Tourville had admirably well combined: no man understood and managed better the weaknesses of human nature, but its strength he could not so well estimate; and as for generosity, as he could not believe in its sincerity, he was never prepared for its effects. The struggles which the prince made against his passion were greater, and of longer duration, than M. de Tourville had expected. If count Albert had continued absent, the prince might have been brought more easily to betray him; but his return recalled, in the midst of love and jealousy, the sense of respect he had for the superior character of this friend of his early days: he knew the value of a friend—even at the moment he yielded his faith to a flatterer. He could not at once forfeit the esteem of the being who esteemed him most—he could not sacrifice the interest, and as he thought, the happiness, of the man who loved him best. The attachment his favourite had shown him, his truth, his confiding openness of temper, the pleasure in his countenance when he saw him first upon his return from England, all these operated on the heart of the prince, and no declaration of his passion had been made at the time when

the appointed interview took place between count Albert and the countess Christina at her father's palace. Her friends, not doubting that her marriage was on the eve of its accomplishment, had no scruple, even in that court of etiquette, in permitting the affianced lovers to have as private a conference as each seemed to desire. The lady's manner was this morning most alarmingly gracious. Count Albert was, however, struck by a difference in her air, the moment she was alone with him, from what it had been whilst in the presence of her friends. All that he might without vanity have interpreted as marking a desire to please, to show him favour, and to evince her approbation, at least, of the choice her friends had made for her, vanished the moment they withdrew. What her motives might be, count Altenberg could not guess; but the hope he now felt, that she was not really inclined to consider him with partiality, rendered it more easy to enter into that explanation, upon which he was, at all events, resolved. With all the delicacy due to her sex, with all the deference due to her character, and all the softenings by which politeness can soothe and conciliate pride, he revealed to the countess Christina the real state of his affections: he told her the whole truth, concluding by repeating the assurance of his belief that her charms and merit would be irresistible to any heart that was disengaged.

The lady heard him in astonishment: for this turn of fate she had been wholly unprepared—the idea of his being attached to another had never once presented itself to her imagination; she had never calculated on the possibility that her alliance should be

declined by any individual of a family less than sovereign. She possessed, however, pride of character superior to her pride of rank, and strength of mind suited to the loftiness of her ambition. With dignity in her air and countenance, after a pause of reflection, she replied, "Count Albert Altenberg is, I find, equal to the high character I have heard of him: deserving of my esteem and confidence, by that which can alone command esteem and merit confidence—sincerity. His example has recalled me to my nobler self, and he has, in this moment, rescued me from the labyrinth of a diplomatist. Count Albert's sincerity I—little accustomed to imitation, but proud to *follow* in what is good and great—shall imitate. Know then, sir, that my heart, like your own, is engaged: and that you may be convinced I do not mock your ear with the semblance of confidence, I shall, at whatever hazard to myself, trust to you my secret. My affections have a high object—are fixed upon him whose friend and favourite count Albert Altenberg deservedly is. I should scorn myself—no throne upon earth could raise me in my own opinion, if I could deceive or betray the man who has treated me with such sincerity."

Relieved at once by this explanation, and admiring the manner in which it was made, mingled joy and admiration were manifest in his countenance; and the lady forgave him the joy, in consideration of the tribute he paid to her superiority. Admiration was a tribute he was most willing to yield at this moment, when released from that engagement to love which it had been impossible for him to fulfil.

The countess recalled his attention to her affairs

and to his own. Without his making any inquiry, she told him all that had been done, and all that yet remained to be done, for the accomplishment of her hopes: she had been assured, she said, by one now in the favour and private confidence of the hereditary prince, that his inclination for her was—painfully and with struggles, which, in her eyes, made his royal heart worthy her conquest—suppressed by a sense of honour to his friend.

"This conflict would now cease," count Albert said. "It should be his immediate care to relieve his prince from all difficulty on his account."

"By what means?" the countess asked.

"Simply by informing him of the truth—as far as I am concerned. Your secret, madam, is safe—your confidence sacred. Of all that concerns myself—my own attachment, and the resignation of any pretensions that might interfere with his, he shall immediately be acquainted with the whole truth."

The countess coloured, and repeating the words "*the whole truth*," looked disconcerted, and in great perplexity replied, that count Albert's speaking to the prince directly—his immediate resignation of his pretensions—would, perhaps, defeat her plans. This was not the course she had intended to pursue—far from that which M. de Tourville had pointed out. After some moments' reflection, she said, "I abide by the truth—speak to the prince—be it so: I trust to your honour and discretion to speak to him in such terms as not to implicate me, to commit my delicacy, or to derogate from my dignity. We shall see then whether he loves me as I desire to be loved. If he

does, he will free me, at once, from all difficulty with my friends, for he will speak *en prince*—and not speak in vain; if he loves me not, I need not tell you, sir, that you are equally free. My friends shall be convinced that I will never be the bride of any other man."

After the explanation with the lady Christina, count Albert lost no time; he went instantly to the palace. In his way thither, he was met by one of the pages, who told him the prince desired to see him immediately. He found the prince alone. Advancing to meet him, with great effort in his manner to command his emotion, the prince said, "I have sent for you, count Albert, to give you a proof that the friendship of princes, is not, in every instance, so vain a thing as it is commonly believed to be. Mine for you has withstood strong temptation:—you come from the countess Christina, I believe, and can measure, better than any one, the force of that temptation. Know that in your absence it has been my misfortune to become passionately enamoured of your destined bride; but I have never, either by word or look, directly or indirectly, infringed on what I felt to be due to your friendship and to my own honour. Never did I give her the slightest intimation of my passion, never attempted to take any of the advantages which my situation might be supposed to give."

Count Albert had just received the most convincing testimony corroborating these assertions—he was going to express his sense of the conduct of his prince, and to explain his own situation, but the

prince went on speaking with the eagerness of one who fears his own resolution, who has to say something which he dreads that he should not be able to resume or finish, if his feelings should meet with any interruption.

"And now let me, as your friend and prince, congratulate you, count Albert, on your happiness; and, with the same sincerity, I request that your marriage may not be delayed, and that you will take your bride immediately away from my father's court. Time will, I hope, render her presence less dangerous; time will, I hope, enable me to enjoy your society in safety; and when it shall become my duty to govern this state, I shall hope for the assistance of your talents and integrity, and shall have deserved, in some degree, your attachment."

The count, in the strongest manner, expressed his gratitude to his prince for these proofs of his regard, given under circumstances the most trying to the human heart. He felt, at this instant, exquisite pleasure in revealing to his highness the truth, in showing him that the sacrifice he had so honourably, so generously determined to make, was not requisite, that their affections were fixed on different objects, that before count Albert had any idea of the prince's attachment to the lady Christina, it had been his ardent wish, his determination, at all hazards, to break off engagements which he could not fulfil.

The prince was in rapturous joy—all his ease of manner towards his friend returned instantly, his affection and confidence flowed in full tide. Proud of himself, and happy in the sense of the imminent

danger from which he had escaped, he now described the late conflicts his heart had endured with the eloquence of self-complacency, and with that sense of relief which is felt in speaking on the most interesting of all subjects to a faithful friend from whom a secret has been painfully concealed. The prince now threw open every thought, every feeling of his mind. Count Altenberg rose higher than ever in his favour: not the temporary favourite of the moment—the companion of pleasures—the flatterer of present passion or caprice; but the friend in whom there is certainty of sympathy, and security of counsel. The prince, confiding in count Albert's zeal and superior powers, now took advice from him, and made a confidant no longer of M. de Tourville. The very means which that intriguing courtier had taken to undermine the count thus eventually proved the cause of establishing more firmly his credit. The plain sincerity of the count, and the generous magnanimity of the lady, at once disconcerted and destroyed the artful plan of the diplomatist. M. de Tourville's disappointment when he heard from the countess Christina the result of her interview with count Albert, and the reproaches which in that moment of vexation he could not refrain from uttering against the lady for having departed from their plan, and having trusted to the count, unveiled to her the meanness of his character and the baseness of his designs. She plainly saw that his object had been not to assist her love, but to gratify his own hate: not merely to advance his own fortune—that, she knew, must be the first object of every courtier—but "to

rise upon the ruins of another's fame;" and this, she determined, should never be accomplished by her assistance, or with her connivance. She put count Albert on his guard against this insidious enemy.

The count, grateful to the lady, yet biassed neither by hope of her future favour nor by present desire to please, firm in honour and loyalty to the prince who asked his counsel, carefully studied the character of the countess Christina, to determine whether she possessed the qualities fit for the high station to which love was impatient that she should be elevated. When he was convinced that her character was such as was requisite to ensure the private happiness of the prince, to excite him to the attainment of true glory—then, and not till then, he decidedly advised the marriage, and zealously offered any assistance in his power to promote the union. The hereditary prince about this time became, by the death of his father, sole master of his actions; but it was not prudent to begin his government with an act in open defiance of the prejudices or customs of his country. By these customs, he could not marry any woman under the rank of a princess; and the emperor had been known to refuse conferring this rank, even on favourites of powerful potentates, by whom he had been in the most urgent manner solicited. Count Albert Altenberg stood high in the esteem of the emperor, at whose court he had spent some time; and his prince now commissioned him to go to Vienna, and endeavour to move the emperor to concede this point in his favour. This embassy was a new and

terrible delay to the count's anxious desire of returning to England. But he had offered his services, and he gave them generously. He repaired to Vienna, and persevering through many difficulties, at length succeeded in obtaining for the countess the rank of princess. The attachment of the prince was then publicly declared—the marriage was solemnized—all approved of the prince's choice—all—except the envious, who never approve of the happy. Count Albert received, both from the prince and princess, the highest marks of esteem and favour. M. de Tourville, detected and despised, retired from court in disgrace and in despair.

Immediately after his marriage, the prince declared his intention of appointing count Albert Altenberg his prime minister; but before he entered on the duties of his office, and the very moment that he could be spared by his prince, he asked and obtained permission to return to England, to the lady on whom his affections were fixed. The old count, his father, satisfied with the turn which affairs had taken, and gratified in his utmost ambition by seeing his son minister of state, now willingly permitted him to follow his own inclination in the choice of a wife. "And," concluded count Albert, "my father rejoices that my heart is devoted to an Englishwoman: having himself married an English lady, he knows, from experience, how to appreciate the domestic merits of the ladies of England; he is prepossessed in their favour. He agrees, indeed, with foreigners of every nation, who have had opportunities of judg-

ing, and who all allow that—next to their own countrywomen—the English are the most charming and the most amiable women in the world."

When the count had finished, and had pronounced this panegyric of a nation, while he thought only of an individual, he paused, anxious to know what effect his narrative had produced on Mr. and Mrs. Percy.

He was gratified both by their words and looks, which gave him full assurance of their entire satisfaction.

"And since he had done them the honour of appealing to their opinion, they might be permitted to add their complete approbation of every part of his conduct, in the difficult circumstances in which he had been placed. They were fully sensible of the high honour that such a man as count Altenberg conferred on their daughter by his preference. As to the rest, they must refer him to Caroline herself." Mr. Percy said with a grave voice, but with a smile from which the count augured well, "that even for the most advantageous and, in his opinion, desirable connexion, he would not influence his daughter's inclination.—Caroline must decide."

The count, with all the persuasive tenderness and energy of truth and love, pleaded his own cause, and was heard by Caroline with a modest, dignified, ingenuous sensibility, which increased his passion. Her partiality was now heightened by her conviction of the strength and steadiness of his attachment; but whilst she acknowledged how high he stood in her esteem, and did not attempt to conceal the impres-

sion he had made on her heart, yet he saw that she dreaded to yield to the passion which must at last require from her the sacrifice of her home, country, friends, and parents. As long as the idea of being united to him was faint and distant, so was the fear of the sacrifices that union might demand; but now, the hope, the fear, the certainty, at once pressed on her heart with the most agitating urgency. The count as far as possible relieved her mind by the assurance that though his duty to his prince and his father, that though all his private and public connexions and interests obliged him to reside some time in Germany, yet that he could occasionally visit England, that he should seize every opportunity of visiting a country he preferred to all others; and, for his own sake, he should cultivate the friendship of her family, as each individual was in different ways suited to his taste and stood high in his esteem.

Caroline listened with fond anxiety to these hopes: she was willing to believe in promises which she was convinced were made with entire sincerity; and when her affections had been wrought to this point, when her resolution was once determined, she never afterwards tormented the man to whom she was attached with wavering doubts and scruples.

Count Altenberg's promise to his prince obliged him to return at an appointed time. Caroline wished that time had been more distant; she would have delighted in spending the spring-time of love in the midst of those who had formed till now all the happiness of her life—with her parents, to whom she owed every thing, to whom her gratitude was as warm, as

strong, as her affection—with her beloved sister, who had sympathized so tenderly in all her sorrow, and who ardently wished to have some time allowed to enjoy her happiness. Caroline felt all this, but she felt too deeply to display feeling: sensible of what the duty and honour of count Altenberg demanded, she asked for no delay.

The first letters that were written to announce her intended marriage were to Mrs. Hungerford and to lady Jane Granville. And it may be recorded as a fact rather unusual, that Caroline was so fortunate as to satisfy all her friends: not to offend one of her relations, by telling any too soon, or too late, of her intentions. In fact, she made no secret, no mystery, where none was required by good sense or propriety. Nor did she communicate it under a strict injunction of secrecy to twenty friends, who were afterwards each to be angry with the other for having, or not having, told that of which they were forbidden to speak. The order of precedency in Caroline's confidential communications was approved even by all the parties concerned.

Mrs. Hungerford was at Pembroke with her nieces when she received Caroline's letter: her answer was as follows.

"MY DEAR CHILD,

"I am ten years younger since I read your letter, therefore do not be surprised at the quickness of my motions—I shall be with you at the Hills, in town, or wherever you are, as soon as it is possible, after you let me know when and where I can embrace you

and our dear count. At the marriage of my niece, lady Mary Barclay, your mother will remember that I prayed to Heaven I might live to see my beloved Caroline united to the man of her choice—I am grateful that this blessing, this completion of all my earthly hopes and happiness, has been granted to me.

"M. Elizabeth Hungerford."

The answer of lady Jane Granville came next.

"*Confidential.*

"This is the last *confidential* letter I shall ever be able to write to you—for a married woman's letters, you know, or you will soon know, become, like all the rest of her property, subject to her husband—excepting always the secrets of which she was possessed before marriage, which do not go into the common stock, if she be a woman of honour—so I am safe with you, Caroline; and any erroneous opinion I might have formed, or any hasty expressions I may have let drop, about a certain count, you will bury in oblivion, and never let me see you look even as if you recollected to have heard them.

"You were right, my dear, in that whole business —I was wrong; and all I can say for myself is, that I was wrong with the best possible intentions. I now congratulate you with as sincere joy as if this charming match had been made by my advice, under my *chaperonage*, and by favour of that *patronage of fashion*, of which I know your father thinks that both my *head* and *heart* are full; there he is only half right, after all: so do not let him be too proud. I

will not allow that my heart is ever wrong, certainly not where you are concerned.

"I am impatient, my dear Caroline, to see your count Altenberg. I heard him most highly spoken of yesterday by a Polish nobleman, whom I met at dinner at the duke of Greenwich's. Is it true, that the count is to be prime minister of the prince of * * *? The duke of Greenwich asked me this question, and I promised I would let his grace know from *the best possible* authority—but I did not *commit* you.

"And now, my dear, for my own interest. If you have really and cordially forgiven me, for having so rashly said, upon a late occasion, that I would never forgive you, prove to me your placability and your sincerity—use your all-powerful influence to obtain for me a favour on which I have set my heart. Will you prevail on all your house to come up to town directly, and take possession of mine?—Count Altenberg, you say, has business to transact with ministers; whilst this is going on, and whilst the lawyers are settling preliminaries, where can you all be better than with me? I hope I shall be able to make Mr. and Mrs. Percy feel as much at home, in one hour's time, as I found myself the first evening after my arrival at the Hills some years ago.

"I know the Hungerfords will press you to go to them, and Alfred and Mrs. A. Percy will plead *nearest of kin*—I can only throw myself upon your generosity. The more inducements you have to go to other friends, the more I shall feel gratified and obliged, if you favour me with this proof of your pre-

ference and affection. Indulge me, my dear Caroline, perhaps, for the last time, with your company, of which, believe me, I have, though a woman of the world, sense and feeling sufficient fully to appreciate the value. Yours (at all events), ever and affectionately,

J. GRANVILLE.

Spring-Gardens—Tuesday.

"P.S.—I hope your father is of my opinion, that weddings, especially among persons of a certain rank of life, ought always to be *public*,—attended by the friends and connexions of the families, and conducted with something of the good old aristocratic formality, pomp, and state, of former times."

Lady Jane Granville's polite and urgent request was granted. Caroline and all her family had pleasure in showing lady Jane that they felt grateful for her kindness.

Mr. Temple obtained permission from lord Oldborough to accompany the Percys to town; and it was settled that Rosamond and Caroline should be married on the same day.

But the morning after their arrival in London, Mr. Temple appeared with a countenance very unlike that which had been seen the night before—Hope and joy had fled!—All pale and in consternation!—Rosamond was ready to die with terror. She was relieved when he declared that the evil related only to his fortune. The place that had been promised to him was given, indeed—the word of promise was kept to the ear—but by some management, either

of lord Skreene's or lord Skrimpshire's, the place had been *saddled* with a pension to the widow of the gentleman by whom it had been previously held, and the amount of this pension was such as to reduce the profits of the place to an annual income by no means sufficient to secure independence, or even competence, to a married man. Mr. Temple knew that when the facts were stated to lord Oldborough, his lordship would, by his representations to the highest authority, obtain redress; but the secretary was unwilling to implicate him in this disagreeable affair, unwilling to trouble his tranquillity again with court-intrigues, especially, as Mr. Temple said, where his own personal interest alone was concerned—at any rate this business must delay his marriage. Count Altenberg could not possibly defer the day named for his wedding—despatches from the continent pressed the absolute necessity of his return. Revolutionary symptoms had again appeared in the city—his prince could not dispense with his services. His honour was at stake.

Mr. Temple did not attempt or pretend to bear his disappointment like a philosopher: he bore it like a lover, that is to say, very ill. Rosamond, poor Rosamond, rallied him with as much gaiety as she could command with a very heavy heart.

After a little time for reflection, her good sense, which, when called upon to act, never failed to guide her conduct, induced her to exert decisive influence to prevent Mr. Temple from breaking out into violent complaints against those in power, by whom he had been ill treated.

The idea of being married on the same day with her sister, she said, after all, was a mere childish fancy, for which no solid advantage should be hazarded; therefore she conjured her lover, not in heat of passion to precipitate things, but patiently to wait—to return and apply to lord Oldborough, if he should find that the representations he had already made to lord Skrimpshire failed of effect. With much reluctance Mr. Temple submitted to postpone the day promised for his marriage; but both Mr. and Mrs. Percy so strongly supported Rosamond's arguments, that he was compelled to be prudent. Rosamond now thought only of her sister's approaching nuptials. Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer arrived in town, and all Mr. and Mrs. Percy's troops of friends gathered round them for this joyful occasion.

Lady Jane Granville was peculiarly happy in finding that Mr. Percy agreed with her in opinion that marriages ought to be publicly solemnized; and rejoiced that, when Caroline should be led to the altar by the man of her choice, she would feel that choice sanctioned by the approbation of her assembled family and friends. Lady Jane justly observed, that it was advantageous to mark as strongly as possible the difference between marriages with consent of friends, and clandestine unions, which from their very nature must always be as private as possible.

If some little love of show, and some aristocratic pride of family, mixed with lady Jane's good sense upon this as upon most other occasions, the truly philosophic will be inclined to pardon her; for they

best know how much of all the principles which form the strength and happiness of society, depends upon mixed motives.

Mr. and Mrs. Percy, grateful to lady Jane, and willing to indulge her affection in its own way, gratified her with permission to arrange the whole ceremonial of the wedding.

Now that Rosamond's marriage was postponed, she claimed first right to be her sister's bridemaid; lady Florence Pembroke, Mrs. Hungerford's niece, had made her request, and obtained Caroline's promise, to be the second; and these were all that Caroline desired to have: but lady Jane Granville evidently wished for the honour and glory of lady Frances Arlington for a third, because she was niece to the duke of Greenwich; and besides, as lady Jane pleaded, "though a little selfish, she really would have been generous, if she had not been spoiled: to be sure, she cared in general for no one but herself; yet she absolutely showed particular interest about Caroline. *Besides*, her ladyship had set her heart upon the matter, and never would forgive a disappointment of a fancy." Her ladyship's request was granted. Farther than this affair of the three bridemaids we know not—there is no record concerning who were the bridemen. But before we come to the wedding-day, we think it necessary to mention, for the satisfaction of the prudent part of the world, that the settlements were duly signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of proper witnesses.

At the moment of recording this fact, we are well aware that as much as we shall gain in the esteem of

the old, we shall lose in the opinion of the young. We must therefore be satisfied with the nod of approbation from parents, and must endure the smile of scorn from lovers. We know that

> " Jointure, portion, gold, estate,
> Houses, household-stuff, or land,
> The low conveniences of fate,
> Are Greek no lovers understand."

We regret that we cannot gratify some of our courteous readers with a detailed account of the marriage of Caroline and count Altenberg, with a description of the wedding-dresses, or a list of the company, who, after the ceremony, partook of an elegant collation at lady Jane Granville's house in Spring-Gardens. We lament that we cannot even furnish a paragraph in honour of count Altenberg's equipage.

After all their other friends had made their congratulations, had taken leave of Caroline, and had departed, Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer still lingered.

" I know, my love," said Mrs. Hungerford, " I ought to resign you, in these last moments, to your parents, your brothers, your own Rosamond ; yet I have some excuse for my selfishness—they will see you again, it is to be hoped, often——But I !—that is not in the course of nature: the blessing I scarcely could have expected to live to enjoy has been granted to me. And now that I have seen you united to one worthy of you, one who knows your value, I am content—I am grateful. Farewell, again and again, my beloved Caroline, may every——"

Tears spoke the rest. Turning from Caroline, she leaned on count Altenberg's arm; as he conducted her to her carriage, "You are a happy man, count Altenberg," said she: "forgive me, if I am not able to congratulate you as I ought——Daughter Mortimer, you know my heart—speak for me, if you can."

Count Altenberg was more touched by this strong affection for Caroline than he could have been by any congratulatory compliments to himself. After the departure of Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer, came the separation so much dreaded by all the family, for which all stood prepared. Despising and detesting the display of sensibility, they had fortified themselves for this moment with all their resolution, and each struggled to repress their own feelings.

Count Altenberg had delayed till the last moment. It was now necessary that they should set out. Caroline, flushed crimson to the very temples one instant, and pale the next, commanded with the utmost effort her emotion; Rosamond, unable to repress hers, clung to her sister weeping. Caroline's lips quivered with a vain attempt to speak—she could only embrace Rosamond repeatedly, and then her mother. Her father pressed her to his bosom—blessed her—and then drawing her arm within his led her to her husband.

As they passed though the hall, the faithful housekeeper, and the old steward, who had come from the country to the marriage, pressed forward, in hopes of a last look. Caroline stopped, and took

leave of each. She was able, though with difficulty, to speak, and she thanked them for all the services and kindness she had received from them from childhood to this hour: then her father led her to the carriage.

"It is the order of nature, my dear child," said he: "we are fond but not selfish parents; your happiness is gained by the sacrifice, and we can part with you."

CHAPTER XL.

Some sage moralist has observed that even in the accomplishment of our most ardent wishes in this world, there is always some circumstance that disappoints our expectations, or mixes somewhat of pain with the joy. "This is perfectly true," thought Rosamond. "How often have I wished for Caroline's marriage with count Altenberg—and now she is married—really married—and gone!"

It had passed with the rapidity of a dream: the hurry of joy, the congratulations—all, all was over; and in sad silence, Rosamond felt the reality of her loss—by Rosamond doubly felt at this moment, when all her own affairs were in great uncertainty. Mr. Temple was still unable to obtain the performance of the promise which had been made him of *remuneration* and *competent provision.* He had gone through, in compliance with the advice of his friends, the mortification of reiterating vain memorials and applications to the duke of Greenwich, lord Skrimp-

shire, lord Skreene, and Mr. Secretary Cope. The only thing which Mr. Temple refused to do was to implicate lord Oldborough, or to disturb him on the subject. He had spent some weeks with his old master in his retirement without once adverting to his own difficulties, still hoping that on his return to town a promise would be fulfilled, which lord Skreene had given him, that "the affair should in his absence be settled to his satisfaction." But on his return to town, his lordship found means of evasion and delay, and threw the blame on others; the course of memorials and representations was to be recommenced. Mr. Temple's pride revolted, his love was in despair —and frequently, in the bitterness of disappointment, he reiterated to his friend Alfred his exclamations of regret and self-reproach, for having quitted, from pique and impatience of spirit, a profession where his own perseverance and exertions would infallibly have rendered him by this time independent. Rosamond saw with sympathy and anguish the effect which these feelings of self-reproach, and hope delayed, produced on Mr. Temple's spirits and health. His sensibility, naturally quick, and rendered more acute by disappointment, seemed now continually to draw from all characters and events, and even from every book he opened, a moral against himself, some new illustration or example, which convinced him more and more of the folly of being a dependent on the great. He was just in this repentant mood, when one morning, at Mrs. Alfred Percy's, Rosamond heard him sigh deeply several times, as he was reading with great attention. She could not forbear asking what

it was that touched him so much. He put the book into her hands, pointing to the following passage. "The whole of this letter,"* said he, "is applicable to me and excellent; but this really seems as if it had been written for me or by me."

She read.

"I was a young man, and did not think that men were to die, or to be turned out * * * * * * What was to be done now?—No money, my former patron in disgrace! friends that were in favour not able to serve me, or not willing; that is, cold, timid, careful of themselves, and indifferent to a man whose disappointments made him less agreeable * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * I languished on for three long melancholy years, sometimes a little elated; a smile, a kind hint, a downright promise, dealt out to me from those in whom I had placed some silly hopes, now and then brought a little refreshment, but that never lasted long; and to say nothing of the agony of being reduced to talk of one's own misfortunes and one's wants, and that basest and lowest of all conditions, the slavery of borrowing, to support an idle useless being—my time, for those three years, was unhappy beyond description. What would I have given then for a profession! * * * * * * * * * * any useful profession is infinitely better than a thousand patrons."

To this Rosamond entirely acceded, and admired the strong good sense of the whole letter; but she observed to Mr. Temple, that it was very unjust, not

* Letter from Mr. Williams (secretary to lord chancellor West) to Mrs. Williams.

only to himself, but what was of much more consequence, to *her*, to say that all this applied exactly to his case. "Did Mr. Temple," she asked, "mean to assert that she could esteem a man who was *an idle useless being*, a mere dependent on great men, a follower of courts? Could such a man have recommended himself to her father?—Could such a man ever have been the chosen friend of her brother Alfred?

"It was true," she acknowledged, "that this friend of her brother had made one mistake in early life; but who is there that can say that he has not in youth or age committed a single error? Mr. Temple had done one silly thing, to be sure, in quarrelling with his profession; but he had suffered, and had made amends for this afterwards, by persevering application to literature. There he had obtained the success he deserved. Gentlemen might sigh and shake their heads, but could any gentlemen deny this? Could it be denied that Mr. Temple had distinguished himself in literature? Could any person deny that a political pamphlet of his recommended him to the notice of lord Oldborough, one of the ablest statesmen in England, who made him his secretary, and whose esteem and confidence he afterwards acquired by his merit, and continued, in place and out, to enjoy?—Will any gentleman deny this?" Rosamond added, that, "in defence of *her brother's friend*, she could not help observing, that a man who had obtained the esteem of some of the first persons of their day, who had filled an employment of trust, that of secretary to a minister, with fidelity and credit, who had pub-

lished three celebrated political pamphlets, and two volumes of moral and philosophical disquisitions, which, as she had heard the bookseller say, were become *stock books*, could not deserve to be called an *idle useless being*. To be born and die would not make all his history—no, such a man would at least be secure of honourable mention in the Biographia Britannica as a writer—moral—political—metaphysical."

But while Rosamond thus did her utmost to support the spirits of her lover, her own began to fail; her vivacity was no longer natural: she felt every day more and more the want of her sister's sympathy and strength of mind.

Letters from abroad gave no hope of Caroline's return—delay after delay occurred. No sooner had quiet been restored to the country than count Altenberg's father was taken ill, and his illness, after long uncertainty, terminated fatally.

After the death of his father, the count was involved in a variety of domestic business, which respect for the memory of his parent and affection for surviving relations could not allow him to leave. When all this had been arranged, and when all seemed preparing for their return to England, just when Rosamond hoped that the very next letter would announce the day when they would set out, the French declared war, the French troops were actually in motion—invasion was hourly expected—it was necessary to prepare for the defence of the country. At such a moment the count could not

quit his country or his prince. And there was Caroline, in the midst of a country torn by civil war, and in the midst of all the horrors of revolution.

About this time, to increase the anxiety of the Percy family, they learned that Godfrey was taken prisoner on his way home from the West Indies. The transport in which his division of the regiment had embarked had been separated from her convoy by a gale of wind in the night, and it was apprehended that she had been taken by the enemy. Godfrey's family hoped for a moment that this might be a false alarm; but after enduring the misery of reading contradictory paragraphs and contests of the newspaper writers with each other for several successive days, it was at last too clearly established and confirmed, by official intelligence, that the transport was taken by a Dutch ship.

In the midst of these accumulating causes of anxiety, trials of another kind were preparing for this family, as if Fortune was determined to do her utmost to ruin and humble those who had despised her worshippers, struggled against her influence, and risen in the world in defiance of her power. To explain the danger which now awaited them, we must return to their old family enemy, sir Robert Percy. Master of Percy-hall, and of all that wealth could give, he could not enjoy his prosperity, but was continually brooding on plans of avarice and malice.

Since his marriage with miss Falconer, sir Robert Percy's establishment had become so expensive as to fret his temper continually. His tenants had had more and more reason to complain of their landlord,

who, when any of his farms were out of lease, raised his rents exorbitantly, to make himself amends, as he said, for the extravagance of his wife. The tenants, who had ever disliked him as the successor and enemy of their *own* good and beloved landlord, now could not and attempted not to conceal their aversion. This renewed and increased the virulence of his dislike to *our* branch of the Percys, who, as he knew, were always compared *with him and his,* and seemed to be for ever present to the provoking memories of these tenants.

Sir Robert was disappointed hitherto in the hope for which he married, the hope of an heir, who should prevent the estate from returning to those from whom it had been wrested by his arts. Envy at seeing the rising and prosperous state of *those Percys,* who, in spite of their loss of fortune, had made their way up again through all obstacles, combined to increase his antipathy to his relations. His envy had been exasperated by the marriage of Caroline to count Altenberg, and by the high reputation of her brother, He heard their praises till his soul sickened; and he was determined to be their destruction. He found a willing and able assistant in Sharpe the attorney, and they soon devised a plan worthy of their conjoined malice. At the time when sir Robert had come into possession of Percy-hall, after the suit had been decided in his favour, he had given up all claim to the rents which Mr. Percy had received during the years which he had held the estate, and had accepted in lieu of them the improvements which Mr. Percy had made on the estate, and a considerable quantity

of family plate and a collection of pictures. But now sir Robert wrote to Mr. Percy without adverting to this agreement, and demanding from him the amount of all the rents which he had received, deducting only a certain sum on his own valuation for improvements. The plate and pictures, which he had left at Percy-hall, sir Robert said he was willing to take in lieu of the debt; but an immense balance against Mr. Percy remained. In technical phrase, we believe, he warned Mr. Percy that Sharpe his attorney had directions to commence a suit against him for the *mesne rents*. The amount of the claim was such as it was absolutely impossible that Mr. Percy could pay, even by the sale of every thing he possessed in the world. If this claim were established, his family would be reduced to beggary, he must end his days in a prison, or fly his country, and take refuge in some foreign land. To this last extremity sir Robert hoped to reduce him. In reply, however, to his insolent letter, he was surprised, by receiving from Mr. Percy a calm and short reply, simply saying that his son Alfred would take the proper steps to bring the affair to trial, and that he must submit to the decision of the law, whatever that might be. Sir Robert was mortified to the quick by finding that he could not extort from his victim one concession or complaint, nor one intemperate expression.

But however calm and dignified was Mr. Percy's conduct, it could not be without the greatest anxiety that he awaited the event of the trial, which was to decide his future fate, and that of his whole family.

The length of time which must elapse before the

trial could come on was dreadful. Suspense was the evil they found most difficult to endure. Suspense may be easily borne by persons of an indolent character, who never expect to rule their destiny by their own genius; but to those who feel themselves possessed of energy and abilities to surmount obstacles and to brave dangers, it is torture to remain passive—to feel that prudence, virtue, genius, avail them not—that while rapid ideas pass in their imagination, time moves with an unaltered pace, and compels them to wait, along with the herd of vulgar mortals, for knowledge of futurity.

CHAPTER XLI.

What has become all this time of the Falconer family?

Since the marriage of miss Falconer with sir Robert Percy, all intercourse between the Falconers and our branch of the Percy family had ceased; but one morning, when Alfred was alone, intently considering his father's case, and the legal difficulties which threatened him, he was surprised by a visit from commissioner Falconer. The commissioner looked thin, pale, and wretched. He began by condoling with Alfred on their mutual family misfortunes. Alfred received this condolence with politeness, but with a proud consciousness that, notwithstanding his father's present difficulties and the total loss of fortune with which he was threat-

ened, neither his father nor any individual in his family would change places with any one of the Falconers; since nothing dishonourable could be imputed to Mr. Percy, and since none of his misfortunes had been occasioned by any imprudence of his own.

A deep sigh from the commissioner, at the moment these thoughts were passing in Alfred's mind, excited his compassion, for he perceived that the same reflections had occurred to him.

After taking an immoderate quantity of snuff, the commissioner went on, and disclaimed in strong terms all knowledge of his son-in-law sir Robert's cruel conduct to his cousin. The commissioner said that sir Robert Percy had, since his marriage with Bell Falconer, behaved very ill, and had made his wife show great ingratitude to her own family—that in Mrs. Falconer's distress, when she and Georgiana were most anxious to retire from town for a short time, and when Mrs. Falconer had naturally looked to the house of her married daughter as a sure asylum, the doors of Percy-hall had been actually shut against her, sir Robert declaring that he would not be involved in the difficulties and disgrace of a family who had taken him in to marry a girl without any fortune.

Alfred was perfectly convinced, both from the cordial hatred with which the commissioner now spoke of his son-in-law, and from Mr. Falconer's disposition, that he had nothing to do with the cruel measures which sir Robert had taken against his father. Commissioner Falconer was not a malevo-

lent, but a weak man—incapable of being a disinterested friend—equally incapable of becoming a malicious enemy. The commissioner now proceeded to his own affairs, and to the business of his visit. He said that he had been disappointed in all his hopes from the Greenwich party, that when *that sad business of Mrs. Falconer's came out*, they had seized this as a pretence for *dropping* him altogether—that when they had, by lord Oldborough's retreat from office, obtained every thing they wanted, and had no more occasion for assistance or information, they had shamefully forgotten or disowned all their former promises to Cunningham. They had refused to accredit him at the court of Denmark, refused even to defray the expences of his journey thither, which, in the style he had thought it necessary for an ambassador to travel in, had been considerable. Upon the hopes held out, he had taken a splendid house in Copenhagen, and had every day, for some weeks, been in expectation of the arrival of his credentials. When it was publicly known that another ambassador was appointed, Cunningham's creditors became clamorous; he contrived to escape from Copenhagen in the night, and was proceeding *incog.* in his journey homewards, when he was stopped at one of the small frontier towns, and was there actually detained in prison for his debts.

The poor commissioner produced his son's letter, giving an account of his detention, and stating that, unless the money he had raised in Copenhagen was paid, there was no hope of his being liberated—he must perish in a foreign jail.

We spare the reader the just reproaches which the unhappy father, at this moment, uttered against the son's duplicity. It was his fate, he said, to be ruined by those for whom he had been labouring and planning, night and day, for so many years. "And now," concluded Mr. Falconer, "here am I, reduced to sell almost the last acre of my paternal estate—I shall literally have nothing left but Falconer-court, and my annuity!—Nothing!——But it must be done, ill as he has used me, and impossible as it is, ever, even at this crisis, to get the truth from him—I must pay the money: he is in jail, and cannot be liberated without this sum. I have here, you see, under the hand of the chief magistrate, sufficient proof——I will not, however, trouble you, my dear sir, with showing more of these letters—only it is a comfort to me to speak to one who will listen with some sympathy—Ah! sir, when out of place!—out of favour! —selling one's estate!—how people change!—But I am taking up your time. Since these lands are to be sold, the sooner the better. Your father, you know, is trustee to my marriage-settlements, and, I believe, his consent, his signature, will be necessary —will it not?——I am no lawyer—I really am not clear what *is* necessary—and my solicitor, Mr. Sharpe, I have dismissed: perhaps you will allow me to put the business into your hands?"

Alfred undertook it, and kindly told the commissioner that if he would send him his papers, he would, without putting him to any expence, look them over carefully—have all the necessary releases drawn—and make his title clear to any purchaser who should apply.

The commissioner was full of gratitude for this friendly offer, and immediately begged that he might leave his title-deeds. Accordingly the servant was desired to bring in the box which he had left in the carriage. The commissioner then rose to take leave, but Alfred begged he would stay till he had written a list of the deeds, as he made it a rule never to take charge of any papers, without giving a receipt for them. The commissioner thought this "a superfluous delicacy between friends and relatives;" but Alfred observed that relations would, perhaps, oftener continue friends, if in matters of business they took care always to be as exact as if they were strangers.

The commissioner looked at his watch—said he was in haste—he was going to wait upon lord somebody, from whom, in spite of all his experience, he expected something.

"You will find a list of the deeds, I have a notion," said he, "in the box, Mr. Alfred Percy, and you need only sign it—that will be quite sufficient."

"When I have compared the papers with the list, I will sign it," said Alfred: "my clerk and I will do it as quickly as possible. Believe me, you cannot be in greater haste than I am."

The commissioner, secretly cursing Alfred's accuracy, and muttering something of the necessity for his own punctuality, was obliged to submit. He sat down—the clerk was sent for—the box was opened. The list of the papers was, as Alfred found, drawn out by Buckhurst Falconer; and the commissioner now recollected the time. "Just when

poor Buckhurst," said the father, with a sigh, "was arguing with me against going into the church—at that time, I remember, he was desperately in love with your sister Caroline."

"Why, in truth," said Alfred, smiling, as he read over the scrawled list, "this looks a little as if it were written by a man in love—here's another reason for our comparing the papers and the list."

"Well, well, I took it all upon trust—I am no lawyer—I never looked at them—never opened the box, and am very sorry to be obliged to do it now."

The essential care, either of papers or estate, the commissioner had evermore neglected, while he had all his life been castle-building, or pursuing some phantom of fortune at court. Whilst Alfred was comparing the papers and the list, the commissioner went on talking of the marriage of Caroline with count Altenberg, asking when they expected them to return. It was possible that count Altenberg might be moved to make some remonstrance in favour of Cunningham; and a word or two from him to the duke of Greenwich would do the business. The commissioner longed to hint this to Alfred, but he was so intent upon these bundles of parchment, that till every one of them was counted, it would be in vain to make that attempt: so the commissioner impatiently stood by, while the clerk went on calling over the papers, and Alfred, in equal strains, replying.

"Thank Heaven!" said he to himself, "they have got to the last bundle."

"Bundle eighteen," cried the clerk.

"Bundle eighteen," replied Alfred. "How many numbers does it contain?"

"Six," said the clerk.

"Six!—no, seven, if you please," said Alfred.

"But six in the list, sir."

"I will read them over," said Alfred. "No. 1. Deed of assignment to Filmer Griffin, esq. No. 2. Deed of mortgage to Margaret Simpson, widow. No. 3. Deed of lease and release. No. 4. Lease for a year——"

"No. 4. no such thing—stop, sir—Deed!"

Alfred gave one look at the paper, and starting up, snatched it from the hands of his clerk, with an exclamation of joy, signed the receipt for the commissioner, put it into his hands, locked the box, and sat down to write a letter, all with such rapidity that the commissioner was struck with astonishment and curiosity. Notwithstanding all his impatience to be punctual to his own engagement, he now stood fixed to the spot, and at last began with "My dear Mr. Alfred Percy, may I ask what has happened?"

"My dear commissioner, I have found it—I have found it—the long-lost deed, and I am writing to my father, to tell him. Excuse me—excuse me if I am not able to explain farther at this moment."

The commissioner understood it all too quickly. He saw how it had happened through Buckhurst's carelessness. At the time Buckhurst had been packing up these papers, some of Mr. Percy's had been lying on the table—Buckhurst had been charged not to mix them with his father's; but he was in love, and did not know what he was doing.

The commissioner began three sentences, and left them all unfinished, while Alfred did not hear one word of them: the first was an apology for Buckhurst, the second a congratulation for his good cousin Percy, the third was an exclamation that came from his heart. "Good Heavens! but what will become of my daughter Bell and sir Robert? I do not comprehend quite, my dear sir."

Perceiving that he was not heard by Alfred, the commissioner took up his hat and departed, determining that he would inquire farther from sir Robert's solicitor concerning the probable consequences of the recovery of this deed.

Alfred had no sooner finished his joyful letter to his father than he wrote to sir Robert Percy, informing him of the recovery of the deed, and letting him know that he was ready to show it to whoever sir Robert would send to his house to examine it. He made this offer to put an end at once to all doubts. He trusted, he said, that when sir Robert should be satisfied of the existence and identity of the deed, he would stop his present proceedings for the recovery of the *mesne rents,* and that he would, without obliging his father to have farther recourse to law, restore to him the Percy estate.

To this letter no answer was received for some time. At length Mr. Sharpe called on Alfred, and begged to see the deed. He was permitted to examine it in Alfred's presence. He noted down the date, names of the witnesses, and some other particulars, of which, he observed, it was necessary

he should inform sir Robert, before he could be satisfied as to the identity of the conveyance. Sharpe was particularly close and guarded in his looks and words during this interview; would neither admit nor deny that he was satisfied, and went away leaving nothing certain, but that he would write to sir Robert. Alfred thought he saw that they meant to avoid giving an answer, in order to keep possession some months longer, till another term. He took all the necessary steps to bring the matter to trial immediately, without waiting for any answer from sir Robert. No letter came from him, but Alfred received from his solicitor the following note:

"SIR,

"I am directed by sir Robert Percy to acquaint you, in reply to yours of the 20th instant, that conceiving his title to the Percy estate to be no way affected by the instrument to which you allude therein, he cannot withdraw his present suit for the *mesne rents* that had been already received, if you proceed in an ejectment for the recovery of the aforesaid estate. I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"A. SHARPE.

"*Wednesday.*"

Alfred was surprised and alarmed by this letter. It had never occurred to him as possible that sir Robert and his counsel would attempt to stand a new trial in the face of this recovered deed; this was beyond all he could have conceived even from their effrontery and villany. He consulted Mr. Friend,

who, after considering Sharpe's letter, could not devise what defence they intended to make, as the deed, upon most accurate examination, appeared duly executed, according to the provision of the statute of frauds. Upon the whole, Mr. Friend was of opinion that the letter was meant merely to alarm the plaintiffs, and to bring them to offer or consent to a compromise. In this opinion Alfred was confirmed the next day, by an interview with Sharpe, accidental on Alfred's part, but designed and prepared by the solicitor, who watched Alfred as he was coming out of the courts, and dogged him till he parted from some gentlemen with whom he was walking—then joining him, he said, in a voice which Mr. Allscrip might have envied for its power of setting sense at defiance, "I am happy, Mr. Alfred Percy, to chance to see you to-day; for, with a view to put an end to litigation and difficulties, I had a few words to suggest —premising that I do not act or speak now, in any wise, as or for sir Robert Percy, or with reference to his being my client, nor as a solicitor in this cause, be it understood, but merely and solely as one gentleman to another, upon honour—and not bringing forward any idea to be taken advantage of hereafter, as tending to any thing in the shape of an offer to compromise, which, in a legal point of view, you know, sir, I could not be warranted to hazard for my client, and of consequence, which I hereby declare, I do not in any degree mean."

"Would you be so good, Mr. Sharpe, to state at once what you do mean; for I confess I do not, in any degree, understand you."

"Why, then, sir, what I mean is, simply, and candidly, and frankly, this: that if I could, without compromising the interest of my client, which, as an honest man, I am bound not to do or appear to do, I should wish to put an end to this litigation between relations; and though your father thinks me his enemy, would convince him to the contrary, if he would allow me, and could point out the means of shortening this difference between relations, which has occasioned so much scandal; and moreover, could devise an accommodation, which might be agreeable to both parties, and save you a vast deal of trouble and vexation; possession," added he, laughing, "being nine parts of the law."

Mr. Sharpe paused, as if hoping that something would now be said by Alfred, that might direct him whether to advance or recede; but Alfred only observed, that the end Mr. Sharpe proposed to himself by speaking was to be understood, and that this desirable end he had not yet attained.

"Why, sir, in some cases, one cannot venture to make one's self understood any way but by inuendoes."

"Then, good morning to you, sir—you and I can never understand one another."

"Pardon me, sir, unless you are in a hurry," cried Mr. Sharpe, catching Alfred by the button, "which (when so large an estate, to which you might eventually succeed, is in question) you are too much a man of business to be—in one word, then, for I won't detain you another moment, and I throw myself open, and trust to your honour——"

"You do me honour."

"Put a parallel case. You, plaintiff A——, I, defendant B——. I should, if I were A——, but no way advising it, being B——, offer to divide the whole property, the claim for the *mesne rents* being wholly given up; and that the offer would be accepted, I'd engage upon my honour, supposing myself witnessing the transaction, only just as a gentleman."

"Impossible, sir," cried Alfred, with indignation. "Do you take me for a fool? Do you think I would give up half my father's estate, knowing that he has a right to the whole?"

"Pardon me, sir—I only suggested an A. B. case. But one word more, sir," cried Mr. Sharpe, holding Alfred, who was breaking from him, "for your own—your father's interest: you see this thing quite in a wrong point of view, when you talk of a few months' more or less delay of getting possession, being all there is between us—depend upon it, if it goes to trial, you will never get possession."

"Then, sir, if you think so, you are betraying the interest of your client, in advising me not to let it go to trial."

"Good God! sir: but that is between you and me only."

"Pardon me, sir, it is between you and your conscience."

"Oh! if that's all—my conscience is at ease, when I'm trying to prevent the scandal of litigation between relations: therefore, just let me mention to you for

your private information, what I know sir Robert would not wish to come out before the trial."

"Don't tell it to me, sir—I will not hear it," cried Alfred, breaking from him, and walking on very fast.

Faster still Sharpe pursued. "You'll remember, sir, at all events, that what has been said is not to go farther—you'll not forget."

"I shall never forget that I am a man of honour, sir," said Alfred.

Sharpe parted from him, muttering, "that if he lived to the day of trial, he would repent this."

"And if I live till the day of judgment, I shall never repent it," thought Alfred.

Now fully convinced that sir Robert desired a compromise, and wanted only to secure, while in possession, some portion of that property which he knew the law would ultimately force him to relinquish, Alfred persevered in his course, relieved from the alarm into which he had at first been thrown when he learned that his opponents intended to take defence. Alfred felt assured that they would never let the matter come to trial; but time passed on, and they still persisted. Many of his brother lawyers were not only doubtful, but more inclined to despond than to encourage him as to the event of the trial; several regretted that he had not accepted of Mr. Sharpe's offered compromise. "Half the estate certain, and his father's release from all difficulties, they thought too good offers to have been rejected. He might, as Sharpe had prophesied, have to repent his rejection of that proposal."

Others observed, that though Mr. Alfred Percy was certainly a young man of great talents, and had been successful at the bar, still he was a young lawyer; and it was a bold and hazardous, not to say rash thing, to take upon himself the conduct of a suit against such opponents as Mr. Sharpe and sir Robert Percy, practised in law, hardened in iniquity, and now driven to desperation.

Mr. Friend was the only man who stood steadily by Alfred, and never wavered in his opinion. "Trust to truth and justice," said he; "you did right not to compromise—be firm. If you fail, you will have this consolation—you will have done all that man could do to deserve success."

The day of trial approached. Mr. Friend had hoped, till very late in the business, that the object of their adversaries was only to intimidate, and that they would never let it go to trial: now it was plain they would. But on what grounds? Again and again Mr. Friend and Alfred perused and reperused sir John Percy's deed, and examined the opinions of counsel of the first eminence. Both law and right appeared to be clearly on their side; but it was not likely that their experienced opponents should persist without having some strong resource.

A dread silence was preserved by sir Robert Percy and by Mr. Solicitor Sharpe. They must have some deep design: what it could be, remained to be discovered even till the day of trial.

CHAPTER XLII.

The day of trial arrived—Mr. Percy came up to town, and brought Mrs. Percy and Rosamond with him to his son Alfred's, that they might all be together, and hear as soon as possible their fate.

The trial came on about three o'clock in the afternoon. The court was uncommonly crowded. Mr. Percy, his son Erasmus, and all his friends, and sir Robert and his adherents, appeared on opposite sides of the galleries.

The excellent countenance and gentlemanlike demeanor of Mr. Percy were contrasted with the dark, inauspicious physiognomy of sir Robert, who sat opposite to him, and who was never tranquil one second, but was continually throwing notes to his counsel, beckoning or whispering to his attorney—while convulsive twitches of face and head, snuff-taking, and handkerchief spread frequently to conceal the expression of his countenance, betrayed the malignant flurry of his spirits.

Alfred conducted his father's cause in the most judicious and temperate manner. An attempt had been made by sir Robert to prejudice the public against Mr. Percy by representing him as the descendant of a younger brother, who was endeavouring to dispossess the heir of the elder branch of the family of that estate which belonged to him by right of inheritance. Alfred's first care was to put the court and the jury in full possession of the facts. He stated that "His father, Lewis Percy, plaintiff in this cause, and

Robert Percy, bart. defendant, both descended from sir John Percy, who was their grandfather. Sir John outlived both his sons, who left him two grandsons, Robert was the son of his eldest, and Lewis of his youngest son. Sir John had two estates, one of them paternal, which went in the ordinary course of descent to the representative of the eldest son, being the present sir Robert Percy. Sir John's other estate, in Hampshire, which came to him by his wife, he conveyed, a short time before his death, to his youngest grandson, the present Lewis Percy, who had held undisturbed possession of it for many years. But, in process of time, sir Robert Percy ruined himself by play, and having frequent intercourse with Sharpe, the solicitor, upon some great emergency inquired whether it was not possible to shake the title of his cousin Mr. Percy's estate. He suggested that the conveyance might not be forthcoming; but sir Robert assured him that both his grandfather and the present Mr. Percy were men of business, and that there was little likelihood either that the deeds should be lost, or that there should be any flaw in the title. Afterwards a fire broke out at Percy-hall, which consumed that wing of the house in which were Mr. Percy's papers—the papers were all saved except this deed of conveyance. Mr. Sharpe being accidentally apprized of the loss, conveyed the intelligence to sir Robert. He immediately commenced a suit against his cousin, and had finally succeeded in obtaining a verdict in his own favour, and possession of the Hampshire estate. At the time when Mr. Percy delivered up possession and quitted Percy-

hall, in consideration of the extensive improvements which he had made, and in consideration of his giving up to sir Robert plate, furniture, wine, horses, and equipages, sir Robert had promised to forego whatever claim he might have upon Mr. Percy for the rents which he had received during the time he had held the estate; but, afterwards, sir Robert repented of having made this agreement, broke his promise, and took out a writ against his cousin for the *mesne rents.* They amounted to an immense sum, which Mr. Percy was utterly unable to pay, and he could have had no hope of avoiding ruin had the claim been by law decided against him. By fortunate circumstances, however, he had, while this cause was pending, recovered that lost conveyance, which proved his right to the Hampshire estate. Of this he had apprized sir Robert, who had persisted, nevertheless, in holding possession, and in his claim for the *mesne rents.* The present action was brought by Mr. Percy in resistance of this unjust claim, and for the recovery of his property."

Not one word of invective, of eloquence, of ornament, or of any attempt at pathos, did our barrister mix with this statement. It was his object to put the jury and the court clearly in possession of facts, which, unadorned, he knew would appear stronger than if encumbered by any flowers of oratory.

Having produced the deed, conveying the Hampshire estate to his father, Alfred called evidence to prove the signature of sir John Percy and the handwriting of the witnesses. He farther proved that this conveyance had been formerly seen among his

father's papers at Percy-hall, showed it had been recently recovered from Mr. Falconer's box of papers, and explained how it had been put there by mistake, and he supported this fact by the evidence of commissioner Falconer, father-in-law to the defendant.—Alfred rested his cause on these proofs, and waited, anxious to know what defence the defendant was prepared to make.

To his astonishment and consternation, sir Robert's counsel produced another deed of sir John Percy's, revoking the deed by which sir John had made over his Hampshire estate to his younger grandson, Mr. Percy; it appearing by a clause in the original deed that a power for this purpose had been therein reserved. This deed of revocation was handed to the judge and to the jury, that it might be examined. The two deeds were carefully compared. The nicest inspection could not discover any difference in the signature or seal. When Mr. Friend examined them, he was in dismay. The instrument appeared perfect. Whilst the jury were occupied in this examination, Mr. Friend and Alfred had a moment to consult together.

"We are undone," whispered Mr. Friend, "if they establish this deed of revocation—it sets us aside for ever."

Neither Mr. Friend nor Alfred had any doubt of its being a forgery, but those who had plunged thus desperately in guilt would probably be provided with perjury sufficient to support their iniquity.

"If we had been prepared!" said Mr. Friend: "but how could we be prepared for such a stroke?

Even now, if we had time, we could summon witnesses who would discredit theirs, but——"

"Do not despair," said Alfred: "still we have a chance that their own witnesses may cross each other, or contradict themselves. Falsehood, with all its caution, is seldom consistent."

The trial proceeded. Alfred, in the midst of the fears and sighs of his friends, and of the triumphant smiles and anticipating congratulations of his enemies, continued to keep both his temper and his understanding cool. His attention was fixed upon the evidence produced, regardless of the various suggestions whispered or written to him by ignorant or learned advisers.

William Clerke, the only surviving witness to the deed of revocation produced by sir Robert, was the person on whose evidence the cause principally rested. He was now summoned to appear, and room was made for him. He was upwards of eighty years of age: he came slowly into court, and stood supporting himself upon his staff, his head covered with thin gray hairs, his countenance placid and smiling, and his whole appearance so respectable, so venerable, as to prepossess immediately the jury and the court in his favour.

Alfred Percy could scarcely believe it possible that such a man as this could be the person suborned to support a forgery. After being sworn, he was desired to sit down, which he did, bowing respectfully to the court. Sir Robert Percy's counsel proceeded to examine him as to the points they desired to establish.

"Your name, sir, is William Clerke, is it not?"

"My name is William Clerke," answered the old man, in a feeble voice.

"Did you ever see this paper before?" showing him the deed.

"I did—I was present when sir John Percy signed it—he bid me witness it, that is, write my name at the bottom, which I did, and then he said, 'Take notice, William Clerke, this is a deed, revoking the deed by which I made over my Hampshire estate to my youngest grandson, Lewis Percy.'"

The witness was going on, but the counsel interrupted.

"You saw sir John Percy sign this deed—you are sure of that?"

"I am sure of that."

"Is this sir John Percy's signature?"

"It is—the very same I saw him write; and here is my own name, that he bid me put just there."

"You can swear that this is your handwriting?"

"I can—I do."

"Do you recollect what time sir John Percy signed this deed?"

"Yes; about three or four days before his death."

"Very well, that is all we want of you, Mr. Clerke."

Alfred Percy desired that Clerke should be detained in court, that he might cross-examine him. The defendants went on, produced their evidence, examined all their witnesses, and established all they desired.

Then it came to Alfred's turn to cross-examine the witnesses that had been produced by his adversary.

When William Clerke re-appeared, Alfred regarding him steadfastly, the old man's countenance changed a little; but still he looked prepared to stand a cross-examination. In spite of all his efforts, however, he trembled.

"Oh! you are trembling on the brink of the grave!" said Alfred, addressing him in a low, solemn tone: "pause, and reflect, whilst you are allowed a moment's time. A few years must be all you have to spend in this world. A few moments may take you to another, to appear before a higher tribunal—before that Judge, who knows our hearts, who sees into yours at this instant."

The staff in the old man's hand shook violently.

Sir Robert Percy's counsel interrupted—said that the witness should not be intimidated, and appealed to the court. The judge was silent, and Alfred proceeded, "You know that you are upon your oath—these are possibly the last words you may ever utter—look that they be true. You know that men have been struck dead whilst uttering falsehoods. You are upon your oath—did you see sir John Percy sign this deed?"

The old man attempted in vain to articulate.

"Give him time to recollect," cried the counsel on the opposite side: "give him leave to see the writing now he has his spectacles."

He looked at the writing twice—his head and hands shaking so that he could not fix his spectacles. The question was repeated by the judge. The old man grew pale as death. Sir Robert Percy, just opposite to him, cleared his throat to catch the wit-

ness's attention, then darted at him such a look as only he could give.

"Did I see Sir John Percy sign this deed?" repeated William Clerke: "yes, I did."

"You hear, my lord, you hear," cried Sir Robert's counsel, "the witness says he did—there is no occasion farther to intimidate this poor old man. He is not used to speak before such an audience. There is no need of eloquence—all we want is truth. The evidence is positive. My lord, with your lordship's leave, I fancy we may dismiss him."

They were going to hurry him away, but Alfred Percy said that, with the permission of the court, he must cross-examine that witness farther, as the whole event of the trial depended upon the degree of credit that might be given to his evidence.

By this time the old man had somewhat recovered himself; he saw that his age and reverend appearance still prepossessed the jury in his favour, and from their looks, and from the whispers near him, he learned that his tremor and hesitation had not created any suspicion of guilt, but had been attributed rather to the sensibility of virtue and the weakness of age. And, now that the momentary emotion which eloquence had produced on his mind had subsided, he recollected the bribe that had been promised to him. He was aware that he had already sworn what, if he contradicted, might subject him to be prosecuted for perjury. He now stood obstinately resolved to persevere in his iniquity. The first falsehoods pronounced and believed, the next would be easy.

"Your name is William Clerke, and this," said Alfred (pointing to the witness's signature), "is your handwriting?"

"Yes, I say it is."

"You *can* write then?" (putting a pen into his hand): "be so good as to write a few words in the presence of the court." He took the pen, but after making some fruitless attempts, replied, "I am too old to write—I have not been able to write my name these many years—Indeed! sir, indeed! you are too hard upon one like me. God knows," said he, looking up to Heaven, some thought with feeling, some suspected with hypocrisy—"God knows, sir, I speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. Have you any more questions to put to me? I am ready to tell all I know. What interest have I to conceal any thing?" continued he, his voice gaining strength and confidence as he went on repeating the lesson which he had been taught.

"It was long, a long while ago," he said, "since it had all happened; but thank Heaven, his memory had been spared him, and he remembered all that had passed, the same as if it was but yesterday. He recollected how sir John looked, where he sat, what he said when he signed this deed; and, moreover, he had often before heard of a dislike Sir John had taken to his younger grandson—ay, to that young gentleman's father," looking at Alfred; "and I was very sorry to hear it—very sorry there should be any dispute in the family, for I loved them all," said he, wiping his eyes —"ay, I loved 'em all, and all alike, from the time

they were in their cradles. I remember, too, once, sir John said to me, William Clerke, says he, you are a faithful lad—for I was a lad once——"

Alfred had judiciously allowed the witness to go on as far as he pleased with his story, in the expectation that some exaggeration and contradiction would appear; but the judge now interrupted the old man, observing that this was nothing to the purpose—that he must not take up the time of the court with idle tales, but that if he had any thing more to give in evidence respecting the deed, he should relate it.

The judge was thought to be severe; and the old man, after glancing his eye on the jury, bowed with an air of resignation, and an appearance of difficulty, which excited their compassion.

"We may let him go now, my lord, may not we?" said sir Robert Percy's counsel.

"With the permission of his lordship, I will ask one other question," said Alfred.

Now it should be observed, that after the first examination of this witness, Alfred had heard him say to Mr. Sharpe, "They forgot to bring out what I had to say about the seal." To which Sharpe had replied, "Enough without it."

Alfred had examined the seal, and had observed that there was something underneath it—through a small hole in the parchment he saw something between the parchment and the sealing-wax.

"You were present, I think you say, Mr. Clerke, not only when this deed was signed, but when it was sealed?"

"I was, sir," cried Clerke, eager to bring out this

part of the evidence, as it had been prepared for him by sir Robert; "I surely was; and I remember it particularly, because of a little remarkable circumstance: sir John, God bless him!—I think I see him now——My lord, under this seal," continued the old man, addressing himself to the judge, and putting his shrivelled finger upon the seal, "under this very seal sir John put a sixpence—and he called upon me to observe him doing it—for, my lord, it is my opinion, he thought then of what might come to pass—he had a sort of a foreboding of this day. And now, my lord, order them, if you please, to break the seal—break it before them all—and if there is not the sixpence under it, why this deed is not sir John's, and this is none of my writing, and," cried he, lifting up his hands and eyes, "I am a liar, and perjured."

There was a profound silence. The seal was broken. The sixpence appeared. It was handed in triumph, by sir Robert Percy's counsel, to the jury and to the judge. There seemed to be no longer a doubt remaining in the minds of the jury—and a murmur of congratulations among the partisans of sir Robert seemed to anticipate the verdict.

"'Tis all over, I fear," whispered Friend to Alfred. "Alfred, you have done all that could be done, but they have sworn through every thing—it is over with us."

"Not yet," said Alfred. Every eye turned upon him, some from pity, some from curiosity, to see how he bore his defeat. At length, when there was silence, he begged to be permitted to look at the sixpence. The judge ordered that it should be shown

to him. He held it to the light to examine the date of the coin; he discovered a faint impression of a head on the sixpence, and, upon closer inspection, he made out the date, and showed clearly that the date of the coin was later than the date of the deed: so that there was an absolute impossibility that this sixpence could have been put under the seal of the deed by sir John.

The moment Alfred stated this fact, the counsel on the opposite side took the sixpence, examined it, threw down his brief, and left the court. People looked at each other in astonishment. The judge ordered that William Clerke should be detained, that he might be prosecuted by the crown for perjury.

The old man fell back senseless. Mr. Sharpe and sir Robert Percy pushed their way together out of court, disclaimed by all who had till now appeared as their friends. No farther evidence was offered, so that here the trial closed. The judge gave a short, impressive charge to the jury, who, without withdrawing, instantly gave their verdict in favour of the plaintiff, Lewis Percy—a verdict that was received with loud acclamations, which not even respect to the court could restrain.

Mr. Percy and Alfred hastily shook hands with their friends, and in the midst of universal applause hurried away to carry the good news to Mrs. Percy and Rosamond, who were at Alfred's house, waiting to hear the event of the trial.

Neither Alfred nor Mr. Percy had occasion to speak—the moment Mrs. Percy and Rosamond saw them they knew the event.

"Yes," said Mr. Percy, "our fortune is restored; and doubly happy we are, in having regained it, in a great measure, by the presence of mind and ability of my son."

His mother and sister embraced Alfred with tears of delight. For some moments a spectator might have imagined that he beheld a family in deep affliction. But soon through these tears appeared on the countenance of each individual the radiance of joy, smiles of affection, tenderness, gratitude, and every delightful benignant feeling of the human heart.

"Has any body sent to Mrs. Hungerford and to lady Jane Granville?" said Mr. Percy.

"Yes, yes, messengers were sent off the moment the verdict was given," said Erasmus: "I took care of that."

"It is a pity," said Rosamond, "that Caroline is not here at this moment, and Godfrey."

"It is best as it is," said Mrs. Percy: "we have that pleasure still in store."

"And now, my beloved children," said Mr. Percy, "after having returned thanks to Providence, let me here, in the midst of all of you to whom I owe so large a share of my happiness, sit down quietly for a few minutes to enjoy 'the sober certainty of waking bliss.'"

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE day after the trial brought several happy letters to the Percys. Rosamond called it the day of happy letters, and by that name it was ever after recorded in the family. The first of these letters was from Godfrey, as follows:

"Dear father, mother, brothers, and sisters all! I hope you are not under any anxiety about me, for here I am, safe and sound, and in excellent quarters, at the house of Mynheers Grinderweld, Groensveld, and Slidderschild, Amsterdam, the Dutch merchants who were shipwrecked on our coast years ago! If it had happened yesterday, the thing could not be fresher in their memories. My dear Rosamond, when we laughed at their strange names, square figures, and formal advice to us, if ever we should, by the changes and chances of human events, be reduced to distress, we little thought that I, a prisoner, should literally come to seek shelter at their door. And most hospitably have I been received. National prejudices, which I early acquired, I don't know how, against the Dutch, made me fancy that a Dutchman could think only of himself, and would give nothing for nothing: I can only say from experience, I have been as hospitably treated in Amsterdam as ever I was in London. These honest merchants have overwhelmed me with civilities and substantial services, and still they seem to think they can never do enough

for me. I wish I may ever see them on English ground again. But we have no Percy-hall to receive them in now; and as well as I remember the Hills, we could not conveniently stow more than one at a time. Side by side, as they stood after breakfast, I recollect, at Percy-hall, they would completely fill up the parlour at the Hills.

"I may well be in high spirits to-day; for these good people have just been telling me that the measures they have been taking to get my exchange effected have so far succeeded, they have reason to believe that in a week, or a fortnight at farthest, I shall be under weigh for England.

"In the mean time, you will wonder perhaps how I got here; for I perceive that I have subjected myself to Rosamond's old reproach of never beginning my story at the beginning. My father used to say, half the mistakes in human affairs arise from our *taking for granted;* but I think I may take it for granted that either from the newspapers or from Gascoigne, who must be in England by this time, you have learned that the transport I was on board, with my division of the regiment, parted convoy in the storm of the 18th, in the night, and at daybreak fell in with two Dutchmen. Our brave boys fought as Englishmen always do; but all that is over now, so it does not signify prosing about it. Two to one was too much—we were captured. I had not been five minutes on the Dutchman's deck, when I observed one of the sailors eyeing me very attentively. Presently he came up and asked if my name was not Percy, and if I did not recollect to have seen him be-

fore? He put me in mind of the shipwreck, and told me he was one of the sailors who were harboured in one of my father's outhouses whilst they were repairing the wreck. I asked him what had become of the drunken carpenter, and told him the disaster that ensued in consequence of that rascal's carelessness. My sailor was excessively shocked at the account of the fire at Percy-hall: he thumped his breast till I thought he would have broke his breastbone; and after relieving his mind by cursing and swearing in high Dutch, low Dutch, and English, against the drunken carpenter, he told me there was no use in saying any more, for that he had punished himself.—He was found dead one morning behind a barrel, from which in the night he had been drinking spirits surreptitiously through a straw. Pray tell this to old John, who used always to prophesy that this fellow would come to no good: assure him, however, at the same time, that all the Dutch sailors do not deserve his maledictions. Tell him, I can answer for the poor fellow who recognised me, and who, during the whole passage, never failed to show me and my fellow-prisoners every little attention in his power. When we got to Amsterdam, it was he reminded me of the Dutch merchants, told me their names, which, without his assistance, I might have perished before I could ever have recollected, and showed me the way to their house, and never rested till he saw me well settled.

"You will expect from me some account of this place. You need not expect any, for just as I had got to this line in my letter appeared one who has

put all the lions of Amsterdam fairly out of my head —Mr. Gresham! He has been for some weeks in the country, and has just returned. The Dutch merchants, not knowing of his being acquainted with my family, never mentioned him to me, nor me to him: so our surprise at meeting was great. What pleasure it is in a foreign country, and to a poor prisoner, to see any one from dear England, and one who knows our own friends! I had never seen Mr. Gresham myself, but you have all by your letters made me well acquainted with him. I like him prodigiously, to use a lady's word (not yours, Rosamond). Letters from Mr. Henry were waiting for him here; he has just opened them, and the first news he tells me is, that Caroline is going to be married! Is it possible? Count Altenberg! The last time I heard from you, you mentioned nothing of all this. Some of your letters must have been lost. Pray write again immediately, and do not take it for granted that I shall be at home before a letter reaches me; but give me a full history of every thing up to the present moment. Groensveld is sealing his letters for London, and must have mine now or never. Adieu! Pray write fully: you cannot be too minute for a poor prisoner. Yours affectionately,

"burning with curiosity,

"GODFREY PERCY."

A letter from Mr. Gresham to Mr. Henry farther informed them, that Godfrey's exchange was actually effected, and that he had secured his passage on board a vessel just ready to sail for England.

Next came letters from count Altenberg. Briefly, in the laconic style of a man pressed at once by sudden events and strong feelings, he related that at the siege of the city of * * * * * by the French, early in the morning of the day on which it was expected that the enemy would attempt to storm the place, his prince, while inspecting the fortifications, was killed by a cannon-ball, on the very spot where the count had been standing but a moment before. All public affairs were changed in his country by the death of the prince. His successor, of a weak character, was willing to purchase present ease, and to secure his low pleasures, at any price—ready to give up the honour of his country, and submit to the conqueror—that he had been secretly intriguing with the enemy, had been suspected, and this suspicion was confirmed by his dastardly capitulation when the means of defence were in his power and the spirit of his people eager for resistance.

With indignation, heightened by grief, contrast, and despairing patriotism, count Altenberg had remonstrated in vain—had refused, as minister, to put his signature to the capitulation—had been solicited urgently to concede—offers of wealth and dignities pressed upon him: these he rejected with scorn. Released from all his public engagements by the death of the prince and by the retiring of the princess from court, count Altenberg refused to act as minister, under his successor; and seeing that, under such a successor to the government, no means of serving or saving the country remained, he at once determined to quit it for ever: resolved to live in a free country,

already his own, half by birth and wholly by inclination, where he had property sufficient to secure him independence, sufficient for his own wishes, and for those of his beloved Caroline—a country where he could enjoy better than on any other spot in the whole compass of the civilized world, the blessings of real liberty and of domestic tranquillity and happiness.

His decision made, it was promptly executed. He left to a friend the transacting the sale of his German property, and Caroline concluded his letter with

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"Passports are obtained, every thing ready. Early next week we set out for England; by the first of next month we shall be at HOME."

Then came a letter from lord Oldborough. Some time previous to the trial, surprised at neither seeing Mr. Temple nor hearing of his marriage, his lordship had written to inquire what delayed his promised return. Taking it for granted that he was married, his lordship in the most polite manner begged that he would prevail upon his bride to enliven the retirement of an old statesman by her sprightly company. As the friend of her father he made this request, with a confidence in her hereditary disposition to show him kindness.

In reply to this letter, Mr. Temple told his friend and master what had delayed his marriage, and why he had hitherto forborne to trouble him on the sub-

ject. Lord Oldborough, astonished and indignant, uttered once and but once contemptuous exclamations against the "inconceivable meanness of lord Skrimpshire," and the "infinitely small mind of his grace of Greenwich:" then, without condescending to any communication with inferior powers, his lordship applied directly to the highest authority. The consequence was, that a place double the value of that which had been promised was given to Mr. Temple, and it was to announce his appointment to it that occasioned the present letter from lord Oldborough, enclosing one from Mr. Secretary Cope, who "had it in command to assure his lordship that the delay had arisen solely from the anxious desire of his majesty's ministers to mark their respect for his lordship's recommendation, and their sense of Mr. Temple's merit, by doing more than had been originally proposed. An opportunity, for which they had impatiently waited, had now put it into their power to evince the sincerity of their intentions in a mode which they trusted would prove to the entire satisfaction of his lordship."

The greatest care was taken both in substance and manner to gratify lord Oldborough, whose loss had been felt, and whose value had, upon comparison, increased in estimation.

Rosamond was rewarded by seeing the happiness of the man she loved, and hearing him declare that he owed it to her prudence.

"Rosamond's prudence!—Who ever expected to hear this?" Mr. Percy exclaimed. "And yet the praise is just. So, henceforward, none need ever

despair of grafting prudence upon generosity of disposition and vivacity of temper."

Mr. Temple obtained from Rosamond a promise to be his as soon as her sister Caroline and her brother should arrive.

Lady Jane Granville, who felt the warmest interest in their prosperity, was the first to whom they communicated all this joyful intelligence. Her ladyship's horses had indeed reason to rue this day; for they did more work this day than London horses ever accomplished before in the same number of hours, not excepting even those of the merciless Mrs. John Prevost; for lady Jane found it necessary to drive about to her thousand acquaintance to spread the news of the triumph and felicity of the Percy family.

In the midst of this tumult of joy, Mr. Percy wrote two letters: one was to his faithful old steward, John Nelson, who deserved from his master this mark of regard; the other was to commissioner Falconer, to make him some friendly offers of assistance in his own affairs, and to beg that, through him, his daughter, the unhappy and deserted lady of sir Robert Percy, might be assured that neither Mr. Percy nor any of his family wished to put her to inconvenience; and that far from being in haste to return to Percy-hall, they particularly wished to wait in town for the arrival of Caroline and count Altenberg; and they therefore requested that she would not hasten her removal, from any false idea of their impatience. We said the deserted lady of sir Robert Percy, for sir Robert had fled from the country. On quitting the court after the trial, he took all the ready money

he had previously collected from his tenants, and set out for the continent, leaving a note for his wife, apprizing her "that she would never see him more, and that she had better return to her father and mother, as he had no means left to support her extravagance."

Commissioner Falconer was at this time at Falconer-court, where he had been obliged to go to settle some business with his tenantry, previous to the sale of his land for the redemption of Cunningham. The commissioner's answer to Mr. Percy's letter was as follows:

"I cannot tell you, my dear sir, how much I was touched by the kindness of your letter and conduct—so different from what I have met with from others. I will not cloud your happiness—in which, believe me, I heartily rejoice—by the melancholy detail of all my own sorrows and disappointments; but only answer briefly to your friendly inquiries respecting my affairs.

"And first, for my unfortunate married daughter, who has been in this terrible manner returned upon our hands. She thanks you for your indulgence, on which she will not encroach. Before you receive this, she will have left Percy-hall. She is going to live with a miss Clapham, a great heiress, who wants a fashionable companion and chaperon. Mrs. Falconer became acquainted with her at Tunbridge, and has devised this plan for Arabella. I fear Bell's disposition will not suit such a situation, but she has no other resource.

"Mrs. Falconer and Georgiana have so *over-managed* matters with respect to Petcalf, that it has ended as I long since feared it would, in his breaking off. If Mrs. Falconer had taken my advice, Georgiana might now be completely settled; instead of which she is fitting out for India. She is going, to be sure, in good company; but in my opinion the expence (which, Heaven knows, I can ill afford) will be thrown away like all the rest—for Georgiana has been much worn by late hours, and though still young, has, I fear, lost her bloom, and looks rather old for India.

"I am truly obliged to you, my dear sir, for your friendly offer with respect to Falconer-court, and have in consequence stopped the sale of the furniture. I shall rejoice to have such a good tenant as Mr. Temple. It is indeed much more agreeable to me to let than to sell. The accommodation, as you propose, will put it in my power to release Cunningham, which is my most pressing difficulty.

"As you are the only person in the world now who takes an interest in my affairs, or to whom I can safely unburden my mind, I must, though I know complaint to be useless, relieve my heart by it for a moment. I can safely say, that for the last ten years of my life I have never spent a day *for myself*. I have been continually planning and toiling to advance my family,—not an opportunity has been neglected; and yet from this very family springs all my unhappiness. Even Mrs. Falconer blames me as the cause of that *sad business*, which has disgraced us for ever, and deprived us of all our friends—and has afforded

an excuse for breaking all promises. There are many, whom I will not name, but they are persons now high in office, who have—I may venture to say it to you—used me shamefully ill.

"Many an honest tradesman and manufacturer, to say nothing of men of talents in the liberal professions, I have seen in the course of the last forty years make their own fortunes, and large fortunes, while I have ended worse than I began—have literally been working all my life for others, not only without reward, but without thanks. If I were to begin life again, I certainly should follow your principles, my dear sir, and depend more upon myself, and less upon others, than I have done—But now all is over. Let me assure you, that in the midst of my own misfortunes, I rejoice in your prosperity, and in the esteem and respect with which I hear you and yours spoken of by all.

"Present my affectionate regards and congratulations to Mrs. Percy, and to all your amiable and happy circle. Propriety and feeling for my poor daughter, lady Percy, must prevent my paying at present my personal congratulations to you at Percy-hall; but I trust you will not the less believe in the sincerity of my attachment.

"I am, my dear sir,
"Your obliged and faithful
"Friend and servant,
"T. Falconer.

"P. S.—I have just learnt that the little place I mentioned to Mr. Alfred Percy, when we last met,

is not disposed of. Lord Oldborough's influence, as Mr. Temple well knows, is still all-powerful; and your interest with his lordship, you must be sensible, is greater than that of any other person living, without exception. A word from you would do the business for me. It is but a trifle, which I should once have been ashamed to ask: but it is now a matter of necessity."

The event of the trial, and the restoration of the Percy family to their property, were heard with transports of joy by the old tenantry. They had not needed the effect of contrast, to make them love and feel the value of their good landlord; but certainly sir Robert Percy's tyranny, and all that he had made them suffer for their obstinate fidelity to the *old branch*, had heightened and fortified their attachment. It was now their turn to glory in that honest obstinacy, and with the strong English sense of justice, they triumphed in having the rightful owners restored to their estate, and to the seat of their ancestors.

As the Percy family crossed the well-known bridge at the end of the village, those bells, which had sounded so mournfully, which had been muffled when they quitted their home, now rang out a merry triumphant peal—and it was rung by the hands of the very same persons who had formerly given that proof of attachment to him in his adversity.—Emotion as strong now seized Mr. Percy's heart. At the same spot he jumped out of the carriage, and by the same path along which he had hastened to stop the bell-

ringers, lest they should ruin themselves with sir Robert, he now hastened to see and thank these honest, courageous people. In passing through the village, which had been freshly swept and garnished, the people whom he remembered to have seen in tears following the carriage at their departure were now crowding to their doors with faces bright with smiles. Hats that had never stirred, and backs that had never bent for the *usurper*, were now eager with low bows to mark their proud respect to the true man. There were no noisy acclamations, for all were touched. The voices of the young children, however, were heard, who, as their mothers held them up in their arms, to see the landlord, of whom they had heard so much, offered their little nosegays as the open carriage passed, and repeated blessings on those on whom from their cradles they had heard blessings bestowed by their parents.

The old steward stood ready at the park-gate to open it for his master. His master and the ladies put their hands out of the carriage to shake hands with him, but he could not stand it. He just touched his master's hand. Tears streamed down his face, and turning away without being able to say one word, he hid himself in the porter's lodge.

As they drove up to the house, they saw standing on the steps waiting—and long had he been waiting there, for the first sound of the carriage—Johnson, the butler, who had followed the family to the Hills, and had served them in their fallen fortunes—Johnson was now himself. Before the hall-door, wide open to receive them, he stood, with the livery-servants in due order.

Mrs. Harte, the good old housekeeper, had been sent down to prepare for the reception of the family, and a world of trouble she had had; but all was now right and proper, and she was as active and alert as the youngest of her maidens could have been, in conducting the ladies to their apartments, in showing all the old places, and doing what she called the honours of the *re-installation.* She could have wished to have vented a little of her indignation, and to have told how some things had been left; but her better taste and judgment, and her sense of what would be pleasing to her master and mistress, repressed all recrimination. By the help of frequent recurrence to her snuff-box, in difficulties great, together with much rubbing of her hands, and some bridling of her head, she got through it, without naming those, who should not be thought of, as she observed, on this joyful day.

The happiness of the Percy family was completed by the return of Godfrey, of Caroline, and count Altenberg. Godfrey arrived just as his family were settled at Percy-hall. After his long absence from his home and country, he doubly enjoyed this scene of domestic prosperity. Beloved as Rosamond was by rich and poor in the neighbourhood, and the general favourite of her family, her approaching marriage spread new and universal joy. It is impossible to give an idea of the congratulations, and of the bustle of the various preparations, which were going on at this time at Percy-hall, especially in the lower regions. Even Mrs. Harte's all-regulating genius was insufficient for the exigencies of the times. Indeed, her head and her heart were

now at perpetual variance, continually counteracting and contradicting each other. One moment delighted with the joy and affection of the world below, she would come up to boast of it to her mistress and her young ladies; the next moment she would scold all the people for being out of their wits, and for not minding or knowing a single thing they were doing, or ordered to do, "no more than the babes in the wood;" then proving the next minute and acknowledging that she was "*really quite as bad as themselves*. And no wonder, for the thoughts of miss Rosamond's marriage had turned her head entirely upside down—for she had been at miss Rosamond's christening, held her by proxy, and considered her always as her particular own child, and well she might, for a better, except, perhaps, miss Caroline—I should say *the countess*—never breathed."

The making a *desert* island for miss Rosamond's wedding-dinner was the object which had taken such forcible possession of Mrs. Harte's imagination, that till it was accomplished it was in vain to hope that any other could, in her eyes, appear in any kind of proportion. In the midst of all the sentimental joy above stairs, and in the midst of all the important business of settlements and lawyers, Mrs. Harte was pursuing the settled purpose of her soul, constructing with infinite care, as directed by her Complete English Housekeeper, a *desert island for a wedding*, in a deep china dish, with a mount in the middle, two figures upon the mount, with crowns

on their heads, a knot of rock-candy at their feet, and gravel-walks of *shot comfits*, judiciously intersecting in every direction their dominions.

CHAPTER XLIV.

As soon as it was possible, after his return to Percy-hall, Mr. Percy went to pay his respects to lord Oldborough. He found this great statesman happy in retirement, without any affectation of happiness. There were proofs in every thing about him that his mind had unbent itself agreeably; his powers had expanded upon different objects, building, planting, improving the soil and the people.

He had many tastes, which had long lain dormant, or rather which had been held in subjugation by one tyrant passion. That passion vanquished, the former tastes resumed their activity. The superior strength of his character was shown in his never recurring to ambition. Its vigour was displayed in the means by which he supplied himself not only with variety of occupation, but with variety of motive. Those who best know the human mind must be aware of the difficulty of supplying motive for one accustomed to stimulus of so high a kind as that to which lord Oldborough had been habituated. For one who had been at the head of the government of a great nation, to make for himself objects in the stillness and privacy of a country life required no common talent and energy of soul. The difficulty was

increased to lord Oldborough, for to him the vast resource of a taste for literature was wanting.

The biographer of sir Robert Walpole tells us, that though he had not forgotten his classical attainments, he had little taste for literary occupations. Sir Robert once expressed his regret on this subject to Mr. Fox, in the library at Houghton. "I wish," he said, "I took as much delight in reading as you do; it would be the means of alleviating many tedious hours in my present retirement. But, to my misfortune, I derive no pleasure from such pursuits."

Lord Oldborough felt, but never condescended to complain of that deficiency of general literature, which was caused in him partly by his not having had time for the attainment, and partly by his having formed too low an estimate of the influence and power of literature in the political world. But he now took peculiar delight in recalling the classical studies in which he had in his youth excelled: as Mr. Percy sympathized with him in this taste, there was another point in which they coalesced. Mr. Percy staid with his old friend some days, for he was anxious to give him this proof of attachment, and felt interested in seeing his character develope itself in a new direction, displaying fresh life and strength, and unexpected resource in circumstances, in which statesmen of the most vigorous minds, and of the highest spirit, have been seen to "droop and drowse," to sink into indolence, sensuality, or the horrors of hypochondriacism and superstition.

Lord Oldborough, on his first retiring to Clermont-park, had informed Mr. Percy that he should wish to see him as soon as he had arranged certain papers. He now reminded his lordship of it, and lord Oldborough put into his hands a sketch, which he had been drawing out, of the principal transactions in which he had been engaged during his political career, with copies of his letters to the first public characters of the day in our own and in foreign countries. Even by those who had felt no regard for the man, the letters of such a minister would have been read with avidity; but Mr. Percy perused them with a stronger interest than any which could be created by mere political or philosophical curiosity. He read them with the pleasure which a generous mind takes in admiring that which is good and great, with the delight which a true friend feels in seeing proofs that justify all the esteem he had previously felt. He saw in these original documents, in this history of lord Oldborough's political life, the most perfect consistency and integrity, the most disinterested and enlightened patriotism. When Mr. Percy returned the manuscript to his lordship, he spoke of the satisfaction he must experience in looking back upon this record of a life spent in the service of his country, and observed that he was not surprised that, with such a solid source of self approbation, such indefeasible claims to the gratitude of his countrymen, and such well-earned fame, he should be, as he appeared, happy in retirement.

"I am happy, and, I believe, principally from the cause you have mentioned," said lord Oldborough,

who had a mind too great for the affectation of humility. "So far I am happy."

"Yet," added he, after a considerable pause, "I have, I feel, a greater capability of happiness, for which I have been prevented from making any provision, partly by the course of life of which I made choice, and partly by circumstances over which I had no control."

He paused again; and turning the conversation, spoke of his sister, an elderly lady, who had come to pass some time with him. They had lived separate almost all their lives; she in Scotland with her husband, a Scottish nobleman, who having died about the time when lord Oldborough had resigned his ministerial situation, she had accepted his lordship's invitation to visit him in his retirement. The early attachment he had had for this sister seemed to revive in his mind when they met; and, as if glad to have some object for his affections, they were poured out upon her. Mr. Percy observed a tenderness in his manner and voice when he spoke to her, a thousand little attentions, which no one would have expected from the apparently stern lord Oldborough, a man who had been engrossed all his life by politics.

On the morning of the last day which Mr. Percy meant to spend at Clermont-park, his lordship, as they were sitting together in his study, expressed more than common regret at the necessity for his friend's departure, but said, "I have no right to detain you from your family." Then, after a pause, he added, "Mr. Percy, you first gave me the idea that a private life is the happiest."

"My lord, in most cases I believe it is; but I never meant to assert that a public life spent in noble exertion, and with the consciousness of superior talent and utility, is not more desirable than the life of any obscure individual can possibly be, even though he possess the pleasure of domestic ease and tranquillity. There are men of eminent abilities, capable of extraordinary exertions, inspired by exalted patriotism—I believe, notwithstanding the corruption of so many has weakened all faith in public virtue, I believe in the existence of such men—men who devote themselves to the service of their country: when the time for their relinquishing the toils of public life arrives, honour and self-approbation follow them in retirement."

"It is true, I am happy," repeated lord Oldborough; "but to go on with what I began to say to you yesterday—I feel that some addition might be made to my happiness. The sense of having, to the best of my ability, done my duty, is satisfactory. I do not require applause—I disdain adulation—I have sustained my public life without sympathy—I could seldom meet with it—where I could, I have enjoyed it—and could now enjoy it—exquisitely—as you do, Mr. Percy—surrounded by a happy family. Domestic life requires domestic pleasures—objects for the affections."

Mr. Percy felt the truth of this, and could answer only by suggesting the idea of Mr. Temple, who was firmly and warmly attached to lord Oldborough, and for whom his lordship had a strong regard.

"Mr. Temple, and my daughter Rosamond, whom

your lordship honoured with so kind an invitation, propose, I know, paying their respects to you next week. Though I am her father, I may venture to say that Rosamond's sprightliness is so mixed with solid information and good sense that her society will become agreeable to your lordship."

"I shall rejoice to see Mrs. Temple here. As the daughter of one friend, and the wife of another, she has a double claim to my regard. And (to say nothing of hereditary genius or dispositions—in which you do not believe, and I do), there can be no doubt that the society of a lady, educated as your daughter has been, must suit my taste. The danger is, that her society should become necessary to me. For Mr. Temple I already feel a degree of affection, which I must repress, rather than indulge."

"Repress!—Why so, my lord? You esteem him—you believe in the sincerity of his attachment?"

"I do."

"Then why with stoicism—pardon me, my dear lord—why repress affection?"

"Lest I should become dependent for my daily happiness on one whose happiness is independent of mine—in some degree incompatible with mine. Even if his society were given to me, his heart must be at his home, and with his family. You see I am no proud stoic, but a man who dares to look at life—the decline of life, such as it is—as it must be. Different, Mr. Percy, in your situation—and in mine."

The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of a carriage.

Lord Oldborough looked out of the window as it passed—then smiled, and observed how altered the

times were, since Clermont-park used to be crowded with visitors and carriages—now the arrival of one is an event.

The servant announced a foreign name—a Neapolitan abbé, who had come over in the train of a new ambassador: he had just arrived in England, and had letters from the cardinal * * * *, his uncle, which he was desired to deliver into lord Oldborough's own hand, The abbé was, it appeared, personally a stranger to him, but there had been some ministerial intercourse between his lordship and the cardinal. Lord Oldborough received these political letters with an air of composure and indifference which proved that he ceased to have an interest in the game.

" He supposed," he said, " that the abbé had been apprized that he was no longer one of his majesty's ministers—that he had resigned his official situation —had retired—and that he took no part whatever in public affairs."

The abbé replied that he had been apprized that lord Oldborough had retired from the public office; but his uncle, he added, with a significant smile, was aware that lord Oldborough's influence was as great still as it had ever been, and greater than that of any ostensible minister.

This lord Oldborough disclaimed—coolly observing that his influence, whatever it might be, could not be known even to himself, as it was never exerted; and that as he had determined never more to interfere in public business, he could not be of the least political service to the cardinal. The duke of Greenwich was now the person to whom on such subjects all applications should be addressed.

The abbé, however, repeated, that his instructions from the cardinal were positive and peremptory to deliver these letters into no hands but those of lord Oldborough—that in consequence of this strict injunction he had come purposely to present them. He was instructed to request his lordship would not put the letters into the hands of any secretary, but would have the goodness to examine them himself, and give his counsel how to proceed, and to whom they should, in case of his lordship's declining to interfere, be addressed.

"Mr. Percy!" said lord Oldborough, recalling Mr. Percy, who had risen to quite the room, "you will not leave me——Whatever you may wish to say, M. l'abbé, may be said before this gentleman—my friend."

His lordship then opened the packet, examined the letters—read and re-directed some to the duke of Greenwich, others to the king: the abbé, all the time, descanting vehemently on Neapolitan politics—regretting lord Oldborough's resignation—adverting still to his lordship's powerful influence—and pressing some point in negotiation, for which his uncle, the cardinal, was most anxious.

Among the letters, there was one which lord Oldborough did not open: he laid it on the table with the direction downwards, leaned his elbow upon it, and sat as if calmly listening to the abbé; but Mr. Percy, knowing his countenance, saw signs of extraordinary emotion, with difficulty repressed.

At length the gesticulating abbé finished, and waited his lordship's instructions.

They were given in few words. The letters re-directed to the king and the duke of Greenwich were returned to him. He thanked his lordship with many Italian superlatives—declined his lordship's invitation to stay till the next day at Clermont-park—said he was pressed in point of time—that it was indispensably necessary for him to be in London, to deliver these papers as soon as possible. His eye glanced on the unopened letter.

"Private, sir," said lord Oldborough, in a stern voice, without moving his elbow from the paper: "whatever answer it may require, I shall have the honour to transmit to you—for the cardinal."

The abbé bowed low, left his address, and took leave. Lord Oldborough, after attending him to the door, and seeing him depart, returned, took out his watch, and said to Mr. Percy, "Come to me, in my cabinet, in five minutes."

Seeing his sister on the walk approaching his house, he added, "Let none follow me."

When the five minutes were over, Mr. Percy went to lord Oldborough's cabinet—knocked—no answer—knocked again—louder—all was silent—he entered—and saw lord Oldborough seated, but in the attitude of one just going to rise; he looked more like a statue than a living person: there was a stiffness in his muscles, and over his face and hands a deathlike colour. His eyes were fixed, and directed towards the door—but they never moved when Mr. Percy entered, nor did lord Oldborough stir at his approach. From one hand, which hung over the arm of his chair, his spectacles had dropped; his other hand grasped an open letter.

"My dear lord!" cried Mr. Percy.

He neither heard nor answered. Mr. Percy opened the window and let down the blind. Then attempting to raise the hand which hung down, he perceived it was fixed in all the rigidity of catalepsy. In hopes of recalling his senses or his power of motion, Mr. Percy determined to try to draw the letter from his grasp; the moment the letter was touched, lord Oldborough started—his eyes darting fiercely upon him.

"Who dares? Who are you, sir?" cried he.

"Your friend, Percy—my lord."

Lord Oldborough pointed to a chair—Mr. Percy sat down. His lordship recovered gradually from the species of trance into which he had fallen. The cataleptic rigidity of his figure relaxed—the colour of life returned—the body regained her functions—the soul resumed at once her powers. Without seeming sensible of any interruption or intermission of feeling or thought, lord Oldborough went on speaking to Mr. Percy.

"The letter which I now hold in my hand is from that Italian lady of transcendent beauty, in whose company you once saw me when we first met at Naples. She was of high rank—high endowments. I loved her; how well—I need not—cannot say. We married secretly. I was induced—no matter how—to suspect her fidelity—pass over these circumstances—I cannot speak or think of them. We parted—I never saw her more. She retired to a convent, and died shortly after: nor did I, till I received this letter, written on her death-bed, know

that she had given me a son. The proofs that I wronged her are irresistible. Would that they had been given to me when I could have repaired my injustice!—But her pride prevented their being sent till the hour of her death."

On the first reading of her letter, lord Oldborough had been so struck by the idea of the injustice he had done the mother, that he seemed scarcely to advert to the idea of his having a son. Absorbed in the past, he was at first insensible both to the present and the future. Early associations, long dormant, were suddenly wakened; he was carried back with irresistible force to the days of his youth, and something of likeness in air and voice to the lord Oldborough he had formerly known appeared to Mr. Percy. As the tumult of passionate recollections subsided, as this enthusiastic reminiscence faded, and the memory of the past gave way to the sense of the present, lord Oldborough resumed his habitual look and manner. His thoughts turned upon his son, that unknown being who belonged to him, who had claims upon him, who might form a great addition to the happiness or misery of his life. He took up the letter again, looked for the passage that related to his son, and read it anxiously to himself, then to Mr. Percy—observing, "that the directions were so vague, that it would be difficult to act upon them."

"The boy was sent when three years old to England or Ireland, under the care of an Irish priest, who delivered him to a merchant, recommended by the Hamburgh banker, &c."

"I shall have difficulty in tracing this—great

danger of being mistaken or deceived," said lord Oldborough, pausing with a look of anxiety. "Would to God that I had means of knowing with certainty *where,* and above all, *what,* he is, or that I had never heard of his existence!"

"My lord, are there any more particulars?" inquired Mr. Percy, eagerly.

Lord Oldborough continued to read, "Four hundred pounds of your English money have been remitted to him annually, by means of these Hamburgh bankers. To them we must apply in the first instance," said lord Oldborough, "and I will write this moment."

"I think, my lord, I can save you the trouble," said Mr. Percy: "I know the man."

Lord Oldborough put down his pen, and looked at Mr. Percy with astonishment.

"Yes, my lord, however extraordinary it may appear, I repeat it—I believe I know your son; and if he be the man I imagine him to be, I congratulate you—you have reason to rejoice."

"The facts, my dear sir," cried lord Oldborough: "do not raise my hopes."

Mr. Percy repeated all that had heard from Godfrey of Mr. Henry—related every circumstance from the first commencement of them—the impertinence and insult to which the mystery that hung over his birth had subjected him in the regiment—the quarrels in the regiment—the goodness of major Gascoigne—the gratitude of Mr. Henry—the attachment between him and Godfrey—his selling out of the regiment after Godfrey's ineffectual journey to

London—his wishing to go into a mercantile house—the letter which Godfrey then wrote, begging his father to recommend Mr. Henry to Mr. Gresham, disclosing to Mr. Percy, with Mr. Henry's permission, all that he knew of his birth.

"I have that letter at home," said Mr. Percy: "your lordship shall see it. I perfectly recollect the circumstances of Mr. Henry's having been brought up in Ireland by a Dublin merchant, and having received constantly a remittance in quarterly payments of four hundred pounds a year, from a banker in Cork."

"Did he inquire why, or from whom," said lord Oldborough; "and does he know his mother?"

"Certainly not: the answer to his first inquiries prevented all farther questions. He was told by the bankers that they had directions to stop payment of the remittance if any questions were asked."

Lord Oldborough listened with profound attention as Mr. Percy went on with the history of Mr. Henry, relating all the circumstances of his honourable conduct with respect to miss Panton—his disinterestedness, decision, and energy of affection.

Lord Oldborough's emotion increased—he seemed to recognize some traits of his own character.

"I *hope* this youth is my son," said his lordship, in a low suppressed voice.

"He deserves to be yours, my lord," said Mr. Percy.

"To have a son might be the greatest of evils—to have *such* a son must be the greatest of blessings," said his lordship. He was lost in thought for a moment, then exclaimed, "I must see the letter—I must see the man."

"My lord, he is at my house."

Lord Oldborough started from his seat—"Let me see him instantly."

"To-morrow, my lord," said Mr. Percy, in a calm tone, for it was necessary to calm his impetuosity—"to-morrow. Mr. Henry could not be brought here to-night without alarming him, or without betraying to him the cause of our anxiety."

"To-morrow, let it be—you are right, my dear friend. Let me see him without his suspecting that I am any thing to him, or he to me—you will let me have the letter to-night."

"Certainly, my lord."

Mr. Percy sympathized with his impatience, and gratified it with all the celerity of a friend: the letter was sent that night to lord Oldborough. In questioning his sons more particularly concerning Mr. Henry, Mr. Percy learnt from Erasmus a fresh and strong corroborating circumstance. Dr. Percy had been lately attending Mr. Gresham's porter, O'Brien, the Irishman; who had been so ill, that, imagining himself dying, he had sent for a priest. Mr. Henry was standing by the poor fellow's bedside when the priest arrived, who was so much struck by the sight of him, that for some time his attention could scarcely be fixed on the sick man. The priest, after he had performed his official duties, returned to Mr. Henry, begged pardon for having looked at him with so much earnestness, but said that Mr. Henry strongly reminded him of the features of an Italian lady who had committed a child to his care many years ago. This led to farther explanation, and upon comparing dates and circumstances, Mr. Henry was convinced

that this was the very priest who had carried him over to Ireland—the priest recognised him to be the child of whom he had taken charge; but farther, all was darkness. The priest knew nothing more—not even the name of the lady from whom he had received the child. He knew only that he had been handsomely rewarded by the Dublin merchant, to whom he had delivered the boy—and he had heard that this merchant had since become bankrupt, and had fled to America. This promise of a discovery, and sudden stop to his hopes, had only mortified poor Mr. Henry, and had irritated that curiosity which he had endeavoured to lull to repose.

Mr. Percy was careful, both for Mr. Henry's sake and for lord Oldborough's, not to excite hopes which might not ultimately be accomplished. He took precautions to prevent him from suspecting any thing extraordinary in the intended introduction to lord Oldborough.

There had been some dispute between the present minister and some London merchant, about the terms of a loan which had been made by Lord Oldborough—Mr. Gresham's house had some concern in this transaction; and it was now settled between Mr. Percy and lord Oldborough, that his lordship should write to desire to see Mr. Henry, who, as Mr. Gresham's partner, could give every necessary information. Mr. Henry accordingly was summoned to Clermont-park, and accompanied Mr. Percy, with his mind intent upon this business.

Mr. Henry, in common with all who were capable of estimating a great public character, had conceived high admiration for lord Oldborough; he had seen

him only in public, and at a distance—and it was not without awe that he now thought of being introduced to him, and of hearing and speaking to him in private.

Lord Oldborough, meanwhile, who had been satisfied by the perusal of the letter, and by Mr. Percy's information, waited for his arrival with extreme impatience. He was walking up and down his room, and looking frequently at his watch, which he believed more than once to have stopped. At length the door opened.

"Mr. Percy, and Mr. Henry, my lord."

Lord Oldborough's eye darted upon Henry. Struck instantly with the resemblance to the mother, lord Oldborough rushed forward, and clasping him in his arms, exclaimed, "My son!"

Tenderness, excessive tenderness, was in his look, voice, soul, as if he wished to repair in a moment the injustice of years.

"Yes," said lord Oldborough, "*now* I am happy —*now*, I also, Mr. Percy, may be proud of a son—I too shall know the pleasures of domestic life. Now I am happy!" repeated he,

> "And, pleased, resigned
> To tender passions all his mighty mind."

March 26*th*, 1813.

END OF PATRONAGE.

COMIC DRAMAS.

LOVE AND LAW;

A DRAMA,

IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MR. CARVER, of Bob's Fort	*A Justice of the Peace in Ireland.*
OLD MATTHEW M'BRIDE	*A Rich Farmer.*
PHILIP M'BRIDE	*His Son.*
RANDAL ROONEY	*Son of the Widow Catherine Rooney—a lover of Honor M'Bride.*
MR. GERALD O'BLANEY .	*A Distiller.*
PATRICK COXE	*Clerk to Gerald O'Blaney.*

WOMEN.

MRS. CARVER	*Wife of Mr. Carver.*
MISS BLOOMSBURY . . .	*A fine London Waiting-maid of Mrs. Carver's.*
MRS. CATHERINE ROONEY, *commonly called* CATTY ROONEY	*A Widow—Mother of Randal Rooney.*
HONOR M'BRIDE	*Daughter of Matthew M'Bride and Sister of Philip M'Bride.*

A Justice's Clerk—a Constable—Witnesses—and two Footmen.

LOVE AND LAW.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Cottage.—A Table—Breakfast.
HONOR M'BRIDE, *alone.*

Honor. Phil !—(*calls*)—Phil, dear! come out.

Phil.—(*answers from within*) Wait till I draw on my boots !

Honor. Oh, I may give it up: he's full of his new boots—and singing, see !

Enter PHIL M'BRIDE, *dressed in the height of the Irish buck-farmer fashion, singing,*

" Oh the boy of Ball'navogue !
Oh the dasher ! oh the rogue !
He's the thing ! and he's the pride
Of town and country, Phil M'Bride—
All the talk of shoe and brogue !
Oh the boy of Ball'navogue ! "

There's a song to the praise and glory of your—of your brother, Honor ! And who made it, do you think, girl ?

Honor. Miss Caroline Flaherty, no doubt. But, dear Phil, I've a favour to ask of you.

Phil. And welcome ! What? But first, see ! isn't

there an elegant pair of boots, that fits a leg like wax?—There's what'll plase Car'line Flaherty, I'll engage. But what ails you, Honor?—you look as if your own heart was like to break. Are not you for the fair to-day?—and why not?

Honor. Oh! rasons. (*Aside*) Now I can't speak.

Phil. Speak on, for I'm dumb and all ear—speak up, dear—no fear of the father's coming out, for he's leaving his *bird* (i. e. beard) in the bason, and that's a work of time with him.—Tell all to your own Phil.

Honor. Why then I won't go to the fair—because —better keep myself to myself, out of the way of meeting them that mightn't be too plasing to my father.

Phil. And might be too plasing to somebody else —Honor M'Bride.

Honor. Oh Phil, dear! But only promise me, brother, dearest, if you would this day meet any of the Rooneys——

Phil. That means Randal Rooney.

Honor. No, it was his mother Catty was in my head.

Phil. A bitterer scould never was!—nor a bigger lawyer in petticoats, which is an abomination.

Honor. 'Tis not pritty, I grant; but her heart's good, if her temper would give it fair play. But will you promise me, Phil, whatever she says—you won't let her provoke you this day.

Phil. How in the name of wonder will I hinder her to give me provocation? and when the spirit of the M'Brides is up——

Honor. But don't lift a hand.

Phil. Against a woman?—no fear—not a finger against a woman.

Honor. But I say not against any Rooney, man or woman. Oh Phil! dear, don't let there be any fighting betwixt the M'Bride and Rooney factions.

Phil. And how could I hinder if I would? The boys will be having a row, especially when they get the spirits—and all the better.

Honor. To be drinking! Oh! Phil, the mischief that drinking does!

Phil. Mischief! Quite and clane the contrary—when the shillelah's up, the pike's down. 'Tis when there'd be no fights at fairs, and all sober, then there's rason to dread mischief. No man, Honor, dare be letting the whiskey into his head, was there any mischief in his heart.

Honor. Well, Phil, you've made it out now cliverly. So there's most danger of mischief when men's sober—is that it?

Phil. Irishmen?—ay; for sobriety is not the nat'ral state of the *craturs;* and what's not nat'ral is hypocritical, and a hypocrite is, and was, and ever will be my contempt.

Honor. And mine too. But——

Phil. But here's my hand for you, Honor. They call me a beau and a buck, a slasher and dasher, and flourishing Phil. All that I am, may be; but there's one thing I am not, and will never be—and that's a bad brother to you. So you have my honour, and here's my oath to the back of it. By all the pride of man and all the consate of woman—where will you find a bigger oath?—happen what will, this day, I'll not lift my hand against Randal Rooney!

Honor. Oh thanks! warm from the heart. But here's my father—and where's breakfast?

Phil. Oh! I must be at him for a horse: you, Honor, mind and back me.

Enter OLD M'BRIDE.

Old M'B. Late I am this fair day all along with my beard, that was thicker than a hedgehog's. Breakfast, where?

Honor. Here, father dear—all ready.

Old M'B. There's a jewel! always supple o' foot. Phil, call to them to bring out the horse bastes, while I swallow my breakfast—and a good one, too.

Phil. Your horse is all ready standing, sir. But that's what I wanted to ax you, father—will you be kind enough, sir, to shell out for me the price of a *daacent* horse, fit to mount a man like me?

Old M'B. What ails the baste you have under you always?

Phil. Fit only for the hounds:—not to follow, but to feed 'em.

Old M'B. Hounds! I don't want you, Phil, to be following the hounds at-all-at-all.

Honor. But let alone the hounds. If you sell your bullocks well in the fair to-day, father dear, I think you'll be so kind to spare Phil the price of a horse.

Old M'B. Stand out o' my way, Honor, with that wheedling voice o' your own—I won't. Mind your own affairs—you're leaguing again me, and I'll engage Randal Rooney's at the bottom of all—and the cement that sticks you and Phil so close together. But mind, madam Honor, if you give him the meeting at the fair the day——

Honor. Dear father, I'm not going—I give up the fair o' purpose, for fear I'd see him.

Old M'B. (*kissing her*) Why then you're a piece of an angel!

Honor. And you'll give my brother the horse?

Old M'B. I won't! when I've said I won't—I won't. [*Buttons his coat, and exit.*

Phil. Now there's a sample of a father for ye!

Old M'B. (*returning*) And, mistress Honor, may be you'd be staying at home to——Where's Randal Rooney to be, pray, while I'd be from home?

Honor. Oh father, would you suspect——

Old M'B. (*catching her in his arms, and kissing her again and again*) Then you're a true angel, every inch of you. But not a word more in favour of the horse—sure the money for the bullocks shall go to your portion, every farthing.

Honor. There's the thing! (*Holding her father.*) I don't wish that.

Phil. (*stopping her mouth*) Say no more, Honor—I'm best pleased so.

Old M'B. (*aside*) I'll give him the horse, but he sha'n't know it. (*Aloud.*) I won't. When I say I won't, did I ever? [*Exit* OLD M'BRIDE.

Phil. Never since the world *stud*—to do you justice, you are as obstinate as a mule. Not all the bullocks he's carrying to the fair the day, nor all the bullocks in Ballynavogue joined to 'em, in one team, would draw that father o' mine one inch out of his way.

Honor. (*aside, with a deep sigh*) Oh, then what will I do about Randal ever!

Phil. As close a fisted father as ever had the grip of a guinea! If the guineas was all for you—wilcome, Honor! But that's not it. Pity of a lad o' spirit like me to be cramped by such a hunx of a father.

Honor. Oh! don't be calling him names, Phil: stiff he is, more than close—and any way, Phil dear, he's the father still—and ould, consider.

Phil. He is—and I'm fond enough of him, too, would he only give me the price of a horse. But no matter—spite of him I'll have my swing the day, and it's I that will tear away with a good horse under me and a good whip over him in a capital style, up and down the street of Ballynavogue, for you, miss Car'-line Flaherty! I know who I'll go to, this minute—a man I'll engage will lend me the loan of his bay gelding; and that's counshillor Gerald O'Blaney.

[*Going*, HONOR *stops him.*

Honor. Gerald O'Blaney! Oh brother!—Mercy! —Don't! any thing rather than that——

Phil. (*impatiently*) Why then, Honor?

Honor. (*aside*) If I'd tell him, there'd be mischief. (*Aloud.*) Only—I wouldn't wish you under a compliment to one I've no opinion of.

Phil. Phoo! you've taken a prejudice. What is there again counshillor O'Blaney?

Honor. *Counshillor!* First place, why do you call him *counshillor?* he never was a raal counshillor sure —nor jantleman at all.

Phil. Oh! counshillor by courtesy—he was an attorney once—just as we *doctor* the apotecary.

Honor. But, Phil, was not there something of this man's being dismissed the courts for too sharp practice?

Phil. But that was long ago, if it ever was. There's sacrets in all families to be forgotten—bad to be raking the past. I never knew you so sharp on a neighbour, Honor, before:—what ails ye.

Honor. (*sighing*) I can't tell ye.

[*Still holding him.*

Phil. Let me go then!—Nonsense!—the boys of Ballynavogue will be wondering, and miss Car'line most. [*Exit, singing,*

"Oh the boys of Ball'navogue."

HONOR, *alone.*

Honor. O Phil! I *could* not tell it you; but did you but know how *that* Gerald O'Blaney insulted your shister with his vile proposhals, you'd no more ask the loan of his horse!—and I in dread whenever I'd be left in the house alone that that bad man would boult in upon me—and Randal to find him! and Randal's like gunpowder when his heart's touched!—and if Randal should come *by himself*, worse again! Honor, where would be your resolution to forbid him your presence? Then there's but one way to be right—I'll lave home entirely. Down, proud stomach! You must go to service, Honor M'Bride. There's Mrs. Carver, kind-hearted lady, is wanting a girl—she's English, and nice; may be I'd not be good enough; but I can but try, and do my best; any thing to plase the father.

[*Exit* HONOR.

SCENE II.

O'BLANEY'S *Counting-house.*

GERALD O'BLANEY *alone at a desk covered with Papers.*

O'Bla. Of all the employments in life, this eternal balancing of accounts, see-saw, is the most sickening of all things, except it would be the taking the inventory of your stock, when you're reduced to *invent* the stock itself;—then that's the most lowering to a man of all things! But there's one comfort in this distillery business—come what will, a man has always *proof spirits.*

Enter PAT COXE.

Pat. The whole tribe of Connaught men come, craving to be *ped* for the oats, counsellor, due since last Serapht* fair.

O'Bla. Can't be ped to day, let 'em crave never so.—Tell 'em *Monday;* and give 'em a glass of whiskey round, and that will send 'em off contint, in a jerry.

Pat. I shall—I will—I see, sir.

[*Exit* PAT COXE.

O'Bla. Asy settled that!—but I hope many more duns for oats won't be calling on me this day, for cash is not to be had:—here's bills plenty—long bills, and short bills—but even the kites, which I can fly as well as any man, won't raise the wind for me now.

* Shrovetide.

Re-enter PAT.

Pat. Tim M'Gudikren, sir, for his debt—and talks of the sub-sheriff, and can't wait.

O'Bla. I don't ax him to wait; but he must take in payment, since he's in such a hurry, this bill at thirty-one days, tell him.

Pat. I shall tell him so, plase your honour.

[*Exit* PAT.

O'Bla. They have all rendezvous'd to drive me mad this day; but the only thing is to keep the head cool. What I'm dreading beyant all is, if that ould Matthew M'Bride, who is as restless as a ferret when he has lodged money with any one, should come this day to take out of my hands the two hundred pounds I've got of his—Oh then I might shut up! But stay, I'll match him—and I'll match myself too: that daughter Honor of his is a mighty pretty girl to look at, and since I can't get her any other way, why not ax her in marriage. Her portion is to be——

Re-enter PAT.

Pat. The protested note, sir—with the charge of the protest to the back of it, from Mrs. Lorigan; and her compliments, and to know what will she do?

O'Bla. What will *I* do, fitter to ax. My kind compliments to Mrs. Lorigan, and I'll call upon her in the course of the day, to settle it all.

Pat. I understand, sir. [*Exit* PAT.

O'Bla. Honor M'Bride's portion will be five hundred pounds on the nail—that would be no bad bit, and she, a good, clever, likely girl. I'll pop the question this day.

Re-enter PAT.

Pat. Corkeran the cooper's bill, as long as my arm.

O'Bla. Oh! don't be bothering me any more. Have you no sinse? Can't you get shut of Corkeran the cooper without me? Can't ye quarrel with the items? Tear the bill down the middle, if necessary, and sind him away with a flay (flea) in his ear, to make out a proper bill—which I can't see till to-morrow, mind. I never pay any man on fair-day.

Pat. (*aside.*) Nor on any other day. (*Aloud.*) Corkeran's my cousin, counsellor, and if convanient, I'd be glad you'd advance him a pound or two on account.

O'Bla. 'Tis not convanient was he twenty times your cousin, Pat. I can't be paying in bits, nor on account—all or none.

Pat. None, then, I may tell him, sir?

O'Bla. You may—you must; and don't come up for any of 'em any more. It's hard if I can't have a minute to talk to myself.

Pat. And it's hard if I can't have a minute to eat my breakfast, too, which I have not.

[*Exit* PAT.

O'Bla. Where was I?—I was popping the question to Honor M'Bride. The only thing is, whether the girl herself woudn't have an objection:—there's that Randal Rooney is a great *bachelor* of hers, and I doubt she'd be apt to prefar him before me, even when I'd purpose marriage. But the families of the Rooneys and M'Brides is at vareance—then I must keep 'em so. I'll keep Catty Rooney's spirit up, niver to consent to that match. Oh! if them

Rooneys and M'Brides were by any chance to make it up, I'd be undone: but against that catastrophe, I've a preventative. Pat Coxe! Pat Coxe! where are you, my young man?

Enter PAT, *wiping his mouth.*

Pat. Just swallowing my breakfast.

O'Bla. Mighty long swallowing you are. Here—don't be two minutes, till you're at Catty Rooney's, and let me see how cliverly you'll execute that confidential embassy I trusted you with. Touch Catty up about her ould ancient family, and all the kings of Ireland she comes from. *Blarnay* her cliverly, and work her to a foam against the M'Brides.

Pat. Never fear, your honour. I'll tell her the story we agreed on, of Honor M'Bride meeting of Randal Rooney behind the chapel.

O'Bla. That will do—don't forget the ring; for I mane to put another on the girl's finger, if she's agreeable, and knows her own interest. But that last's a private article. Not a word of that to Catty, you understand.

Pat. Oh! I understand—and I'll engage I'll compass Catty, tho' she's a cunning shaver.

O'Bla. Cunning?—No; she's only hot tempered, and asy managed.

Pat. Whatever she is, I'll do my best to plase you. And I expict your honour, counsellor, won't forget the promise you made me, to ask Mr. Carver for that little place—that situation that would just shute me.

O'Bla. Never fear, never fear. Time enough to think of shuting you, when you've done my business. [*Exit* PAT.
That will work like barm, and ould Matthew, the father, I'll speak to myself genteelly. He will be proud, I warrant, to match his daughter with a gentleman like me. But what if he should smell a rat, and want to be looking into my affairs. Oh! I must get it sartified properly to him before all things, that I'm as safe as the bank; and I know who shall do that for me—my worthy friend, that most consequential magistrate, Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort, who loves to be advising and managing of all men, women, and children, for their good. 'Tis he shall advise ould Matthew for *my* good. Now Carver thinks he lades the whole county, and ten mile round—but who is it lades him, I want to know? Why, Gerald O'Blaney.—And how? Why, by a spoonful of the universal panacea, *flattery*—in the vulgar tongue, *flummery*. (*A knock at the door heard.*) Who's rapping at the street?—Carver of Bob's Fort himself, in all his glory this fair-day. See then how he struts and swells. Did ever man, but a pacock, look so fond of himself with less rason? But I must be caught deep in accounts, and a balance of thousands to credit. (*Sits down to his desk, to account books.*) Seven thousand, three hundred, and two pence. (*Starting and rising.*) Do I see Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort?—Oh! the honour——

Mr. Carv. Don't stir, pray—I beg—I request—I insist. I am by no means ceremonious, sir.

O'Bla. (*bustling and setting two chairs*) No, but I'd wish to show respect proper to him I consider the first man in the county.

Mr. Carv. (*aside*) Man! gentleman, he might have said.

[*Mr.* CARVER *sits down and rests himself consequentially.*

O'Bla. Now, Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort, you've been over fartiguing yourself——

Mr. Carv. For the public good. I can't help it, really.

O'Bla. Oh! but, upon my word and honour, it's too much: there's rason in all things. A man of Mr. Carver's fortin to be slaving! If you were a man in business, like me, it would be another thing. I must slave at the desk to keep all round. See, Mr. Carver, see!—ever since the day you advised me to be as particular as yourself in keeping accounts to a farthing, I do, to a fraction, even like state accounts, see!

Mr. Carv. And I trust you find your advantage in it, sir. Pray, how does the distillery business go on?

O'Bla. Swimmingly! ever since that time, Mr. Carver, your interest at the castle helped me at the dead lift, and got that fine took off. 'Tis to your purtiction, encouragement, and advice entirely, I owe my present unexampled prosperity, which you prophesied; and Mr. Carver's prophecies seldom, I may say never, fail to be accomplished.

Mr. Carv. I own there is some truth in your ob-

servation. I confess I have seldom been mistaken or deceived in my judgment of man, woman, or child.

O'Bla. Who can say so much?

Mr. Carv. For what reason, I don't pretend to say; but the fact ostensibly *is*, that the few persons I direct with my advice are unquestionably apt to prosper in this world.

O'Bla. Mighty apt! for which rason I would wish to trouble you for your unprecedently good advice on another pint, if it would not be too great a liberty.

Mr. Carv. No liberty at all, my good Gerald—I am always ready to advise—only to-day—certainly, the fair day of Ballynavogue, there are so many calls upon me, both in a public and private capacity, so much business of vital importance!

O'Bla. (*aside*) Vital importance!—that is his word, on all occasions. (*Aloud.*) May be then (oh! where was my head?) may be you would not have breakfasted all this time, and we've the kittle down always in this house (*rising*)? Pat!—Jack!—Mick!—Jenny! put the kittle down.

Mr. Carv. Sit down, sit still, my worthy fellow. Breakfasted at Bob's Fort, as I always do.

O'Bla. But a bit of cake—a glass of wine, to refrish and replinish nature.

Mr. Carv. Too early—spoil my dinner. But what was I going to say?

O'Bla. (*aside*) Burn me, if I know; and I pray all the saints you may never recollect.

Mr. Carv. I recollect. How many times do you think I was stopped on horseback coming up the

street of Ballynavogue?—Five times by weights and measures, imperiously calling for reformation, sir. Thirteen times, upon my veracity, by booths, apple-stalls, nuisances, vagabonds, and drunken women. Pigs without end, sir—wanting ringing, and all squealing in my ears, while I was settling sixteen disputes about tolls and customs. Add to this, my regular battle every fair-day with the crane, which ought to be any where but where it is; and my perpetual discoveries of fraudulent kegs, and stones in the butter! Now, sir, I only ask, can you wonder that I wipe my forehead? (*wiping his forehead.*)

O'Bla. In troth, Mr. Carver, I cannot! But these are the pains and penalties of being such a man of consequence as you evidently are;—and I that am now going to add to your troubles too by consulting you about my little pint!

Mr. Carv. A point of law, I dare to say; for people somehow or other have got such a prodigious opinion of my law. (*Takes snuff.*)

O'Bla. (*aside*) No coming to the pint till he has finished his own panygeric.

Mr. Carv. And I own I cannot absolutely turn my back on people. Yet as to *poor* people, I always settle them by telling them, it is my principle that law is too expensive for the poor: I tell them, the poor have nothing to do with the laws.

O'Bla. Except the penal.

Mr. Carv. True, the civil is for us, men of property; and no man should think of going to law without he's qualified. There should be licences.

O'Bla. No doubt. Pinalties there are in plinty;

still those who can afford, should indulge. In Ireland it would as ill become a gentleman to be any way shy of a law-shute, as of a duel.

Mr. Carv. Yet law is expensive, sir, even to me.

O'Bla. But 'tis the best economy in the end; for when once you have cast or non-shuted your man in the courts, 'tis as good as winged him in the field. And suppose you don't get sixpence costs, and lose your cool hundred by it, still it's a great advantage; for you are let alone to enjoy your own in pace and quiet ever after, which you could not do in this county without it. But the love of the law has carried me away from my business: the pint I wanted to consult you about is not a pint of law; 'tis another matter.

Mr. Carv. (*looking at his watch*) I must be at Bob's Fort, to seal my despatches for the castle. And there's another thing I say of myself.

O'Bla. (*aside*) Remorseless agotist!

Mr. Carv. I don't know how, the people all have got such an idea of my connexions at the castle, and my influence with his excellency, that I am worried with eternal applications: they expect I can make them all gaugers or attorney-generals, I believe. How do they know I write to the castle?

O'Bla. Oh! the post-office tells asy by the big sales (seals) to your despatches—(*aside*) which, I'll engage, is all the castle ever rades of them, though Carver has his excellency always in his mouth, God help him!

Mr. Carv. Well, you wanted to consult me, Gerald?

O'Bla. And you'll give me your advice, which will

be conclusive, law, and every thing to me. You know the M'Brides—would they be safe?

Mr. Carv. Very safe, substantial people.

O'Bla. Then here's the thing, Mr. Carver: as you recommend them, and as they are friends of yours—I will confess to you that, though it might not in pint of interest be a very prudent match, I am thinking that Honor M'Bride is such a prudent girl, and Mrs. Carver has taken her by the hand, so I'd wish to follow Mrs. Carver's example for life, in taking Honor by the hand for better or worse.

Mr. Carv. In my humble opinion you cannot do better; and I can tell you a secret—Honor will have no contemptible fortune in that rank of life.

O'Bla. Oh, fortune's always contemptible in marriage.

Mr. Carv. Fortune! sir?

O'Bla. (*aside*) Overshot. (*Aloud.*) In comparison with the patronage and protection or countenance she'd have from you and your family, sir.

Mr. Carv. That you may depend upon, my good Gerald, as far as we can go; but you know we are nothing.

O'Bla. Oh, I know you're every thing—every thing on earth—particularly with ould M'Bride; and you know how to speak so well and iloquent, and I'm so tongue-tied and bāāshful on such an occasion.

Mr. Carv. Well, well, I'll speak for you.

O'Bla. A thousand thanks down to the ground.

Mr. Carv. (*patting him on the back as he rises*) My *poor* Gerald.

O'Bla. Then I am *poor* Gerald in point of wit,

I know; but you are too good a friend to be calling me *poor* to ould M'Bride—you can say what I can't say.

Mr. Carv. Certainly, certainly; and you may depend on me. I shall speak my decided opinion; and I fancy M'Bride has sense enough to be ruled by me.

O'Bla. I'm sure he has—only there's a Randal Rooney, a wild young man, in the case. I'd be sorry the girl was thrown away upon Randal.

Mr. Carv. She has too much sense: the father will settle that, and I'll settle the father.

[*Mr.* CARVER *going.*

O'Bla. (*following, aside*) And who has settled you?

Mr. Carv. Don't stir—don't stir—men of business must be nailed to a spot—and I'm not ceremonious.

[*Exit Mr.* CARVER.

O'Bla. Pinned him by all that's cliver!

[*Exit* O'BLANEY.

SCENE III.

Mrs. CARVER'S *Dressing-room.*

Mrs. CARVER *sitting at work.*—BLOOMSBURY *standing.*

Bloom. Certainly, ma'am, what I always said was, that for the commonalty there's no getting out of an Irish cabin a girl fit to be about a lady such as you, Mrs. Carver, in the shape of a waiting-maid or waiting-maid's assistant, on account they smell so of smoke, which is very distressing; but this Honor

M'Bride seems a bettermost sort of girl, ma'am; if you can make up your mind to her *vice*.

Mrs. Carv. Vice?

Bloom. That is, vicious pro*noun*ciations in regard to their Irish brogues.

Mrs. Carv. Is that all?—I am quite accustomed to *the accent.*

Bloom. Then, ma'am, I declare now, I've been forced to stuff my *hears* with cotton wool hever since I comed to Ireland. But this here Honor M'Bride has a mighty pretty *vice,* if you dont take exceptions to a little nationality; nor she is not so smoke-dried: she's really a nice, tidy-looking-like girl considering. I've taken tea with the family often, and they live quite snug for Hirish. I'll assure you, ma'am, quite bettermost people for Hibernians, as you always said, ma'am.

Mrs. Carv. I have a regard for old Matthew, tho' he is something of a miser, I fear.

Bloom. So, ma'am, shall I call the girl up, that we may see and talk to her? I think, ma'am, you'll find she will do; and I reckon to keep her under my own eye and advice from morning till night: for when I seed the girl so willing to larn, I quite took a fancy to her, I own—as it were.

Mrs. Carv. Well, Bloomsbury, let me see this Honor M'Bride.

Bloom. (*calling*) One of you there! please call up Honor M'Bride.

Mrs. Carv. She has been waiting a great while, I fear; I don't like to keep people waiting.

Bloom. (*watching for* HONOR *as she speaks*) Dear heart, ma'am, in this here country people does love

waiting for waiting's sake, that's sure—they got nothing else to do. Here, Honor—walk in, Honor—rub your shoes always.

Enter HONOR, *timidly.*

Mrs. Carv. (*in an encouraging voice*) Come in, my good girl.

Bloom. Oh! child, the door: the peoples never shut a door in Ireland!—Did not I warn you?—says I, "come when you're called—do as you're bid—shut the door after you, and you'll never be chid." Now what did I tell you, child?

Honor. To shut the door after me when I'd come into a room.

Bloom. *When I'd come*—now that's not dic'snary English.

Mrs. Carv. Good Bloomsbury, let that pass for the present—come a little nearer to me, my good girl.

Honor. Yes, ma'am.

Bloom. Take care of that china pyramint with your cloak—walk on to Mrs. Carver—no need to be afraid—I'll stand your friend.

Mrs. Carv. I should have thought, Honor M'Bride, you were in too comfortable a way at home to think of going into service.

Honor. (*sighs*) No better father, nor brother, *nor* (than) I have, ma'am, I thank your ladyship; but some things come across.

Mrs. Carv. (*aside*) Oh! it is a blushing case, I see: I must talk to her alone, by and by. (*Aloud.*) I don't mean, my good girl, to pry into your family affairs.

Honor. Oh! ma'am, you're too good. (*Aside.*) The kind-hearted lady, how I love her already! (*She wipes the tears from her eyes.*)

Bloom. Take care of the bow-pot at your elbow, child; for if you break the necks of them moss roses——

Honor. I ax their pardon.

Mrs. Carv. Better take the flower-pot out of her way, Bloomsbury.

Bloom. (*moving the flower-pot*) There, now: but, Honor, keep your eyes on my lady, never turn your head, and keep your hands always afore you, as I show you. Ma'am, she'll larn manners in time,—Lon'on was not built in a day. It i'n't to be expected of she!

Mrs. Carv. It is not to be expected indeed that she should learn every thing at once; so one thing at a time, good Bloomsbury, and one person at a time. Leave Honor to me for the present.

Bloom. Certainly, ma'am; I beg pardon—I was only saying——

Mrs. Carv. Since it is, it seems, necessary, my good girl, that you should leave home, I am glad that you are not too proud to go into service.

Honor. Oh! into *your* service, ma'am,—I'd be too proud if you'd be kind enough to accept me.

Mrs. Carv. Then as to wages, what do you expect?

Honor. Any thing at all you please, ma'am.

Bloom. (*pressing down her shoulder*) And where's your curtsy? We shall bring these Irish knees into training by and by, I hopes.

Honor. I'm awk'ard and strange, ma'am—I never was from home afore.

Mrs. Carv. Poor girl—we shall agree very well, I hope.

Honor. Oh yes, any thing at all, ma'am; I'm not greedy—nor needy, thanks above! but it's what I'd wish to be under your protection if it was plasing, and I'll do my very best, madam. (*Curtsies.*)

Mrs. Carv. Nobody can expect more, and I hope and trust you'll find mine an easy place—Bloomsbury, you will tell her what will be required of her. (*Mrs.* CARVER *looks at her watch.*) At twelve o'clock I shall be returned from my walk, and then, Honor, you will come into my cabinet here; I want to say a few words to you. [*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE IV.

The High Road—A cottage in view—Turf-stack, Hay-rick, &c.

CATTY ROONEY *alone, walking backwards and forwards.*

Catty. 'Tis but a stone's throw to Ballynavogue. But I don't like to be going into the fair on foot, when I been always used to go in upon my pillion behind my husband when living, and my son Randal, after his death. Wait, who comes here?—'Tis Gerald O'Blaney's, the distiller's, young man, Pat Coxe: now we'll larn all—and whether O'Blaney can lend me the loan of a horse or no. A good morrow to you, kindly, Mr. Pat Coxe.

Enter PAT COXE.

Pat. And you the same, Mrs. Rooney, tinfold.

Mr. O'Blaney has his *sarvices* to you, ma'am: no, not his *sarvices*, but his compliments, that was the word,—his kind compliments, that was the very word.

Catty. The counshillor's always very kind to me, and genteel.

Pat. And was up till past two in the morning, last night, madam, he bid me say, looking over them papers you left with him for your shuit, ma'am, with the M'Brides, about the bit of Ballynascraw bog; and if you call upon the counshillor in the course of the morning, he'll find, or make, a minute, for a consultation he says. But mane time, to take no step to compromise, or make it up, *for your life*, ma'am.

Catty. No fear, I'll not give up at law, or any way, to a M'Bride, while I've a drop of blood in my veins—and it's good thick Irish blood runs in these veins.

Pat. No doubt, ma'am—from the kings of Ireland, as all the world knows, Mrs. Rooney.

Catty. And the M'Brides have no blood at-all-at-all.

Pat. Not a drop, ma'am—so they can't stand before you.

Catty. They *ought* not, any way!—What are they? Cromwellians at the best. Mac Brides! Scotch!—not Irish native, at-all-at-all. People of yesterday, graziers—which tho' they've made the money, can't buy the blood. My anshestors sat on a throne, when the M'Brides had only their *hunkers**

* Their *hunkers*, i. e. their hams.

to sit upon; and if I walk now when they ride, they can't look down upon me—for every body knows who I am—and what they are.

Pat. To be sure, ma'am, they do—the whole country talks of nothing else but the shame when you'd be walking and they riding.

Catty. Then could the counshillor lend me the horse?

Pat. With all the pleasure in life, ma'am, only every horse he has in the world is out o' messages, and drawing turf and one thing or another to-day—and he is very sorry, ma'am.

Catty. So am I, then—I'm unlucky the day. But I won't be saying so, for fear of spreading ill luck on my faction. Pray now what kind of a fair is it?—Would there be any good signs of a fight, Mr. Pat Coxe?

Pat. None in life as yet, ma'am,—only just buying and selling. The horse-bastes, and horned-cattle, and pigs squeaking, has it all to themselves. But it's early times yet,—it won't be long so.

Catty. No M'Brides, no Ballynavogue boys gathering yet?

Pat. None to signify of the M'Brides, ma'am, at all.

Catty. Then it's plain them M'Brides dare not be showing their faces, or even their backs, in Ballynavogue. But sure all our Ballynascraw boys, the Roonies, are in it as usual, I hope?

Pat. Oh, ma'am, there is plinty of Roonies. I marked Big Briny of Cloon, and Ulick of Eliogarty, and little Charley of Killaspugbrone.

Catty. All *good* men*—no better. Praise be where due.

Pat. And scarce a Mac Bride I noticed. But the father and son—ould Matthew, and flourishing Phil, was in it, with a new pair of boots and the silver-hilted whip.

Catty. The spalpeen! turned into a buckeen, that would be a squireen,—but can't.

Pat. No, for the father pinches him.

Catty. That's well—and that ould Matthew is as obstinate a neger as ever famished his stomach. What's he doing in Ballynavogue the day?

Pat. Standing he is there, in the fair-green, with his score of fat bullocks, that he has got to sell.

Catty. Fat bullocks! Them, I reckon, will go towards Honor M'Bride's portion, and a great fortin she'll be for a poor man—but I covet none of it for me or mine.

Pat. I'm sure of that, ma'am,—you would not demane yourself to the likes.

Catty. Mark me, Pat Coxe, now—with all them fat bullocks at her back, and with all them fresh roses in her cheeks—and I don't say but she's a likely girl, if she wa'n't a Mac Bride; but with all that, and if she was the best spinner in the three counties—and I don't say but she's good, if she wa'n't a Mac Bride;—but was she the best of the best, and the fairest of the fairest, and had she to boot the two stockings full of gould, Honor M'Bride shall never be brought home, a daughter-in-law to me! My pride's up.

* *Good men*—men who fight well.

Pat. (*aside*) And I'm instructed to keep it up. ——(*Aloud.*) True, for ye, ma'am, and I wish that all had as much proper pride, as ought to be having it.

Catty. There's maning in your eye, Pat—give it tongue.

Pat. If you did not hear it, I suppose there's no truth in it.

Catty. What?—which?

Pat. That your son Randal, Mrs. Rooney, is not of your way of thinking about Honor M'Bride, maybe's.

Catty. Tut! No matter what way of thinking he is—a young slip of a boy like him does not know what he'll think to-morrow. He's a good son to me; and in regard to a wife, one girl will do him as well as another, if he has any sinse—and I'll find him a girl that will plase him, I'll engage.

Pat. May be so, ma'am—no fear: only boys do like to be plasing themselves, by times—and I noticed something.

Catty. What did you notice?—till me, Pat, dear, quick.

Pat. No—'tis bad to be meddling and remarking to get myself ill-will; so I'll keep myself to myself: for Randal's ready enough with his hand as you with the tongue—no offence, Mrs. Rooney, ma'am.

Catty. Niver fear—only till me the truth, Pat, dear.

Pat. Why, then, to the best of my opinion, I seen Honor M'Bride just now giving Randal Rooney the meeting behind the chapel; and I seen him putting a ring on her finger.

Catty. (*clasping her hands*) Oh, murder!—Oh! the unnat'ral monsters that love makes of these young men; and the traitor, to use me so, when he promised he'd never make a stolen match unknown'st to me.

Pat. Oh, ma'am, I don't say—I wouldn't swear—it's a match yet.

Catty. Then I'll run down and stop it—and catch 'em.

Pat. You haven't your jock on, ma'am—(*she turns towards the house*)—and it's no use—for you won't catch 'em: I seen them after, turning the back way into Nick Flaherty's.

Catty. Nick Flaherty's, the publican's? oh, the sinners! And this is the saint that Honor M'Bride would be passing herself upon us for? And all the edication she got at Mrs. Carver's Sunday school! Oh, this comes of being better than one's neighbours! A fine thing to tell Mrs. Carver, the English lady, that's so nice, and so partial to miss Honor M'Bride! Oh, I'll expose her!

Pat. Oh! sure, Mrs. Rooney, you promised you'd not tell. (*Standing so as to stop* CATTY.)

Catty. Is it who told me? No—I won't mintion a sintence of your name. But let me by—I won't be put off now I've got the scent. I'll hunt 'em out, and drag her to shame, if they're above ground, or my name's not Catty Rooney! Mick! Mick! little Mick! (*calling at the cottage door*) bring my blue *jock* up the road after me to Ballynavogue. Don't let me count three till you're after me, or I'll bleed ye! (*Exit* CATTY, *shaking her closed hand, and re-*

peating) I'll expose Honor M'Bride—I'll expose Honor! I will, by the blessing!

Pat. (*alone*) Now, if Randal Rooney would hear, he'd make a jelly of me, and how I'd trimble; or the brother, if he comed across me, and knewed. But they'll niver know. Oh, Catty won't say a sintence of my name, was she carded! No, Catty's a scould, but has a conscience. Then I like conscience in them I have to dale with sartainly. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

Mrs. CARVER'S *Dressing-room.*

HONOR M'BRIDE and MISS BLOOMSBURY *discovered.*

Honor. How *will* I know, miss Bloomsbury, when it will be twelve o'clock?

Bloom. You'll hear the clock strike: but I suspect you'se don't understand the clock yet—well, you'll hear the workmen's bell.

Honor. I know, ma'am, oh I know, true—only I was flurried, so I forgot.

Bloom. Flurried! but never be flurried. Now mind and keep your head upon your shoulders, while I tell you all your duty—you'll just *ready* this here room, your lady's dressing-room; not a parti*cal* of dust let me never find, petticlarly behind the vindor shuts.

Honor. Vindor shuts!—where, ma'am?

Bloom. The *shuts* of the *vindors*—did you never hear of a vindor, child?

Honor. Never, ma'am.

Bloom. (*pointing to a window*) Don't tell me! why, your head is a wool-gathering! Now, mind me, pray—see here, always you put that there,—and this here, and that upon that—and this upon this, and this under that,—and that under this—you can remember that much, child, I supposes?

Honor. I'll do my endeavour, ma'am, to remember all.

Bloom. But mind, now, my good girl, you takes *petticlar* care of this here pyramint of japanned china—and *very* petticlar care of that there great joss—and the *very most petticularest* care of this here right reverend Mandolene. (*Pointing to and touching a Mandarin, so as to make it shake.* HONOR *starts back.*)

Bloom. It i'n't alive. Silly child, to start at a Mandolin shaking his head and beard at you. But, oh! mercy, if there i'n't enough to make him shake his head. Stand there!—stand here!—now don't you see?

Honor. *Which,* ma'am?

Bloom. "*Which, ma'am!*" you're no *witch,* indeed, if you don't see a cobweb as long as my arm. Run, run, child, for the pope's head.

Honor. Pope's head, ma'am?

Bloom. Ay, the pope's head, which you'll find under the stairs. Well, a'n't you gone? what do you stand there, like a stuck pig, for?—Never see a pope's head?—never 'ear of a pope's head?

Honor. I've heard of one, ma'am—with the priest; but we are protestants.

Bloom. Protestants! what's that to do? I do pro-

test, I believe that little head of yours is someway got wrong on your shoulders to-day.

[*The clock strikes*—HONOR, *who is close to it, starts.*

Bloom. Start again!—why, you're all starts and fits. Never start, child! so ignoramus like! 'tis only the clock in your ear,—twelve o'clock, hark!—The bell will ring now in a hurry. Then you goes in there to my lady—stay, you'll never be able, I dare for to say, for to open the door without me; for I opine you are not much usen'd to brass locks in Hirish cabins—can't be expected. See here then! You turns the lock in your hand this'n ways—the *lock*, mind now; not the *key* nor the bolt for your life, child, else you'd bolt your lady in, and there'd be my lady in Lob's pound, and there'd be a pretty kettle of fish!—So you keep, if you can, all I said to you in your head, if possible—and you goes in there—and I goes out here. [*Exit* BLOOMSBURY.

Honor. (*curtsying*) Thank ye, ma'am. Then all this time I'm sensible I've been behaving and looking little better than like a fool, or an *innocent.*—But I hope I won't be so bad when the lady shall speak to me. (*The bell rings.*) Oh, the bell summons me in here.—(*Speaks with her hand on the lock of the door.*) The lock's asy enough—I hope I'll take courage—(*sighs.*)—Asier to spake before one *nor* two, any way—and asier tin times to the mistress than the maid. [*Exit* HONOR.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

GERALD O'BLANEY'S *Counting-house.*

O'BLANEY *alone.*

O'Bla. Then I wonder that ould Matthew M'Bride is not here yet. But is not this Pat Coxe coming up yonder? Ay. Well, Pat, what success with Catty?

Enter PAT COXE, *panting.*

Take breath, man alive—What of Catty?

Pat. Catty! Oh, murder! No time to be talking of Catty, now! Sure the shupervizor's come to town.

O'Bla. Blood!—and the malt that has not paid duty in the cellar! Run, for your life, to the back-yard, give a whistle to call all the boys that's ricking o' the turf, away with 'em to the cellar, out with every sack of malt that's in it, through the back-yard, throw all into the middle of the turf-stack, and in the wink of an eye build up the rick over all, snoog (snug).

Pat. I'll engage we'll have it done in a crack.

[*Exit* PAT.

O'Bla. (*calling after him*) Pat! Pat Coxe! man!

Re-enter PAT.

O'Bla. Would there be any fear of any o' the boys *informin?*

Pat. Sooner cut their ears off! [*Exit* PAT.

Enter OLD M'BRIDE, *at the opposite side.*

Old M'B. (*speaking in a slow drawling brogue*) Would Mr. Gerald O'Blaney, the counsellor, be within?

O'Bla. (*quick brogue*) Oh, my best friend, Matthew M'Bride, is it you, dear? Then here's Gerald O'Blaney, always at your sarvice. But shake hands; for of all men in Ireland, you are the man I was aching to lay my eyes on. And in the fair did ye happen to meet Carver of Bob's Fort?

Old M'B. (*speaking very slowly*) Ay, did I—and he was a-talking to me, and I was a talking to him—and he's a very good gentleman, Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort—so he is—and a gentleman that knows how things should be; and he has been giving of me, Mr. O'Blaney, a great account of you, and how you're thriving in the world—and so as that.

O'Bla. Nobody should know that better than Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort—he knows all my affairs. He is an undeniable honest gentleman, for whom I profess the highest regard.

Old M'B. Why then he has a great opinion of you, too, counsellor—for he has been advising of, and telling of me, O'Blaney, of your proposhal, sir—and very sinsible I am of the honour done by you to our family, sir—and condescension to the likes of us—tho' to be sure, Honor M'Bride, though she is my daughter, is a match for any man.

O'Bla. Is a match for a prince—a Prince Ragent even. So no more about condescension, my good Matthew, for love livels all distinctions.

Old M'B. That's very pretty of you to say so, sir; and I'll repeat it to Honor.

O'Bla. Cupid is the great liveller, after all, and the only democrat Daity on earth I'd bow to—for I know you are no democrat, Mr. M'Bride, but quite and clane the contrary way.

Old M'B. Quite and clane and stiff, I thank my God; and I'm glad, in spite of the vowel before your name, Mr. O'Blaney, to hear you are of the same kidney.

O'Bla. I'm happy to find myself agreeable to you, sir.

Old M'B. But, however agreeable to me, as I won't deny, it might be, sir, to see my girl made into a gentlewoman by marriage, I must observe to you——

O'Bla. And I'll keep her a jaunting car to ride about the country; and in another year, as my fortune's rising, my wife should rise with it into a coach of her own.

Old M'B. Oh! if I'd live to see my child, my Honor, in a coach of her own! I'd be too happy—oh, I'd die content!

O'Bla. (*aside*) No fear!—(*Aloud.*)—And why should not she ride in her own coach, mistress counsellor O'Blaney, and look out of the windows down upon the *Roonies*, that have the insolence to look up to her?

Old M'B. Ah! you know *that* then. That's all that's against us, sir, in this match.

O'Bla. But if *you* are against Randal, no fear.

Old M'B. I am against him—that is, against his

family, and all his seed, breed, and generation. But I would not break my daughter's heart if I could help it.

O'Bla. Wheugh!—hearts don't break in these days, like china.

Old M'B. This is my answer, Mr. O'Blaney, sir: you have my lave, but you must have hers too.

O'Bla. I would not fear to gain that in due time, if you would stand my friend in forbidding her the sight of Randal.

Old M'B. I will with pleasure, that—for tho' I won't force her to marry to plase me, I'll forbid her to marry to displase me; and when I've said it, whatever it is, I'll be obeyed. (*Strikes his stick on the ground.*)

O'Bla. That all I ax.

Old M'B. But now what settlement, counshillor, will you make on my girl?

O'Bla. A hundred a year—I wish to be liberal—Mr. Carver will see to that—he knows all my affairs, as I suppose he was telling you.

Old M'B. He was—I'm satisfied, and I'm at a word myself always. You heard me name my girl's portion, sir?

O'Bla. I can't say—I didn't mind—'twas no object to me in life.

Old M'B. (*in a very low, mysterious tone, and slow brogue*) Then five hundred guineas is some object to most men.

O'Bla. Certainly, sir; but not such an object as your daughter to me: since we are got upon business, however, best settle all that out of the way, as you

say at once. Of the five hundred, I have two in my hands already, which you can make over to me with a stroke of a pen. (*Rising quickly, and getting pen, ink, and books.*)

Old M'B. (*speaking very slowly*) Stay a bit—no hurry—in life. In business—'tis always most haste, worse speed.

O'Bla. Take your own time, my good Matthew—I'll be as slow as you plase—only love's quick.

Old M'B. Slow and sure—love and all—fast bind, fast find—three and two, what does that make?

O'Bla. It used to make five before I was in love.

Old M'B. And will the same after you're married and dead. What am I thinking of? A score of bullocks I had in the fair—half a score sold in my pocket, and owing half—that's John Dolan, twelve pound tin—and Charley Duffy nine guineas and thirteen tin pinnies and a five-penny bit: stay, then, put that to the hundred guineas in the stocking at home.

O'Bla. (*aside*) How he makes my mouth water! (*Aloud*) May be, Matthew, I could, that am used to it, save you the trouble of counting?

Old M'B. No trouble in life to me ever to count my money—only I'll trouble you, sir, if you please, to lock that door; bad to be chinking and spreading money with doors open, for walls has ears and eyes.

O'Bla. True for you. (*Rising, and going to lock the doors.*)

[*Old* M'BRIDE *with great difficulty, and very*

slowly, draws out of his pocket his bag of money —looking first at one door, and then at the other, and going to try whether they are locked, before he unties his bag.

Old M'B. (*spreads and counts his money and notes*) See me now, I wrote on some scrap somewhere 59*l.* in notes—then hard cash, twinty pounds—rolled up silver and gould, which is scarce—but of a hundred pounds there's wanting fourteen pounds odd, I think, or something that way; for Phil and I had our breakfast out of a one pound note of Finlay's, and I put the change somewhere—besides a ribbon for Honor, which make a deficiency of fourteen pounds seven shillings and two pence—that's what's deficient —count it which way you will.

O'Bla. (*going to sweep the money off the table*) Oh! never mind the deficiency—I'll take it for a hundred plump.

Old M'B. (*stopping him*) Plump me, no plumps —I'll have it exact, or not at all—I'll not part it, so let me see it again.

O'Bla. (*aside with a deep sigh, almost a groan*) Oh! when I had had it in my fist—almost: but 'tis as hard to get money out of this man as blood out of a turnip; and I'll be lost to-night without it.

Old M'B. 'Tis not exact—and I'm exact: I'll put it all up again—(*he puts it deliberately into the bag again, thrusting the bag into his pocket*)—I'll make it up at home my own way, and send it in to you by Phil in an hour's time; for I could not sleep sound with so much in my house—bad people about—safer with you in town. Mr. Carver says, you are as good

as the Bank of Ireland—there's no going beyond that. (*Buttoning up his pockets.*) So you may unlock the doors and let me out now—I'll send Phil with all to you, and you'll give him a bit of a receipt or a token, that would do.

O'Bla. I shall give a receipt by all means—all regular: short accounts make long friends. (*Unlocks the door.*)

Old M'B. True, sir, and I'll come in and see about the settlements in the morning, if Honor is agreeable.

O'Bla. I shall make it my business to wait upon the young lady myself on the wings of love; and I trust I'll not find any remains of Randal Rooney in her head.

Old M'B. Not if I can help it, depend on that. (*They shake hands.*)

O'Bla. Then, fare ye well, father-in-law—that's meat and drink to me: would not ye take a glass of wine then?

Old M'B. Not a drop—not a drop at all—with money about me: I must be in a hurry home.

O'Bla. That's true—so best: recommind me kindly to miss Honor, and say a great dale about my impatience—and I'll be expicting Phil, and won't shut up till he comes the night.

Old M'B. No, don't; for he'll be with you before night-fall. [*Exit* M'BRIDE.

O'Bla. (*calling*) Dan! open the door, there: Dan! Joe! open the door smart for Mr. M'Bride! (O'BLANEY *rubbing his hands.*) Now I think I may pronounce myself made for life—success to my

parts!—and here's Pat too! Well, Pat Coxe, what news of the thing in hand?

Enter PAT COXE.

Pat. Out of hand clane! that job's nately done. The turf-rick, sir, 's built up cliver, with the malt snug in the middle of its stomach—so were the shupervishor a conjuror even, barring he'd dale with the ould one, he'd never suspict a sentence of it.

O'Bla. Not he—he's no conjuror: many's the dozen tricks I played him afore now.

Pat. But, counshillor, there's the big veshel in the little passage—I got a hint from a friend, that the shuper got information of the spirits in that from some villain.

O'Bla. And do you think I don't know a trick for that, too?

Pat. No doubt: still, counshillor, I'm in dread of my life that that great big veshel won't be imptied in a hurry.

O'Bla. Won't it? but you'll see it will, though; and what's more, them spirits will turn into water for the shupervisor.

Pat. Water! how?

O'Bla. Asy—the ould tan-pit that's at the back of the distillery.

Pat. I know—what of it?

O'Bla. A sacret pipe I've got fixed to the big veshel, and the pipe goes under the wall for me into the tan-pit, and a sucker I have in the big veshel, which I pull open by a string in a crack, and lets all off all clane into the tan-pit.

Pat. That's capital!—but the water?

O'Bla. From the pump, another pipe—and the girl's pumping asy, for she's to wash to-morrow, and knows nothing about it; and so the big veshel she fills with water, wondering what ails the water that it don't come—and I set one boy and another to help her—and the pump's bewitched, and that's all:—so that's settled.

Pat. And cleverly. Oh! counshillor, we are a match for the shuper any day or night.

O'Bla. For him and all his tribe, *coursing* officers and all. I'd desire no better sport than to hear the whole pack in full cry after me, and I doubling, and doubling, and safe at my form at last. With you, Pat, my precious, to drag the herring over the ground previous to the hunt, to distract the scent, and defy the nose of the dogs.

Pat. Then I am proud to sarve you, counshillor.

O'Bla. I know you are, and a very honest boy. And what did you do for me, with Catty Rooney?

Pat. The best.—Oh! it's I *blarny'd* Catty to the skies, and then egged her on, and aggravated her against the M'Brides, till I left her as mad as e'er a one in Bedlam—up to any thing! And full tilt she's off to Flaherty's, the publican, in her blue jock—where she'll not be long afore she kicks up a quarrel, I'll engage; for she's sarching the house for Honor M'Bride, who is *not* in it—and giving bad language, I warrant, to all the M'Bride faction, who *is* in it, drinking. Oh! trust Catty's tongue for breeding a riot! In half an hour, I'll warrant, you'll have as fine a fight in town as ever ye seen or *hard*.

O'Bla. That's iligantly done, Pat. But I hope Randal Rooney is in it?

Pat. In the thick of he it he is, or will be. So I hope your honour did not forgit to spake to Mr. Carver about that little place for me?

O'Bla. Forgit!—Do I forgit my own name, do you think? Sooner forgit that *then* my promises.

Pat. Oh! I beg your honour's pardon—I would not doubt your word; and to make matters sure, and to make Catty cockahoop, I tould her, and swore to her, there was not a M'Bride in the town but two, and there's twinty, more or less.

O'Bla. And when she sees them twinty, more or less, what will she think?—Why would you say that —she might find you out in a lie next minute, Mr. Overdo? 'Tis dangerous for a young man to be telling more lies than is absolutely requisite. The *lie superfluous* brings many an honest man, and, what's more, many a cliver fellow, into a scrape—and that's your great fau't, Pat.

Pat. Which, sir?

O'Bla. *That,* sir. I don't see you often now take a glass too much. But, Pat, I hear you often still are too apt to indulge in a lie too much.

Pat. Lie! Is it I?—Whin upon my conscience, I niver to my knowledge tould a lie in my life, since I was born, excipt it would be just to skreen a man, which is charity, sure,—or to skreen myself, which is self-defence, sure—and that's lawful; or to oblige your honour, by particular desire, and *that* can't be helped, I suppose.

O'Bla. I am not saying again all that—only (*lay-*

ing his hand on PAT'*s shoulder as he is going out*) against another time, all I'm warning you, young man, is, you're too apt to think there never can be lying enough. Now too much of a good thing is good for nothing. [*Exit* O'BLANEY.

PAT, *alone.*

Pat. There's what you may call the divil rebuking sin—and now we talk of the like as, I've hard my *mudther* say, that he had need of a long spoon that ates wid the divil—so I'll look to that in time. But who's voice is that I hear coming up stairs? I don't believe but it's Mr. Carver—only what should bring him back again, I wonder now? Here he is, all out of breath, coming.

Enter Mr. CARVER.

Mr. Carv. Pray, young man, did you happen to see——(*panting for breath*) Bless me, I've ridden so fast back from Bob's Fort!

Pat. My master, sir, Mr. O'Blaney, is it? Will I run?

Mr. Carv. No, no—stand still till I have breath. —What I want is a copy of a letter I dropped some where or other—here I think it must have been, when I took out my handkerchief—a copy of a letter to his excellency—of great consequence. (*Mr.* CARVER *sits down and takes breath.*)

Pat. (*searching about with officious haste*) If it's above ground, I'll find it. What's this?—an old bill: that is not it. Would it be this, crumpled up? —" To his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."

Mr. Carv. (*snatching*) No farther, for your life!

Pat. Well then I was lucky I found it, and proud.

Mr. Carv. And well you may be, young man; for I can assure you, on this letter the fate of Ireland may depend. (*Smoothing the letter on his knee.*)

Pat. I wouldn't doubt it—when it's a letter of your honour's—I know your honour's a great man at the castle. And plase your honour, I take this opportunity of tanking your honour for the encouragement I got about that little clerk's place—and here's a copy of my hand-writing I'd wish to show your honour, to see I'm capable—and a scholard.

Mr. Carv. Hand-writing! Bless me, young man, I have no time to look at your hand-writing, sir. With the affairs of the nation on my shoulders—can you possibly think?—is the boy mad?—that I've time to revise every poor scholar's copy-book?

Pat. I humbly beg your honour's pardon, but it was only becaase I'd wish to show I was not quite so unworthy to be under (whin you've time) your honour's protection, as promised.

Mr. Carv. My protection?—you are not under my protection, sir:—promised clerk's place?—I do not conceive what you are aiming at, sir.

Pat. The little clerk's place, plase your honour—that my master, counshillor O'Blaney, tould me he spoke about to your honour, and was recommending me for to your honour.

Mr. Carv. Never—never heard one syllable about it, till this moment.

Pat. Oh! murder:—but I expect your honour's goodness will——

Mr. Carv. To make your mind easy, I promised to

appoint a young man to that place, a week ago, by counsellor O'Blaney's special recommendation. So there must be some mistake. [*Exit Mr.* CARVER.

PAT, *alone.*

Pat. Mistake? ay, mistake on purpose. So he never spoke! so he lied!—my master that was praching me! And oh, the dirty lie he tould me! Now I can't put up with that, when I was almost perjuring myself for him at the time. Oh, if I don't fit him for this! And he got the place given to another!—then I'll get him as well sarved, and out of this place too—seen-if-I-don't! He is cunning enough, but I'm cuter nor he—I have him in my power, so I have! and I'll give the shupervizor a scent of the malt in the turf-stack—and a hint of the spirits in the tan-pit—and it's I that will like to stand by innocent, and see how shrunk O'Blaney's double face will look forenent the shupervizor, when all's found out, and not a word left to say, but to pay —ruined hand and foot! Then that shall be, and before nightfall. Oh! one good turn deserves another —in revenge, prompt payment while you live!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

M'BRIDE'S *Cottage.*

MATTHEW M'BRIDE *and* HONOR. (MATTHEW *with a little table before him, at dinner.*)

Old M'B. (*pushing his plate from him*) I'll take no more—I'm done. [*He sighs.*

Honor. Then you made but a poor dinner, father,

after being at the fair, and up early, and all!—Take this bit from my hands, father dear.

Old M'B. (*turning away sullenly*) I'll take nothing from you, Honor, but what I got already enough—and too much of—and that's ungratitude.

Honor. Ungratitude, father! then you don't see my heart.

Old M'B. I lave that to whoever has it, Honor: 'tis enough for me, I see what you do—and that's what I go by.

Honor. Oh me! and what did I do to displase you, father? (*He is obstinately silent; after waiting in vain for an answer, she continues*) I that was thinking to make all happy, (*aside*) but myself, (*aloud*) by settling to keep out of the way of—all that could vex you—and to go to sarvice, to Mrs. Carver's. I thought *that* would plase you, father.

Old M'B. Is it to lave me, Honor? Is it *that* you thought would plase me, Honor?—To lave your father alone in his ould age, after all the slaving he got and was willing to undergo, whilst ever he had strength, early and late, to make a little portion for you, Honor,—you, that I reckoned upon for the prop and pride of my ould age—and you expect you'd plase me by laving me.

Honor. Hear me just if, pray then, father.

Old M'B. (*shaking her off as she tries to caress him*) Go, then; go where you will, and demane yourself going into sarvice, rather than stay with me—go.

Honor. No, I'll not go. I'll stay then with you, father dear,—say that will plase you.

Old M'B. (*going on without listening to her*) And all for the love of this Randal Rooney! Ay, you may well put your two hands before your face; if you'd any touch of natural affection at all, *that* young man would have been the last of all others you'd ever have thought of loving or liking any way.

Honor. Oh! if I could help it!

Old M'B. There it is. This is the way the poor fathers is always to be trated. They to give all, daughter and all, and get nothing at all, not their choice even of the man, the villain that's to rob 'em of all—without thanks even; and of all the plinty of bachelors there are in the parish for the girl that has money, that daughter will go and pick and choose out the very man the father mislikes beyond all others, and then it's "*Oh! if I could help it!*"—Asy talking!

Honor. But, dear father, wasn't it more than talk, what I did?—Oh, won't you listen to me?

Old M'B. I'll not hear ye; for if you'd a grain o' spirit in your mane composition, Honor, you would take your father's part, and not be putting yourself under Catty's feet—the bad-tongued woman, that hates you, Honor, like poison.

Honor. If she does hate me, it's all through love of her own——

Old M'B. Son—ay—that she thinks too good for you—for *you,* Honor; you, the lily of Lismore—that might command the pride of the country. Oh! Honor dear, don't be lessening yourself; but be a proud girl, as you ought, and my own Honor.

Honor. Oh, when you speak so kind!

Old M'B. And I beg your pardon, if I said a cross word; for I know you'll never think of him more, and no need to lave home at all for his sake. It would be a shame in the country, and what would Mrs. Carver herself think?

Honor. She thinks well of it, then.

Old M'B. Then whatever she thinks, she sha'n't have my child from me! tho' she's a very good lady, and a very kind lady, too. But see now, Honor —have done with love, for it's all foolishness; and when you come to be as ould as I am, you'll think so too. The shadows goes all one way, till the middle of the day, and when that is past, then all the t'other way; and so it is with love, in life—stay till the sun is going down with you.

Honor. Then it would be too late to be thinking of love.

Old M'B. And too airly now, and there's no good time, for it's all folly. I'll ax you, will love set the potatoes?—will love make the rent?—or will love give you a jaunting car?—as to my knowledge, another of your bachelors would.

Honor. Oh, don't name him, father.

Old M'B. Why not—when it's his name that would make a lady of you, and there'd be a rise in life, and an honour to your family?

Honor. Recollect it was he that would have dishonoured my family, in me, if he could.

Old M'B. But he repints now; and what can a man do but repint, and offer to make honourable

restitution, and thinking of marrying, as now, Honor dear;—is not that a condescension of he, who's a sort of a jantleman?

Honor. A sort, indeed—a bad sort.

Old M'B. Why, not jantleman *born* to be sure.

Honor. Nor *bred.*

Old M'B. Well, there's many that way, neither born nor bred, but that does very well in the world; and think what it would be to live in the big shingled house, in Ballynavogue, with him!

Honor. I'd rather live here with you, father.

Old M'B. Then I thank you kindly, daughter, for that, but so would not *I for* you,—and then the jaunting-car, or a coach, in time, if he could! He has made the proposhal for you in form this day.

Honor. And what answer from you, father?

Old M'B. Don't be looking so pale,—I tould him he had my consint, if he could get yours. And, oh! before you speak, Honor dear, think what it would be up and down in Ballynavogue, and every other place in the county, assizes days and all, to be mistress Gerald O'Blaney!

Honor. I couldn't but think very ill of it, father; thinking ill, as I do, of him. Father dear, say no more, don't be breaking my heart—I'll never have that man; but I'll stay happy with you.

Old M'B. Why, then, I'll be contint with that same; and who wouldn't?—If it's what you'd rather stay, and *can* stay contint, Honor dear, I'm only too happy. (*Embracing her—then pausing.*) But for Randal——

Honor. In what can you fau't him, only his being a Rooney?

Old M'B. That's all—but that's enough. I'd sooner see you in your coffin—sooner be at your wake to-night, than your wedding with a Rooney! 'Twould kill me. Come, promise me—I'd trust your word—and 'twould make me asy for life, and I'd die asy, if you'd promise never to have him.

Honor. Never till you would consent—that's all I can promise.

Old M'B. Well, that same is a great ase to my heart.

Honor. And to give a little ase to mine, father, perhaps you could promise——

Old M'B. What?—I'll promise nothing at all—I'll promise nothing at all—I'll promise nothing I could'nt perform.

Honor. But this you could perform asy, dear father: just hear your own Honor.

Old M'B. (*aside*) That voice would wheedle the bird off the bush—and when she'd prefar me to the jaunting-car, can I but listen to her? (*Aloud.*) Well, what?—if it's any thing at all in rason.

Honor. It is in rason entirely. It's only, that if Catty Rooney's——

Old M'B. (*stopping his ears*) Don't name her.

Honor. But she might be brought to rason, father; and if she should be brought to give up that claim to the bit o' bog of yours, and when all differs betwix' the families be made up, then you would consent.

Old M'B. When Catty Rooney's brought to rason! Oh! go shoe the goslings, dear,—ay, you'll get my

consint then. There's my hand: I promise you, I'll never be called on to perform that, Honor, jewel.

Honor. (*kissing his hand*) Then that's all I'd ask —nor will I say one word more, but thank you, father.

Old M'B. (*putting on his coat*) She's a good cratur—sorrow better! sister or daughter. Oh! I won't forget that she prefarred me to the jaunting-car. Phil shall carry him a civil refusal. I'll send off the money, the three hundred, by your brother, this minute—that will be some comfort to poor O'Blaney. [*Exit* M'BRIDE.

Honor. Is not he a kind father, then, after all?— That promise he gave me about Catty, even such as it is, has ased my heart wonderfully. Oh! it will all come right, and they'll all be rasonable in time, even Catty Rooney, I've great hope; and little hope's enough, even for love to live upon. But, hark! there's my brother Phil coming. (*A noise heard in the back-house.*) 'Tis only the cow in the bier. (*A knock heard at the door.*) No, 'tis a christian; no cow ever knocked so soft. Stay till I open—Who's in it?

Randal. (*from within*) Your own Randal—open quick.

Honor. Oh! Randal, is it you? I can't open the door. [*She holds the door—he pushes it half open.*

Randal. Honor, that I love more than life, let me in, till I speak one word to you, before you're set against me for ever.

Honor. No danger of that—but I can't let you in, Randal.

Randal. Great danger! Honor, and you must. See you I will, if I die for it!

[*He advances, and she retires behind the door, holding it against him.*

Honor. Then I won't see you this month again, if you do. My hand's weak, but my heart's strong, Randal.

Randal. Then my heart's as weak as a child's this minute. Never fear—don't hold against me, Honor; I'll stand where I am, since you don't trust me, nor love me—and best so, may be: I only wanted to say three words to you.

Honor. I can't hear you now, Randal.

Randal. Then you'll never hear me more. Good bye to you, Honor. [*He pulls the door to, angrily.*

Honor. And it's a wonder as it was you didn't meet my father as you came, or my brother.

Randal. (*pushing the door a little open again*) Your brother!—Oh, Honor! that's what's breaking my heart—(*he sighs*)—that's what I wanted to say to you; and listen to me. No fear of your father, he's gone down the road: I saw him as I come the short cut, but he did'nt see me.

Honor. What of my brother?—say, and go.

Randal. Ay, go—for ever, you'll bid me, when I've said.

Honor. What! oh, speak, or I'll drop.—(*She no longer holds the door, but leans against a table.*—RANDAL *advances, and looks in.*)

Randal. Don't be frightened then, dearest—it's nothing in life but a fight at a fair. He's but little hurted.

Honor. Hurted !—and by who ? by you, is it ?—Then all's over.—(RANDAL *comes quite in*—HONOR, *putting her hand before her eyes.*)—You may come or go, for I'll never love you more.

Randal. I expicted as much !—But she'll faint !

Honor. I won't faint : leave me, Mr. Randal.

Randal. Take this water from me, (*holding a cup*) it's all I ask.

Honor. No need. (*She sits down*) But what's this ?—(*Seeing his hand bound up.*)

Randal. A cut only.

Honor. Bleeding—stop it. (*Turning from him coldly.*)

Randal. Then by this blood—no, not by this worthless blood of mine—but by that dearest blood that fled from your cheeks, and this minute is coming back, Honor, I swear——(*kneeling to her.*)

Honor. Say what you will, or swear, I don't hear or heed you. And my father will come and find you there—and I don't care.

Randal. I know you don't—and I don't care myself what happens me. But as to Phil, it's only a cut in the head he got, that signifies nothing—if he was not your brother.

Honor. Once lifted your hand against him—all's over.

Randal. Honor, I did not lift my hand against *him ;* but I was in the quarrel with his faction.

Honor. And this your promise to me not to be in any quarrel ! No, if my father consented to-morrow, I'd nivir have you now. (*Rises, and is going—he holds her.*)

Randal. Then your're wrong, Honor: you've heard all against me—now hear what's for me.

Honor. I'll hear no more—let me go.

Randal. Go then; (*he lets her go, and turns away himself*) and I'm going before Mr. Carver, who *will* hear me, and the truth will appear—and tho' not from you, Honor, I'll have justice. [*Exit* RANDAL.

Honor. Justice! Oh, worse and worse! to make all public; and if once we go to law, there's an end of love—*for ever.* [*Exit* HONOR.

SCENE III.

O'BLANEY'S *House.*

O'BLANEY *and* CATTY ROONEY.

Catty. And did'nt ye hear it, counshillor? the uproar in the town and the riot?—oh! you'd think the world was throwing out at windows. See my jock, all tattered! Didn't ye hear?

O'Bla. How could I hear, backwards, as you see, from the street, and given up to my business?

Catty. Business! oh! here is a fine business—the M'Brides have driven all before them, and chased the Roonies out of Ballynavogue. (*In a tone of deep despair.*) Oh! Catty Rooney! that ever you'd live to see this day!

O'Bla. Then take this glass (*offering a glass of whiskey*) to comfort your heart, my good Mrs. Rooney.

Catty. No, thank you, counshillor, it's past that even! ogh! ogh!—oh! wirrastrew!—oh! wirrastrew,

ogh!—(*After wringing her hands, and yielding to a burst of sorrow and wailing, she stands up firmly.*) Now I've ased my heart, I'll do. I've spirit enough left in me yet, you'll see; and I'll tell you what I came to you for, counsellor.

O'Bla. Tell me first, is Randal Rooney in it, and is he hurt?

Catty. He was in it: he's not hurt, more shame for him! But, howsomever, he bet one boy handsomely; that's my only comfort. Our faction's all going full drive to swear examinations, and get justice.

O'Bla. Very proper—very proper: swear examinations—that's the course, and only satisfaction in these cases to get justice.

Catty. Justice!—revenge sure! Oh! revenge is sweet, and I'll have it. Counsellor dear, I never went before Mr. Carver—you know him, sir—what sort is he?

O'Bla. A mighty good sort of gentleman—only mighty tiresome.

Catty. Ay, that's what I hard—that he is mighty fond of talking to people for their good. Now that's what I dread, for I can't stand being talked to for my good.

O'Bla. 'Tis little use, I confess. We Irish is wonderful soon tired of goodness, if there's no spice of fun along with it; and poor Carver's soft, and between you and I, he's a little bothered, but, Mrs. Rooney, you won't repate?

Catty. Repate!—I! I'm neither watch nor repater—I scorn both; and between you and I, since you

say so, counshillor, that's my chiefest objection to Carver, whom I wouldn't know from Adam, except by reputation. But it's the report of the country, that he has common informers in his pay and favour; now that's mane, and I don't like it.

O'Bla. Nor I, Mrs. Rooney. I had experience of informers in the distillery line once. The worst varmin that is ever encouraged in any house or country. The very mintion of them makes me creep all over still.

Catty. Then 'tis Carver, they say, that has the oil of Rhodium for them; for they follow and fawn on him, like rats on the rat-catcher—of all sorts and sizes, he has 'em. They say, he sets them over and after one another; and has *lations* of them that he lets out on the craturs' cabins, to larn how many grains of salt every man takes with his little *prates*, and bring information if a straw would be stirring.

O'Bla. Ay, and if it would, then, it's Carver that would quake like the aspin leaf—I know that. It's no malice at all in him; only just he's a mighty great poltroon.

Catty. Is that all? Then I'd pity and laugh at him, and I go to him preferably to any other magistrate.

O'Bla. You may, Mrs. Rooney—for it's in terror of his life he lives, continually draming day and night, and croaking of carders and thrashers, and oak boys, and white boys, and peep-o'-day boys, and united boys, and ribbon-men, and men and boys of all sorts that have, and that have not, been up and down the country since the rebellion.

Catty. The poor cratur! But in case he'd prove refractory, and would not take my examinations, can't I persecute my shute again the M'Brides for the bit of the bog of Ballynascraw, counshillor?—Can't I *harash* 'em at law?

O'Bla. You can, ma'am, harash them properly. I've looked over your papers, and I'm happy to tell you, you may go on at law as soon and as long as you plase.

Catty. (*speaking very rapidly*) Bless you for that word, counshillor; and by the first light to-morrow, I'll drive all the grazing cattle, every four-footed *baast* off the land, and pound 'em in Ballynavogue; and if they replevy, why I'll distrain again, if it be forty times, I will go. I'll go on distraining, and I'll advertise, and I'll cant, and I'll sell the distress at the end of the eight days. And if they dare for to go for to put a plough in that bit of reclaimed bog, I'll come down upon 'em with an injunction, and I would not value the expinse of bringing down a record a pin's pint; and if that went again me, I'd remove it to the courts above and wilcome; and after that, I'd go into equity, and if the chancillor would not be my friend, I'd take it over to the House of Lords in London, so I would as soon as look at 'em; for I'd wear my feet to the knees for justice—so I would.

O'Bla. That you would! You're an elegant lawyer, Mrs. Rooney; but have you the sinews of war?

Catty. Is it money, dear?—I have, and while ever I've one shilling to throw down to ould Matthew

M'Bride's guinea, I'll go on; and every guinea he parts will twinge his vitals: so I'll keep on while ever I've a fiv'-penny bit to rub on another—for my spirit is up.

O'Bla. Ay, ay, so you say. Catty, my dear, your back's asy up, but it's asy down again.

Catty. Not when I've been trod on as now, counshillor: it's then I'd turn and fly at a body, gentle or simple, like mad.

O'Bla. Well done, Catty (*patting her on the back*). There's my own pet mad cat—and there's a legal venom in her claws, that every scratch they'll give shall fester so no plaister in law can heal it.

Catty. Oh, counshillor, now, if you wouldn't be flattering a wake woman.

O'Bla. Wake woman!—not a bit of woman's wakeness in ye. Oh, my cat-o'-cats! let any man throw her from him, which way he will, she's on her legs and at him again, tooth and claw.

Catty. With nine lives, renewable for ever.

[*Exit* CATTY.

O'Bla. (*alone*) There's a demon in woman's form set to work for me! Oh, this works well—and no fear that the Roonies and M'Brides should ever come to an understanding to cut me out. Young Mr. Randal Rooney, my humble compliments to you, and I hope you'll become the willow which you'll soon have to wear for miss Honor M'Bride's pretty sake. But I wonder the brother a'n't come up yet with the rist of her fortune. (*Calls behind the scenes.*) Mick! Jack! Jenny! Where's Pat?——Then why don't you know? run down a piece of the road towards

Ballynascraw, see would you see any body coming, and bring me word would you see Phil M'Bride—you know, flourishing Phil.——Now I'm prepared every way for the shupervishor, only I wish to have something genteel in my fist for him, and a show of cash flying about—nothing like it, to dazzle the eyes.

[*Exit* O'BLANEY.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in Mr. CARVER'S *House. Mr.* CARVER *seated: a table, pens, ink, paper, and law-books. A clerk, pen in hand.—On the right-hand side of Mr.* CARVER *stands Mrs.* CATTY ROONEY.—RANDAL ROONEY *beside her, leaning against a pillar, his arms folded.—Behind Mrs.* ROONEY, *three men—one remarkably tall, one remarkably little.—On the left hand of Mr.* CARVER *stand Old* MATTHEW M'BRIDE, *leaning on his stick; beside him,* PHILIP M'BRIDE, *with his silver-hilted whip in his hand.—A Constable at some distance behind Mr.* CARVER'S *chair.—Mr.* CARVER *looking over and placing his books, and seeming to speak to his clerk.*

Catty. (*aside to her son*) See I'll take it asy, and be very shivel and sweet wid him, till I'll see which side he'll lane, and how it will go with us Roonies—(*Mr.* CARVER *rising, leans forward with*

both his hands on the table, as if going to speak, looks round, and clears his throat loudly.)—Will I spake now, plase your honour?

Old M'B. Dacency, when you see his honour preparing his throat.

[*Mr.* CARVER *clears his throat again.*

Catty. (*curtsying between each sentence*) Then I ixpect his honour will do me justice. I got a great character of his honour. I'd sooner come before your honour than any jantleman in all Ireland. I'm sure your honour will stand my *frind.*

Clerk. Silence!

Mr. Carv. Misguided people of Ballynavogue and Ballynascraw——

[*At the instant Mr.* CARVER *pronounces the word* "Ballynavogue," CATTY *curtsies, and all the* ROONIES, *behind her, bow, and answer*—

Here, plase your honour.

[*And when Mr.* CARVER *says* "Ballynascraw," all *the* M'BRIDE'S *bow, and reply*—

Here, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. (*speaking with pomposity, but embarrassment, and clearing his throat frequently*) When I consider and look round me, gentlemen, and when I look round me and consider, how long a period of time I have had the honour to bear his majesty's commission of the peace for this county——

Catty. (*curtsying*) Your honour's a good warrant, no doubt.

Mr. Carv. Hem!—hem!—also being a residentiary gentleman at Bob's Fort—hem!—hem! hem!—(*Coughs, and blows his nose.*)

Catty. (*aside to her son*) Choking the cratur is with the words he can't get out. (*Aloud.*) Will I spake now, plase your honour?

Clerk. Silence! silence!

Mr. Carv. And when I consider all the ineffectual attempts I have made by eloquence and otherwise, to moralize and civilize you, gentlemen, and to eradicate all your heterogeneous or rebellious passions——

Catty. Not a rebel, good or bad, among us, plase your honour.

Clerk. Silence!

Mr. Carv. I say, my good people of Ballynavogue and Ballynascraw, I stand here really in unspeakable concern and astonishment, to notice at this fair time in my barony, these symptoms of a riot, gentlemen, and features of a tumult.

Catty. True, your honour, see—scarce a symptom of a fature lift in the face here of little Charley of Killaspugbrone, with the b'ating he got from them M'Brides, who bred the riot, entirely under Flourishing Phil, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. (*turning to* PHIL M'BRIDE) Mr. Philip M'Bride, son of old Matthew, quite a substantial man,—I am really concerned, Philip, to see you, whom I looked upon as a sort of, I had almost said, *gentleman*——

Catty. *Gentleman!* what sort? Is it because of the new topped boots, or by virtue of the silver-topped whip, and the bit of a red rag tied about the throat?—Then a gentleman's asy made, now-a-days.

Young M'B. It seems 'tis not so asy any way, now-a-days, to make a *gentlewoman,* Mrs. Rooney.

Catty. (*springing forward angrily*) And is it me you mane, young man?

Randal. Oh! mother, dear, don't be aggravating.

Mr. Carv. Clerk, why don't you maintain silence?

Catty. (*pressing before her son*) Stand back, then, Randal Rooney—don't you hear *silence?*—don't be brawling before his honour. Go back wid yourself to your pillar, or post, and fould your arms, and stand like a fool that's in love, as you are.——I beg your honour's pardon, but he's my son, and I can't help it.——But about our examinations, plase your honour, we're all come to swear—here's myself, and little Charley of Killaspugbrone, and big Briny of Cloon, and Ulick of Eliogarty—all ready to swear.

Mr. Carv. But have these gentlemen no tongues of their own, madam?

Catty. No, plase your honour, little Charley has no English tongue; he has none but the native Irish.

Mr. Carv. Clerk, make out their examinations, with a translation; and interpret for Killaspugbrone.

Catty. Plase your honour, I being the lady, expicted I'd get lave to swear first.

Mr. Carv. And what would you swear, madam, if you got leave, pray?—be careful, now.

Catty. I'll tell you how it was out o' the face, plase your honour. The whole Rooney faction——

Mr. Carv. *Faction!*—No such word in my presence, madam.

Catty. Oh, but I'm ready to swear to it, plase your honour, in or out of the presence:—the whole Rooney

faction—every Rooney, big or little, that was in it, was bet, and banished the town and fair of Ballynavogue, for no rason in life, by them M'Brides there, them scum o' the earth.

Mr. Carv. Gently, gently, my good lady; no such thing in my presence, as scum o' the earth.

Catty. Well, Scotchmen, if your honour prefars. But before a Scotchman, myself would prefar the poorest spalpeen—barring it be Phil, the buckeen—I ax pardon (*curtsying*), if a buckeen's the more honourable.

Mr. Carv. Irrelevant in toto, madam; for buckeens and spalpeens are manners or species of men unknown to or not cognizable by the eye of the law; against them, therefore, you cannot swear: but if you have any thing against Philip M'Bride——

Catty. Oh, I have plinty, and will swear, plase your honour, that he put me in bodily fear, and tore my jock, my blue jock, to tatters. Oh, by the vartue of this book (*snatching up a book*), and all the books that ever were shut or opened, I'll swear to the damage of five pounds, be the same more or less.

Mr. Carv. My good lady, *more or less* will never do.

Catty. Forty shillings, any way, I'll swear to; and that's a felony, your honour, I hope?

Mr. Carv. Take time, and consult your conscience conscientiously, my good lady, while I swear these other men——

[*She examines the coat, holding it up to view—Mr.* CARVER *beckons to the Rooney party.*

Mr. Carv. Beaten men! come forward.

Big Briny. Not *beaten*, plase your honour, only *bet*.

Ulick of Eliogarty. Only black eyes, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. You, Mr. Charley or Charles Rooney, of Killaspugbrone; you have read these examinations, and are you scrupulously ready to swear?

Catty. He is, and *will*, plase your honour; only he's the boy that has got no English tongue.

Mr. Carv. I wish *you* had none, madam, ha! ha! ha! (*The two* M'BRIDES *laugh—the* ROONIES *look grave.*) You, Ulick Rooney, of Eliogarty, *are these* your examinations?

Catty. He can't write, nor rade writing from his cradle, plase your honour; but can make his mark equal to another, sir. It has been read to him any way, sir, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. And you, sir, who style yourself big Briny of Cloon—you think yourself a great man, I suppose?

Catty. It's what many does that has got less rason, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. Understand, my honest friend, that there is a vast difference between looking big and being great.

Big Briny. I see—I know, your honour.

Mr. Carv. Now, gentlemen, all of you, before I hand you the book to swear these examinations, there is one thing of which I must warn and apprize you—that I am most remarkably clear-sighted; consequently there can be no *thumb kissing* with me, gentlemen.

Big Briny. We'll not ax it, plase your honour.

Catty. No Rooney, living or dead, was ever guilty or taxed with the like! (*Aside to her son.*) Oh, they'll swear iligant! We'll flog the world, and have it all our own way! Oh, I knew we'd get justice—or I'd know why.

Clerk. Here's the book, sir, to swear complainants.

[*Mr.* CARVER *comes forward.*

Mr. Carv. Wait—wait; I must hear both sides.

Catty. Both sides! Oh, plase your honour—only bother you.

Mr. Carv. Madam, it is my duty to have ears for all men—Mr. Phillip, now for your defence.

Catty. He has none in nature, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. Madam, you have had my ear long enough—be silent, at your peril.

Catty. Ogh—ogh!—silent!

[*She groans piteously.*

Mr. Carv. Sir, your defence, without any preamble or preambulation.

Phil. I've no defence to make, plase your honour, but that I'm innocent.

Mr. Carv. (*shaking his head*) The worst defence in law, my good friend, unless you've witnesses.

Phil. All present that time in the fair was too busy fighting for themselves to witness for me that I was not; except I'd call upon one that would clear me entirely, which is that there young man on the opposite side.

Catty. Oh, the impudent fellow! Is it my son?

Old M'B. Is it Randal Rooney? Why, Phil, are you turned *innocent?*

Phil. I am not, father, at all. But with your lave, I call on Randal Rooney, for he is an undeniable honourable man—I refer all to his evidence.

Randal. Thank you, Phil. I'll witness the truth, on whatever side.

Catty rushes in between them, exclaiming, in a tremendous tone, If you do, Catty Rooney's curse be upon——

Randal stops her mouth, and struggles to hold his mother back. Oh, mother, you couldn't curse.

[*All the* ROONIES *get about her and exclaim,* Oh, Catty, your son you couldn't curse!

Mr. Carv. Silence, and let *me* be heard. Leave this lady to me; I know how to manage these feminine vixens. Mrs. Catherine Rooney, listen to me—you are a reasonable woman.

Catty. I am not, nor don't pretend to it, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. But you can hear reason, madam, I presume, from the voice of authority

Catty. No, plase your honour—I'm deaf, stone deaf.

Mr. Carv. No trifling with me, madam; give me leave to advise you a little for your good.

Catty. Plase your honour, it's of no use—from a child up I never could stand to be advised for my good. See, I'd get hot and hotter, plase your honour, till I'd bounce! I'd fly! I'd burst! and myself does not know what mischief I mightn't do.

Mr. Carv. Constable! take charge of this cursing and cursed woman, who has not respect for man or magistrate. Away with her out of my presence!—I commit her for a contempt.

Randal. (*eagerly*) Oh! plase your honour, I beg your honour's pardon for her—my mother—entirely. When she is in her rason, she has the greatest respect for the whole bench, and your honour above all. Oh! your honour, be plasing this once! Excuse her, and I'll go bail for her she won't say another word till she'd get the nod from your honour.

Mr. Carv. On that condition, and on that condition only, I am willing to pass over the past. Fall back, constable.

Catty. (*aside*) Why then, Gerald O'Blaney mislet me. This Carver is a *fauterer* of the Scotch. Bad luck to every bone in his body! (*As* CATTY *says this her son draws her back, and tries to pacify her.*)

Mr. Carv. Is she muttering, constable?

Randal. Not a word, plase your honour, only just telling herself to be quiet. Oh, mother, dearest, I'll kneel to plase you.

Catty. Kneel! oh, to an ould woman like me—no standing that! So here, on my hunkers I am, for your sake, Randal, and not a word, good or bad! Can woman do more? (*She sits with her fingers on her lips.*)

Mr. Carv. Now for your defence, Philip: be short, for mercy's sake! (*pulling out his watch.*)

Phil. Not to be detaining your honour too long—I was in Ballynavogue this forenoon, and was just—that is, miss Car'line Flaherty was just——

Mr. Carv. Miss Caroline Flaherty! What in nature can she have to do with the business?

Phil. Only axing me, sir, she was, to play the flageolets, which was the rason I was sitting at Flaherty's.

Mr. Carv. Address yourself to the court, young man.

Phil. Sitting at Flaherty's—in the parlour, with the door open, and all the M'Brides which was *in it* was in the outer room taking a toombler o' punch I trated 'em to—but not drinking—not a man *out o' the way*—when in comes that gentlewoman. (*Pointing to Mrs.* ROONEY.—RANDAL *groans.*) Never fear, Randal, I'll tell it as soft as I can.

Old M'B. Soft, why? Mighty soft cratur ever since he was born, plase your honour, though he's my son.

Mr. Carv. (*putting his finger on his lips*) Friend Matthew, no reflections in a court of justice ever. Go on, Philip.

Phil. So some one having tould Mrs. Rooney lies, as I'm confident, sir—for she come in quite *mad*, and abused my sister Honor; accusing her, before all, of being sitting and giving her company to Randal Rooney at Flaherty's, drinking, and something about a ring, and a meeting behind the chapel, which I couldn't understand;—but it fired me, and I stepped —but I recollected I'd promised Honor not to let her provoke me to lift a hand good or bad—so I stepped across very civil, and I said to her, says I, Ma'am, it's all lies—some one has been belying Honor M'Bride to you, Mrs. Rooney.

[CATTY *sighs and groans, striking the back of one hand reiteratedly into the palm of the other—rises—beats the devil's tattoo as she stands—then claps her hands again.*

Mr. Carv. That woman has certainly more ways

of making a noise, without speaking, than any woman upon earth. Proceed, Philip.

Phil. Depind on it, it's all lies, Mrs. Rooney, says I, ma'am. No, but *you* lie, flourishing Phil, says she. With that every M'Bride, to a man, rises from the table, catching up chairs and stools and toomblers and jugs, to revenge Honor and me. Not for your life, boys, don't *let-drive* ne'er a one of yees, says I— she's a woman, and a widow woman, and only a *scould* from her birth: so they held their hands; but she giving tongue bitter, 'twas hard for flesh and blood to stand it. Now, for the love of heaven and me, sit down all, and be *quite* as lambs, and finish your poonch like gentlemen, sir, says I: so saying, I *tuk* Mrs. Rooney up in my arms tenderly, as I would a bould child—she screeching and screeching like mad:—whereupon her jock caught on the chair, pocket-hole or something, and give one rent from head to *fut*—and that was the tattering of the jock. So we got her to the door, and there she spying her son by ill-luck in the street, directly stretches out her arms, and kicking my shins, plase your honour, till I could not hold her, "Murder! Randal Rooney," cries she, "and will you see your own mother murdered?"

Randal. Them were the very words, I acknowledge, she used, which put me past my rason, no doubt.

Phil. Then Randal Rooney, being past his rason, turns to all them Roonies that were *in no condition.*

Mr. Carv. That were, what we in English would call *drunk*, I presume?

Randal. Something very near it, plase your honour.

Phil. Sitting on the bench outside the door they were, when Randal came up. "Up, Roonies, and at 'em!" cried he; and up, to be sure, they flew, shillelahs and all, like lightning, daling blows on all of us M'Brides: but I never lifted a hand; and Randal, I'll do him justice, avoided to lift a hand against me.

Randal. And while I live I'll never forget *that* hour, nor *this* hour, Phil, and all your generous construction.

Catty. (*aside*) Why then it almost softens me; but I won't be made a fool on.

Mr. Carv. (*who has been re-considering the examinations*) It appears to me that you, Mr. Philip M'Bride, did, as the law allows, only *lay hands softly* upon complainant, Catherine Rooney; and the Roonies, as it appears, struck, and did strike, the first blow.

Randal. I can't deny, plase your honour, we did.

Mr. Carv. (*tearing the examinations*) Then, gentlemen—you, Roonies—*beaten men,* I cannot possibly take your examinations.

[*When the examinations are torn, the* M'BRIDES *all bow and thank his honour.*

Mr. Carv. Beaten men! depart in peace.

[*The* ROONIES *sigh and groan, and after turning their hats several times, bow, walk a few steps away, return, and seem loath to depart.* CATTY *springs forward, holding up her hands joined in a supplicating attitude to Mr.* CARVER.

Randal. If your honour would be plasing to let her spake now, or she'd burst, may be.

Mr. Carv. Speak now, woman, and ever after hold your tongue.

Catty. Then I am rasonable now, plase your honour; for I'll put it to the test—see, I'll withdraw my examinations entirely, and I'll recant—and I'll go farther, I'll own I'm wrong—(though I know I'm right)—and I'll beg your pardon, M'Brides, if —(but I know I'll not have to beg your pardon either)—but I say I *will* beg your pardon, M'Brides, *if*, mind *if*, you will accept my test, and it fails me.

Mr. Carv. Very fair, Mrs. Rooney.

Old M'B. What is it she's saying?

Phil. What test, Mrs. Rooney?

Randal. Dear mother, name your test.

Catty. Let Honor M'Bride be summoned, and if she can prove she took no ring, and was not behind the chapel with Randal, nor drinking at Flaherty's with him, the time she was, I give up all.

Randal. Agreed, with all the pleasure in life, mother. Oh, may I run for her?

Old M'B. Not a fut, you sir—go Phil dear.

Phil. That I will, like a lapwing, father.

Mr. Carv. Where to, sir—where so precipitate?

Phil. Only to fetch my sister.

Mr. Carv. Your sister, sir?—then you need not go far: your sister, Honor M'Bride, is, I have reason to believe, in this house.

Catty. So. Under whose protection, I wonder?

Mr. Carv. Under the protection of Mrs. Carver,

madam, into whose service she was desirous to engage herself; and whose advice——

Clerk. Shall I, if you please, sir, call Honor in?

Mr. Carv. If you please.

[*A silence.*—CATTY *stands biting her thumb.—Old* M'BRIDE *leans his chin upon his hands on his stick, and never stirs, even his eyes.—Young* M'BRIDE *looks out eagerly to the side at which* HONOR *is expected to enter*—RANDAL *looking over his shoulder, exclaims*—

There she comes!—Innocence in all her looks.

Catty. Oh! that we shall see soon. No making a fool of me.

Old M'B. My daughter's step—I should know it. (*Aside*) How my old heart bates!

[*Mr.* CARVER *takes a chair out of the way.*

Catty. Walk in—walk on, miss Honor. Oh, to be sure, Miss Honor will have justice.

Enter HONOR M'BRIDE, *walking very timidly.*

And no need to be ashamed, miss Honor, until your'e found out.

Mr. Carv. Silence!

Old M'B. Thank your honour.

[*Mr.* CARVER *whispers to his clerk, and directs him while the following speeches go on.*

Catty. That's a very pretty curtsy, miss Honor—walk on, pray—all the gentlemen's admiring you—my son Randal beyant all.

Randal. Mother, I won't bear——

Catty. Can't you find a sate for her, any of yees? Here's a stool—give it her, Randal. (HONOR *sits*

down.) And I hope it won't prove the stool of repentance, miss or madam. Oh, bounce your forehead, Randal—truth must out; you've put it to the test, sir.

Randal. I desire no other for her or myself.

[*The father and brother take each a hand of* HONOR *—support and soothe her.*

Catty. I'd pity you, Honor, myself, only I know you a M'Bride—and know your'e desaving me, and all present.

Mr. Carv. Call that other witness I allude to, clerk, into our presence without delay.

Clerk. I shall, sir. [*Exit clerk.*

Catty. We'll see—we'll see all soon—and the truth will come out, and shame the *dibbil* and the M'Brides!

Randal. (*looking out*) The man I bet, as I'm a sinner!

Catty. What?—which?—where?—True for ye! —I was wondering I did not see the man you bet appear again ye: and this is he, with the head bound up in the garter, coming—miserable cratur he looks —who would he be?

Randal. You'll see all soon, mother.

Enter PAT COXE, *his head bound up.*

Mr. Carv. Come on—walk on boldly, friend.

Catty. Pat Coxe! saints above!

Mr. Carv. Take courage, you are under my protection here—no one will dare to touch you.

Randal. (*with infinite contempt*) Touch ye! Not I, ye dirty dog!

Mr. Carv. No, sir, you have done enough that way already, it appears.

Honor. Randal! what, has Randal done this?

Mr. Carv. Now observe—this Mr. Patrick Coxe, aforesaid, has taken refuge with me; for he is, it seems, afraid to appear before his master, Mr. O'Blaney, this night, after having been beaten: though, as he assures me, he has been beaten without any provocation whatsoever, by you, Mr. Randal Rooney—answer, sir, to this matter?

Randal. I don't deny it, sir—I bet him, 'tis true.

Pat. To a jelly—without marcy—he did, plase your honour, sir.

Randal. Sir, plase your honour, I got rason to suspect this man to be the author of all them lies that was tould backwards and forwards to my mother about me and Miss Honor M'Bride, which made my mother mad, and driv' her to raise the riot, plase your honour. I charged Pat with the lies, and he shirked, and could give me no satisfaction, but kept swearing he was no liar, and bid me keep my distance, for he'd a pocket pistol about him. "I don't care what you have about you—you have not the truth about ye, nor in ye," says I; "ye are a liar, Pat Coxe," says I: so he cocked the pistol at me, saying, *that* would prove me a coward—with that I wrenched the pistol from him, and *bet* him in a big passion. I own to that, plase your honour—there I own I was wrong (*turning to* Honor), to demane myself lifting my hand any way.

Mr. C. But it is not yet proved that this man has told any lies.

Randal. If he has tould no lies, I wronged him. Speak, mother—(COXE *gets behind* CATTY, *and twitches her gown*), was it he who was the informer, or not?

Catty. Nay, Pat Coxe, if you lied, I'll not screen you; but if you tould the truth, stand out like a man, and stand to it, and I'll stand by you, against my own son even, Randal, if he was the author of the report. In plain words, then, he, Pat Coxe, tould me, that she, Honor M'Bride, gave you, Randal Rooney, the meeting behind the chapel, and you gave her the ring—and then she went with you to drink at Flaherty's.

Honor. (*starting up*) Oh! who *could* say the like of me?

Catty. There he stands—now, Pat, you must stand or fall—will you swear to what you said? (*Old* M'BRIDE *and* PHIL *approach* PAT.)

Mr. Carv. This is not the point before me; but, however, I waive that objection.

Randal. Oh! mother, don't put him to his oath, lest he'd perjure himself.

Pat. I'll swear: do you think I'd be making a liar of myself?

Honor. Father—Phil dear—hear me one word!

Randal. Hear her—oh! hear her—go to her.

Honor. (*in a low voice*) Would you ask at what time it was he pretends I was taking the ring and all that?

Old M'B. Plase your honour, would you ask the rascal what time?

Mr. Carv. Don't call him rascal, sir—no *rascals* in

my presence. What time did you see Honor M'Bride behind the chapel, Pat Coxe?

Pat. As the clock struck twelve—I mind—by the same token the workmen's bell rang as usual! that same time, just as I seen Mr. Randal there putting the ring on her finger, and I said "*there's the bell ringing for a wedding,*" says I.

Mr. Carv. To whom did you say that, sir?

Pat. To myself, plase your honour—I'll tell you the truth.

Honor. Truth! That time the clock struck twelve and the bell rang, I was happily here in this house, sir.

Mr. Carv. At Bob's Fort?—what witness?

Honor. If I might take the liberty to call one could do me justice.

Mr. Carv. No liberty in justice—speak out.

Honor. If I might trouble Mrs. Carver herself?

Mr. Carv. Mrs. Carver will think it no trouble (*rising with dignity*) to do justice, for she has been the wife to one of his majesty's justices of the peace for many years.

[*Sends a servant for Mrs.* CARVER.

Mr. Carv. Mrs. Carver, my dear, I must summon you to appear in open court, at the suit or prayer of Honor M'Bride.

Enter Mrs. CARVER, *who is followed by Miss* BLOOMSBURY, *on tiptoe.*

Mrs. Carv. Willingly.

Mr. Carv. The case lies in a nutshell, my dear: there is a man who swears that Honor M'Bride was

behind the chapel, with Randal Rooney, putting a ring on her finger, when the clock struck twelve, and our workmen's bell rang this morning. Honor avers she was at Bob's Fort with you: now as she could not be, like a bird, in two places at once—was she with you?

Mrs. Carv. Honor M'Bride was with me when the workmen's bell rang, and when the clock struck twelve, this day—she staid with me till two o'clock.

[*All the* ROONIES, *except* CATTY, *exclaim*—

Oh, no going beyond the lady's word!

Mrs. Carv. And I think it but justice to add, that Honor M'Bride has this day given me such proofs of her being a good girl, a good daughter, and a good sister, that she has secured my good opinion and good wishes for life.

Mr. Carv. And mine in consequence.

Bloom. And mine of course. [HONOR *curtsies.*

[*Old* M'BRIDE *bows very low to Mr.* CARVER, *and again to Mrs.* CARVER. PHIL *bows to Mr. and Mrs.* CARVER, *and to Miss* BLOOMSBURY.

Old M'B. Where are you now, Catty?—and you, Pat, ye unfortinate liar?

Pat. (*falling on his knees*) On me knees I am. Oh, I am an unfortinate liar, and I beg your honour's pardon this once.

Mr. Carv. A most abandoned liar, I pronounce you.

Pat. Oh! I hope your honour won't abandon me, for I didn't know miss Honor was under her ladyship, Mrs. Carver's favour and purtection, or I'd sooner ha' cut my tongue out clane—and I expect

your honour won't turn your back on me quite, for this is the first lies I ever was found out in since my creation; and how could I help, when it was by my master's particular desire?

Mr. Carv. Your master! honest Gerald O'Blaney!

Catty. O'Blaney!—save us! (*Lifting up her hands and eyes.*)

Mr. Carv. Take care, Pat Coxe.

Pat. Mr. O'Blaney, ma'am—plase your honour—all truth now—the counshillor, that same and no other, as I've breath in my body—for why should I tell a lie now, when I've no place in my eye, and not a ha'porth to get by it? I'll confess all. It was by my master's orders that I should set you, Mrs. Rooney, and your pride up, ma'am, again' making up with them M'Brides. I'll tell the truth now, plase your honour—that was the cause of the lies I mentioned about the ring and chapel—I'll tell more, if you'll bind Mr. Randal to keep the pace.

Randal. I?—ye dirty dog!—Didn't I tell ye already, I'd not dirty my fingers with the likes of you?

Pat. All Mr. Gerald O'Blaney's aim was to ruin Mr. Randal Rooney, and set him by the ears with that gentleman, Mr. Philip M'Bride, the brother, and they to come to blows and outrage, and then be in disgrace committed by his honour.

Randal. (*turning to* Honor M'Bride) Honor, you saved all—your brother and I never lifted our hands against one another, thanks be to Heaven and you, dearest!

Catty. And was there no truth in the story of the chapel and the ring?

Pat. Not a word of truth, but lies, Mrs. Rooney, dear ma'am, of the master's putting into my mouth out of his own head.

[CATTY ROONEY *walks firmly and deliberately across the room to* HONOR M'BRIDE.

Catty. Honor M'Bride, I was wrong; and here, publicly, as I traduced you, I ax your pardon before his honour, and your father, and your brother, and before Randal, and before my faction and his.

[*Both* ROONIES *and* M'BRIDES *all, excepting Old* M'BRIDE, *clap their hands, and huzza.*

Mr. Carv. I ought to reprove this acclamation—but this once I let it pass.

Phil. Father, you said nothing—what do you say, sir?

Old M'B. (*never moving*) I say nothing at all. I never doubted Honor, and knew the truth must appear—that's all I say.

Honor. Oh! father dear—more you will say (*shaking his stick gently.*) Look up at me, and remember the promise you gave me, when Catty should be rasonable—and is not she rasonable now?

Old M'B. I did not hear a word from her about the bog of Ballynascraw.

Catty. Is it the pitiful bit?—No more about it! Make crame cheeses of it—what care I? 'Twas only for pride I stood out—not *that* I'm thinking of now!

Old M'B. Well, then, miracles will never cease! here's one in your favour, Honor; so take her, Randal, fortune and all—a wife of five hundred.

Randal. (*kneeling*) Oh! happiest of men I am this minute.

Catty. I the same, if she had not a pinny in the world.

Mr. Carv. Happiest of men!—Don't kneel or go into ecstacies now, I beg, till I know the *rationale* of this. Was not I consulted?—did not I give my opinion and advice in favour of another?

Old M'B. You was—you did, plase your honour, and I beg your honour's pardon, and Mr. Counsellor O'Blaney's.

Mr. Carv. And did not you give your consent?—I must think him a very ill-used person.

Old M'B. I gave my consint only in case he could win hers, plase your honour, and he could *not*—and I could not break my own daughter's heart, and I beg your honour's pardon.

Mr. Carv. I don't know how that may be, sir, but I gave my approbation to the match; and I really am not accustomed to have my advice or opinion neglected or controverted. Yet, on the other hand——

Enter a Footman with a note, which he gives to Mr. CARVER.

Old M'B. (*aside to* PHIL) Say something for me, Phil, can't ye?—I hav'n't a word.

Mr. Carv. (*rising with a quicker motion than usual*) Bless me! bless me! here is a revolution! and a counter revolution!—Here's news will make you all in as great astonishment as I own I am.

Old M'B. What is it?

Randal. I'm made for life—I don't care what comes.

Honor. Nor I: so it is not to touch you, I'm happy.

Catty. Oh! your honour, spake quick, *this time*—I beg pardon!

Mr. Carv. Then I have to confess that *for once* I have been deceived and mistaken in my judgment of a man; and what is more, of a man's *circumstances* completely—O'Blaney.

Old M'B. What of his *circumstances,* oh! sir, in the name of mercy?

Mr. Carv. Bankrupt, at this instant all under seizure to the supervisor. Mr. Gerald O'Blaney has fled the country.

Old M'B. Then, Honor, you are without a penny; for all her fortune, 500l., was in his hands.

Randal. Then I'm as happy to have her without a penny—happier I am to prove my love pure.

Catty. God bless you for my own son! That's our way of thinking, Mr. M'Bride—you see it was not for the fortune.

Honor. Oh! Phil, didn't I tell you her heart was right?

Catty. We will work hard—cheer up, M'Brides. Now the Roonies and M'Brides has joined, you'll see we'll defy the world and O'Blaney, the *chate* of *chates.*

Honor. Randal's own mother!

Catty. Ay, now, we are all one family—now pull together. Don't be cast down, Phil dear. I'll never call you *flourishing Phil* again, so don't be standing on pride. Suppose your shister has not a pinny, she's better than the best, and I'll love her and fold her to my ould warm heart, and the daughter of my heart she is now.

Honor. Oh, mother!—for you are my mother now—and happy I am to have a mother in you.

Mr. Carv. I protest it makes me almost—almost—blow my nose.

Catty. Why, then, you're a good cratur. But who tould you I was a vixen, dear—plase your honour?

Mr. Carv. Your friend that is gone.

Catty. O'Blaney?

Randal. Frind! He never was frind to none—least of all to hisself.

Catty. Oh! the double-distilled villain!—he tould your honour I was a vixen, and fond of law. Now would you believe what I'm going to till you? he tould me of his honour——

Mr. Carv. Of me, his patron?

Catty. Of you, his patron, sir. He tould me your honour—which is a slander, as we all here can witness, can't we? by his honour's contempt of Pat Coxe—yet O'Blaney said you was as fond and proud of having informers about you as a rat-catcher is of rats.

Mr. Carv. Mistress Catherine Rooney, and all you good people,—there is a great deal of difference between obtaining information and encouraging common informers.

Catty. There is, I'm sinsible. (*Aside to her son.*) Then he's a good magistrate—except a little pompous, mighty good. (*Aloud to Mr.* Carver.) Then I beg your honour's pardon for my bad behaviour, and bad language and all. 'Twas O'Blaney's fau't—but he's down, and don't trample on the fallen.

Old M'B. Don't defind O'Blaney! Oh! the villain, to rob me of all my hard arnings. Mrs. Catty, I thank you as much as a heavy heart can, for you're ginerous; and you, Randal, for your——

Randal. Is it for loving her, when I can't help it —who could?

Old M'B. (*sighing deeply*) But still it goes against the father's heart to see his child, his pride, go pinnyless out of his house.

Phil. Then, sir, father dear, I have to tell you she is not pennyless.—But I would not tell you before, that Randal, and Catty too, might show themselves what they are. Honor is not pennyless: the three hundred you gave me to lodge with O'Blaney is safe here.—(*Opening his pocket-book.*)—When I was going to him with it as you ordered, by great luck, I was stopped by this very quarrel and riot in Ballynavogue:—he was the original cause of kicking up the riot, and was summoned before your honour,—and here's the money.

Old M'B. Oh, she's not pinnyless! Well, I never saw money with so much pleasure, in all my long days, nor could I think I'd ever live to give it away with half so much satisfaction as this minute. I here give it, Honor, to Randal Rooney and you:—and bless ye, child, with the man of *your* choice, who is *mine* now.

Mrs. Carv. (*aside to Mr.* CARVER) My dear, I wish to invite all these good people to a wedding dinner; but really I am afraid I shall blunder in saying their names—will you prompt me?

Mr. Carv. (*aside to Mrs.* CARVER) Why really

I am not used to be a prompter; however, I will condescend to prompt *you,* Mrs. Carver. (*He prompts, while she speaks.*)

Mrs. Carv. Mr. Big Briny of Cloon, Mr. Ulick of Eliogarty, Mr. Charley of Killaspugbrone, and you, Mrs. Catty Rooney, and you, Mr. M'Bride, senior, and you, Mr. Philip M'Bride, no longer *flourishing Phil;* since you are now all reconciled, let me have the pleasure of giving you a reconciliation dinner, at the wedding of Honor M'Bride, who is an honour to her family, and Randal Rooney, who so well deserves her love.

The M'BRIDES *and* ROONIES *join in the cry of*

Long life and great luck to your ladyship, that was always good!

Mr. Carv. And you comprehend that I beg that the wedding may be celebrated at Bob's Fort.

All join in crying,

Long may your honour's honour reign over us in glory at Bob's Fort!

Catty. (*cracking her fingers*) A fig for the bog of Ballynascraw!—Now 'tis all LOVE and no LAW!

THE ROSE, THISTLE,

AND

SHAMROCK;

A DRAMA,

IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR WILLIAM HAMDEN .	*An elderly English Gentleman.*
CHRISTY GALLAGHER .	*Landlord of an Irish village inn.*
MR. ANDREW HOPE .	*A Drum-major in a Scotch regiment.*
OWEN LARKEN	*The Son of the Widow Larken —a Boy of about fifteen.*
GILBERT	*An English Servant of Sir William Hamden.*

WOMEN.

MISS O'HARA	*A young Heiress—Niece of Sir William Hamden.*
MISS FLORINDA GALLAGHER	*Daughter of Christy Gallagher.*
THE WIDOW LARKEN .	*Mother of Owen and of Mabel.*
MABEL LARKEN . . .	*Daughter of the Widow Larken.*
BIDDY DOYLE	*Maid of the Inn.*

Band of a regiment.

SCENE.—*The Village of Bannow, in Ireland.*

THE ROSE, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Dressing-Room in Bannow-Castle, in Ireland.

Enter Sir WILLIAM HAMDEN, *in his morning gown.*

Sir W. Every thing precisely in order, even in Ireland!—laid, I do believe, at the very same angle at which they used to be placed on my own dressing-table, at Hamden-place, in Kent. Exact Gilbert! most punctual of valet de chambres!—and a young fellow, as he is, too! It is admirable!—Ay, though he looks as if he was made of wood, and moves like an automaton, he has a warm heart, and a true English spirit—true born English every inch of him. I remember him, when first I saw him ten years ago at his father's, farmer Ashfield's, at the harvest-home; there was Gilbert in all his glory, seated on the top of a hay-rick, singing,

> " Then sing in praise of men of Kent,
> So loyal, brave, and free;
> Of Britain's race, if one surpass,
> A man of Kent is he!"

How he brought himself to quit the men of Kent to come to Ireland with me is wonderful. However,

now he is here, I hope he is tolerably happy: I must ask the question in direct terms; for Gilbert would never speak till spoken to, let him feel what he might.

Sir W. (*calls*) Gilbert!—Gilbert!

Enter GILBERT.

Gilb. Here, sir.

Sir W. Gilbert, now you have been in Ireland some weeks, I hope you are not unhappy.

Gilb. No, sir, thank you, sir.

Sir W. But are you happy, man?

Gilb. Yes, sir, thank you, sir.

[GILBERT *retires, and seems busy arranging his master's clothes: Sir* WILLIAM *continues dressing.*

Sir W. (*aside*) *Yes, sir, thank you, sir.* As dry as a chip—sparing of his words, as if they were his last. And the fellow can talk if he would—has humour, too, if one could get it out; and eloquence, could I but touch the right string, the heart-string. I'll try again. (*Aloud*) Gilbert!

Gilb. Yes, sir. (*Comes forward respectfully.*)

Sir W. Pray what regiment was it that was passing yesterday through the village of Bannow?

Gilb. I do not know, indeed, sir.

Sir W. That is to say, you saw they were Highlanders, and that was enough for you—you are not fond of the Scotch, Gilbert?

Gilb. No, sir, I can't say as I be.

Sir W. But, Gilbert, for my sake you must conquer this prejudice. I have many Scotch friends whom I shall go to visit one of these days—excellent friends they are!

Gilb. Are they, sir? If so be you found them so, I will do my best, I'm sure.

Sir W. Then pray go down to the inn here, and inquire if any of the Scotch officers are there.

Gilb. I will, sir. I heard say the officers went off this morning.

Sir W. Then you need not go to inquire for them.

Gilb. No, sir. Only as I heard say, the drum-major and band is to stay a few days in Bannow, on account of their wanting to enlist a new bugle-boy. I was a thinking, if so be, sir, you thought well of it, on account you like these Scotch, I'd better to step down and see how the men be as to being comfortable.

Sir W. That's right, do. Pray, have they tolerable accommodations at the inn in this village?

Gilb. (*smiling*) I can't say much for that, sir.

Sir W. (*aside*) Now I shall set him going. (*Aloud.*) What, the inn here is not like one of our English inns on the Bath road?

Gilb. (*suppressing a laugh*) Bath road! Bless you, sir, it's no more like an inn on the Bath road, nor on any road, cross or by-road whatsomdever, as ever I seed in England. No more like—no more like than nothing at all, sir!

Sir W. What sort of a place is it, then?

Gilb. Why, sir, I'd be ashamed almost to tell you. Why, sir, I never seed such a place to call an inn, in all my born days afore. First and foremost, sir, there's the pig is in and out of the kitchen all day long, and next the calf has what they call the run of the kitchen; so what with them brute beasts, and the poultry that has no coop, and is always under

one's feet, or over one's head, the kitchen is no place for a christian, even to eat his bread and cheese in.

Sir W. Well, so much for the kitchen. But the parlour—they have a parlour, I suppose?

Gilb. Yes, sir, they have a parlour, as they may call it, if they think proper, sir. But then again, an honest English farmer would be *afeard on* his life to stay in it, on account of the ceiling just a coming down a' top of his head. And if he should go up stairs, sir, why that's as bad again, and worse; for the half of them there stairs is rotten, and ever so many pulled down and burnt.

Sir W. Burnt!—the stairs?

Gilb. Burnt, sir, as sure as I'm standing here!—burnt, sir, for fuel one *scarce year*, as they says, sir. Moreover, when a man does get up the stairs, sir, why he is as bad off again, and worse; for the floor of the place they calls the bedchamber, shakes at every step, as if it was a coming down with one; and the walls has all cracks, from top to toe—and there's rat-holes, or holes o' some sort or t'other, all in the floor: so that if a man don't pick his steps curiously, his leg must go down through the cieling below. And moreover, there's holes over head through the roof, sir; so that if it rains, it can't but pour on the bed. They tell me, they used for to shift the bed from one place to another, to find, as they say, the dry corner; but now the floor is grown so crazy, they dare not stir the bed for their lives.

Sir W. Worse and worse!

Gilb. And moreover, they have it now in the worst place in the whole room, sir. Close at the head of

the bed, where there is a window, with every pane broke, and some out entirely, and the women's petticoats and the men's hats just stuck in to *stop all for the night*, as they say, sir.

[GILBERT *tries to stifle his laughter.*

Sir. W. Laugh out, honest Gilbert. In spite of your gravity and your civility, laugh. There is no harm, but sometimes a great deal of good done by laughing, especially in Ireland. Laughing has mended, or caused to be mended, many things that never would have been mended otherwise.

Gilb. (*recovering his gravity*) That's true, I dare to say, sir.

Sir W. Now, Gilbert, if you were to keep an inn, it would be a very different sort of inn from what you have been describing—would not it?

Gilb. I hope so, sir.

Sir W. I remember when we were talking of establishing you in England, that your father told me you would like to set up an inn.

Gilb. (*his face brightening*) For sartin, sir, 'tis the thing in the whole world I should like the best, and be the proudest on, if so be it was in my power, and if so be, sir, you could spare me. (*Holding his master's coat for him to put on.*)

Sir W. Could spare you, Gilbert!—I *will* spare you, whether I can conveniently or not. If I had an opportunity of establishing advantageously a man who has served me faithfully for ten years, do you think I would not put myself to a little inconvenience to do it?—Gilbert, you do not know sir William Hamden.

Gilb. Thank you, sir, but I do—and I should be main sorry to leave you, that's sartin, if it was even to be landlord of the best inn in all England—I know I should.

Sir W. I believe it.—But, stay—let us understand one another—I am not talking of England, and perhaps you are not thinking of Ireland.

Gilb. Yes, sir, but I am.

Sir W. You are! I am heartily glad to hear it, for then I can serve you directly. This young heiress, my niece, to whom this town belongs, has a new inn ready built.

Gilb. I know, sir.

Sir W. Then, Gilbert, write a proposal for this inn, if you wish for it, and I will speak to my niece.

Gilb. (*bowing*) I thank you, sir—only I hope I shall not stand in any honest man's light. As to a dishonest man, I can't say I value standing in his light, being that he has no right to have any, as I can see.

Sir W. So, Gilbert, you will settle in Ireland at last? I am heartily glad to see you have overcome your prejudices against this country. How has this been brought about?

Gilb. Why, sir, the thing was, I didn't know nothing about it, and there was a many lies told backwards and forwards of Ireland, by a many that ought to have known better.

Sir W. And now that you have seen with your own eyes, you are happily convinced that in Ireland the men are not all savages.

Gilb. No, sir, no ways savage, except in the article

of some of them going bare-footed; but the men is good men, most of them.

Sir W. And the women? You find that they have not wings on their shoulders.

Gilb. No, sir. (*Smiling.*) And I'm glad they have not got wings, else they might fly away from us, which I'd be sorry for—some of them.

[*After making this speech,* GILBERT *steps back, and brushes his master's hat diligently.*

Sir W. (*aside*) Ha! is that the case? Now I understand it all. 'Tis fair, that Cupid, who blinds so many, should open the eyes of some of his votaries. (*Aloud.*) When you set up as landlord in your new inn, Gilbert, (GILBERT *comes forward*) you will want a landlady, shall not you?

Gilb. (*falls back, and answers*) I shall, sir, I suppose.

Sir W. Miss—what's her name? the daughter of the landlord of the present inn. Miss—what's her name?

Gilb. (*answers without coming forward*) Miss Gallagher, sir.

Sir W. Miss Gallagher?—A very ugly name!—I think it would be charity to change it, Gilbert.

Gilb. (*bashfully*) It would, no doubt, sir.

Sir W. She is a very pretty girl.

Gilb. She is, sir, no doubt.

[*Cleaning the brush with his hand, bows, and is retiring.*

Sir W. Gilbert, stay. (GILBERT *returns.*) I say, Gilbert, I took particular notice of this miss Galla-

gher, as she was speaking to you last Sunday. I thought she seemed to smile upon you, Gilbert.

Gilb. (*very bashfully*) I can't say, indeed, sir.

Sir W. I don't mean, my good Gilbert, to press you to say any thing that you don't choose to say. It was not from idle curiosity that I asked any questions, but from a sincere desire to serve you in whatever way you like best, Gilbert.

Gilb. Oh, dear master! I can't speak, you are so good to me, and always was—too good!—so I say nothing. Only I'm not ungrateful—I know I'm not ungrateful, *that* I am not! And as to the rest, there's not a thought I have you'd condescend for to know, but you should know it as soon as my mother—that's to say, as soon as ever I knowed it myself. But, sir, the thing is this, since you're so good to let me speak to you, sir——

Sir W. Speak on, pray, my good fellow.

Gilb. Then, sir, the thing is this. There's one girl, they say, has set her thoughts upon me: now I don't like she, because why? I loves another; but I should not choose to say so, on account of its not being over and above civil, and on account of my not knowing yet for sartin whether or not the girl I loves loves me, being I never yet could bring myself to ask her the question. I'd rather not mention her name neither, till I be more at a sartinty. But since you be so kind, sir, if you be so good to give me till this evening, sir, as I have now, with the hopes of the new inn, an independency to offer her, I will take courage, and I shall have her answer soon, sir—and

I will let you know with many thanks, sir, whether —whether my heart's broke or not.

[*Exit* GILBERT *hastily.*

Sir W. (*alone*) Good, affectionate creature! But who would have thought that out of that piece of wood a lover could be made? This is Cupid's delight!

[*Exit Sir* WILLIAM.

SCENE II.

Parlour of the Inn at Bannow.

Miss FLORINDA GALLAGHER, *sola.*

Various articles of dress on the floor—a looking-glass propped up on a chest—Miss GALLAGHER *is kneeling before the glass, dressing her long hair, which hangs over her shoulders.*

Miss G. I don't know what's come to this glass, that it is not flattering at all *the* day. The spots and cracks in it is making me look so full of freckles and crow's feet—and my hair, too, that's such a figure, as straight and as stiff and as stubborn as a presbyterian. See! it won't curl for me: so it is in the papillotes it must be; and that's most genteel.

[*Sound of a drum at a distance—Miss* GALLAGHER *starts up and listens.*

Miss G. Hark till I hear! Is not that a drum I hear? Ay, I had always a quick ear for the drum from my cradle. And there's the whole band—but it's only at the turn of the avenue. It's on parade they are. So I'll be dressed and dacent before they are here, I'll engage. And it's my plaid scarf I'll throw over all, elegant for the Highlanders, and I

don't doubt but the drum-major will be conquist to it at my feet afore night—and what will Mr. Gilbert say to that? And what matter what he says?—I'm not bound to him, especially as he never popped me the question, being so preposterously bashful, as them Englishmen have the misfortune to be. But that's not my fault any way. And if I happen to find a more shutable match, while he's turning the words in his mouth, who's to blame me?—My father, suppose! —And what matter?—Have not I two hundred pounds of my own down on the nail if the worst come to the worst, and why need I be a slave to any man, father or other?—But he'll kill himself soon with the whiskey, poor man, at the rate he's going. Two glasses now for his *mornings*, and his *mornings* are going on all day. There he is, roaring. (*Mr.* GALLAGHER *heard singing.*) You can't come in here, sir. [*She bolts the door.*

Enter CHRISTY GALLAGHER, *kicking the door open.*

Christy. Can't I dear? what will hinder me?—Give me the *kay* of the spirits, if you plase.

Miss G. Oh, sir! see how you are walking through all my things.

Christy. And they on the floor!—where else should I walk, but on the floor, pray, miss Gallagher?—Is it, like a fly, on the ceiling you'd have me be, walking with my head upside down, to plase you?

Miss G. Indeed, sir, whatever way you're walking, it's with your head upside down, as any body may notice, and that don't plase me at all—isn't it a shame, in a morning?

Christy. Phoo! don't be talking of shame, you that knows nothing about it. But lend me the kay of the spirits, Florry.

Miss G. Sir, my name's Florinda—and I've not the kay of the spirits at all, nor any such vulgar thing.

Christy. Vulgar! is it the kay?

Miss G. Yes, sir, it's very vulgar to be keeping of kays.

Christy. That's lucky, for I've lost all mine now. Every single kay I have in the wide world now I lost, barring this kay of the spirits, and that must be gone after the rest too I b'lieve, since you know nothing of it, unless it be in this here chist.

[CHRISTY *goes to the chest.*

Miss G. Oh, mercy, sir!—Take care of the looking-glass, which is broke already. Oh, then, father, 'tis not in the chist, 'pon my word and honour now, if you'll b'lieve: so don't be rummaging of all my things. [CHRISTY *persists in opening the chest.*

Christy. It don't signify, Florry; I've granted myself a gineral sarch-warrant, dear, for the kay; and, by the blessing, I'll go clane to the bottom o' this chist. (*Miss* GALLAGHER *writhes in agony.*) Why, what makes you stand twisting there like an eel or an ape, child?—What, in the name of the ould one, is it you're afeard on?—Was the chist full now of love-letter scrawls from the grand signior or the pope himself, you could not be more tinder of them.

Miss G. Tinder, sir!—to be sure, when it's my best bonnet I'm thinking on, which you are mashing entirely.

Christy. Never fear, dear! I won't mash an atom of the bonnet, provided always, you'll mash these apples for me, jewel. (*He takes apples out of the chest.*) And was'nt I lucky to find them in it? Oh, I knew I'd not sarch this chist for nothing. See how they'll make an iligant apple-pie for Mr. Gilbert now, who loves an iligant apple-pie above all things —your iligant self always excipted, dear.

[*Miss* GALLAGHER *makes a slight curtsy, but motions the apples from her.*

Miss G. Give the apples then to the girl, sir, and she'll make you the pie, for I suppose she knows how.

Christy. And don't you, then, Florry?

Miss G. And how should I, sir?—You didn't send me to the dancing-school of Ferrinafad to larn me to make apple-pies, I conclude.

Christy. Troth, Florry, 'twas not I sint you there, sorrow foot but your mother; only she's in her grave, and it's bad to be talking ill of the dead any way. But be that how it will, Mr. Gilbert must get the apple-pie, for rasons of my own that need not be mintioned. So, Biddy! Biddy, girl! Biddy Doyle!

Enter BIDDY, *running, with a ladle in her hand.*

Christy. Drop whatever you have in your hand, and come here, and be hanged to you! And had you no ears to your head, Biddy?

Biddy. Sure I have, sir—ears enough. Only they are bothering me so without, that pig and the dog fighting, that I could not hear ye calling at-all-at-all.

What is it?—For I'm skimming the pot, and can't lave it. [*Miss* GALLAGHER *goes on dressing.*

Christy. It's only these apples, see!—You'll make me an apple-pie, Biddy, smart.

Biddy. Save us, sir!—And how will I ever get time, when I've the hash to make for them Scotch yet? Nor can I tell, for the life of me, what it was I did with the onions and scallions neither, barring by great luck they'd be in and under the press here —(*running to look under the press*)—which they are, praised be God! in the far corner.

[BIDDY *stretches her arm under the press.*

Christy. There's a nice girl, and a 'cute cliver girl, worth a dozen of your Ferrinafads.

[BIDDY *throws the onions out from under the press, while he speaks.*

Miss G. Then she's as idle a girl as treads the earth, in or out of shoe-leather, for there's my bed that she has not made yet, and the stairs with a month's dust always; and never ready by any chance to do a pin's worth for one, when one's dressing,

[*A drum heard; the sound seems to be approaching near.*

Christy. Blood! the last rowl of the drum, and I not got the kay of the spirits.

Miss G. Oh, saints above! what's gone with my plaid scarf?—and my hair *behind*, see!

[*Miss* GALLAGHER *twists up her hair behind.*— BIDDY *gathers up the onions into her apron, and exit hastily.*—CHRISTY *runs about the room in a distracted manner, looking under and over every thing, repeating*—The kay! the kay! the kay!

Christy. For the whiskey must be had for them Scotch, and the bottled beer too for them English; and how will I get all or any without the kay! Bones, and distraction!

Miss G. And my plain hanke'cher that must be had, and where will I find it, in the name of all the d*a*mons, in this chaos you've made me out of the chist, father? And how will I git all in again, before the drum-major's in it?

Christy. (*sweeping up a heap of things in his arms, and throwing them into the chest*) Very asy, sure! this ways.

Miss G. (*darting forward*) There's the plaid hanke'cher.—(*She draws it out from the heap under her father's arm, and smooths it on her knee.*) But, oh! father, how you are making hay of my things!

Christy. Then I wish I could make hay of them, for hay is much wanting for the horses that's in it.

Miss G. (*putting on her plaid scarf*) Weary on these pins! that I can't stick any way at all, my hands all trimble so.—Biddy! Biddy! Biddy! Biddy, can't ye?—(*Re-enter* BIDDY, *looking bewildered.*) Just pin me behind, girl—smart.

Christy. Biddy is it?—Biddy, girl, come over and help me tramp down this hay.

[CHRISTY *jumps into the chest.*

Miss G. Oh, Biddy, run and stop him, for the love of God! with his brogues and big feet.

Biddy. Oh, marcy! that's too bad, sir; get out o' that if you plase, or miss Florry will go mad, sure! and the major that's coming up the street——Oh, sir, if you plase, in the name of mercy!

Christy (*jumping out.*) Why, then, sittle it all yourself, Biddy, and success to you; but you'll no more get all in again afore Christmas, to the best of my opinion, no more, see! than you'd get bottled porter, froth and all, into the bottle again, once it was out.

Miss G. Such comparisons!—(*tossing back her head.*)

Christy. And caparisons!—(*pointing to the finery on the floor.*) But in the middle of it all, lend me the poker, which will answer for the master-kay, sure!—that poker that is houlding up the window—can't ye, Biddy?

[BIDDY *runs and pulls the poker hastily from under the sash, which suddenly falls and every pane of glass falls out and breaks.*

Christy. Murder! and no glazier!

Miss G. Then, Biddy, of all girls, alive or dead, you're the awk'ardest, vulgarest, unluckiest to touch any thing at all!

Biddy. (*picking up the glass*) I can't think what's come to the glass, that makes it break so asy the day! Sure I done it a hundred times the same, and it never broke wid me afore.

Christy. Well! stick up a petticoat, or something of the kind, and any way lend me hould of the poker; for in lieu of a kay, that's the only frind in need.

[*Exit* CHRISTY *with the poker.*

Miss G. There, Biddy, that will do—any how.—Just shut down the lid, can't ye? and find me my other shoe. Biddy—then, lave that,—come out o' that, do girl, and see the bed!—run there, turn it up

just any way;—and Biddy, run here,—stick me this tortise comb in the back of my head——oh! (*screams and starts away from* BIDDY.) You ran it fairly into my brain, you did! you're the grossest! heavy handiest!—fit only to wait on Sheelah na Ghirah, or the like.—(*Turns away from* BIDDY *with an air of utter contempt.*) But I'll go and resave the major properly.—(*Turns back as she is going, and says to* BIDDY) Biddy, settle all here, can't ye?—Turn up the bed, and sweep the glass and dust in the dust corner, for it's here I'm bringing him to dinner,—so settle up all in a minute, do you mind me, Biddy! for your life!

[*Exit Miss* GALLAGHER.

BIDDY, *alone*—(*speaking while she puts the things in the room in order.*)

Settle up all in a minute!—asy said!—and *for my life* too!—Why, then, there's not a greater slave than myself in all Connaught, or the three kingdoms—from the time I get up in the morning, and that's afore the flight of night, till I get to my bed again at night, and that's never afore one in the morning! But I wouldn't value all one pin's point, if it was kind and civil she was to me. But after I strive, and strive to the utmost, and beyand—(*sighs deeply*) and when I found the innions, and took the apple-pie off her hands, and settled her behind, and all to the best of my poor ability for her, after, to go and call me Sheelah na Ghirah! though I don't rightly know who that Sheelah na Ghirah was from Adam—but still it's the bad language I get goes to my heart.

Oh if it had but plased Heaven to have cast me my lot in the sarvice of a raal jantleman or lady instead of the likes of these! Now, I'd rather be a dog in his honour's or her honour's house than lie under the tongue of miss Gallagher, as I do—to say nothing of ould Christy.

Miss GALLAGHER'S *voice heard, calling,*

Biddy! Biddy Doyle! Biddy, can't ye?

Biddy. Here, miss, in the room, readying it, I am.

CHRISTY GALLAGHER'S *voice heard calling,*

Biddy!—Biddy Doyle!—Biddy, girl! What's come o' that girl, that always out o' the way idling, when wanted?—Plague take her!

Biddy. Saints above! hear him now!—But I scorn to answer.

Screaming louder in mingled voices, CHRISTY'S *and Miss* GALLAGHER'S,

Biddy!—Biddy Doyle!—Biddy, girl!

Christy (*putting in his head.*) Biddy! sorrow take ye! are ye in it?—And you are, and we cracking our vitals calling you. What is it you're dallying here for? Stir! stir! dinner!

[*He draws back his head, and exit.*

BIDDY, *alone.*

Coming then!—Sure it's making up the room, I am with all speed, and the bed not made after all!—(*Throws up the press-bed.*)—But to live in this here house, girl or boy, one had need have the lives of nine cats and the legs of forty. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Kitchen of the Inn.

Miss FLORINDA GALLAGHER *and* CHRISTY GALLAGHER.

Boys and Men belonging to the Band, in the back Scene.

Christy. (*to the band*) The girl's coming as fast as possible to get yees your dinners, jantlemen, and sorrow better dinner than she'll give you: you'll get all instantly—(*To Miss* GALLAGHER.) And am not I telling you, Florry, that the drum-major did not come in yet at all, but went out through the town, to see and get a billet and bed for the sick man they've got.

Enter BIDDY, *stops and listens.*

Miss G. I wonder the major didn't have the manners to step in, and spake to the lady first—was he an Irishman, he would.

Biddy. Then it's my wonder he wouldn't step in to take his dinner first—was he an Englishman, he would. But it's lucky for me and for him he didn't, becaase he couldn't, for it won't be ready this three-quarters of an hour—only the Scotch broth, which boiled over.

[BIDDY *retires, and goes on cooking.*—CHRISTY *fills out a glass of spirits to each of the band.*

Miss G. Since the major's not in it, I'll not be staying here—for here's only riff-raff triangle and gridiron boys, and a black-a-moor, and that I never could stand; so I'll back into the room. Show the

major up, do you mind, father, as soon as ever he'd come.

Christy. Jantlemen all! here's the king's health, and confusion worse confounded to his enemies, for yees; or, if ye like it better, here's the plaid tartan and fillibeg for yees, and that's a comprehensive toast —will give ye an appetite for your dinners.

[*They drink in silence.*

Miss G. Did ye hear me, father?

Christy. Ay, ay.—Off with ye!

[*Exit Miss* GALLAGHER, *tossing back her head.*— CHRISTY *pours out a glass of whiskey for himself, and with appropriate graces of the elbow and little finger, swallows it, making faces of delight.*

Christy. Biddy! Biddy, girl, ye!—See the pig putting in his nose—keep him out—can't ye?

Biddy. Hurrush! hurrush! (*Shaking her apron.*) Then that pig's as sinsible as any christian, for he'd run away the minute he'd see me.

Christy. That's manners o' the pig.—Put down a power more turf, Biddy:—see the jantlemen's gathering round the fire, and has a right to be *could* in their knees this St. Patrick's day in the morning—for it's March, that comes in like a lion.

[*The band during this speech appear to be speaking to* BIDDY.—*She comes forward to* CHRISTY.

Christy. What is it they are whispering and conjuring, Biddy?

Biddy. 'Twas only axing me, they were, could they all get beds the night in it.

Christy. Beds! ay can yees, and for a dozen more

—only the room above is tinder in the joists, and I would not choose to put more on the floor than two beds, and one shake-down, which will answer for five; for it's a folly to talk,—I'll tell you the truth, and not a word of lie. Wouldn't it be idle to put more of yees in the room than it could hold, and to have the floor be coming through the parlour ceiling, and so spoil two good rooms for one night's bad rest, jantlemen?—Well, Biddy, what is it they're saying?

Biddy. They say they don't understand—can they have beds or not?

Christy. Why, body and bones! *No,* then, since nothing else will they comprehend,—*no,*—only five, say,—five can sleep in it.

[*The band divide into two parties.—Five remain, and the others walk off in silence.*

Biddy. And it's into the room you'd best walk up, had not yees, five jantleman, that sleep?

[*The five walk into the parlour*—CHRISTY *preparing to follow, carrying whiskey bottle and jug —turns back, and says to* BIDDY,

Is it dumb they are all? or *innocents?*

Biddy. Not at all innocents, no more than myself nor yourself. Nor dumb neither, only that the Scotch tongue can't spake English as we do.

Christy. Oh! if that's all, after dinner the whiskey punch will make 'em spake, I'll engage.

[*Exit* CHRISTY.

Biddy. 'Tis I that am glad they've taken themselves away, for there's no cooking with all the men in the fire.

Enter Mr. ANDREW HOPE, *Drum-major.*

Mr. H. A gude day to you, my gude lassy.

Biddy. The same to you, sir, and kindly. I beg your pardon for not knowing—would it be the drum-major, sir?

Mr. H. No offence, my gude lass; I am Andrew Hope, and drum-major. I met some of my men in the street coming down, and they told me they could not have beds here.

Biddy. No, sir, plase your honour, only five that's in the room yonder: if you'd be plased to walk up, and you'll get your dinner immediately, your honour, as fast as can be dished, your honour.

Mr. H. No, hurry, my gude lass. But I would willingly see the beds for my poor fellows, that has had a sair march.

Biddy. Why, then, if your honour would take a fool's advice, you'd not be looking at them beds, to be spoiling your dinner—since, good or bad, all the looking at 'em in the wide world won't mend 'em one feather, sure.

Mr. H. My gude girl, that's true. Still I'd like ever to face the worst.

Biddy. Then it's up that ladder you'll go.

Mr. H. No stairs?

Biddy. Oh, there are stairs—but they are burnt and coming down, and you'll find the ladder safest and best; only mind the little holes in the floor, if you plase, your honour.

[*Mr.* HOPE *ascends the ladder while she speaks and goes into the bedchamber above.*

BIDDY, *sola.*

Well, I'm ashamed of my life, when a stranger and foreigner's reviewing our house, though I'm only the girl in it, and no ways answerable. It frets me for my country forenent them Scotch and English. (*Mr.* HOPE *descends the ladder.*) Then I'm sorry it's not better for your honour's self, and men. But there's a new inn to be opened the 25th, in this town; and if you return this way, I hope things will be more agreeable and proper. But you'll have no bad dinner, your honour, any way;—there's Scotch broth, and Scotch hash, and fried eggs and bacon, and a turkey, and a boiled leg of mutton and turnips, and *pratees* the best, and well boiled; and I hope, your honour, that's enough for a soldier's dinner, that's not nice.

Mr. H. Enough for a soldier's dinner! ay, gude truth, my lass; and more than enough for Andrew Hope, who is no ways nice. But, tell me, have you no one to help you here, to dress all this?

Biddy. Sorrow one, to do a hand's turn for me but myself, plase your honour; for the daughter of the house is too fine to put her hand to any thing in life: but she's in the room there within, beyond, if you would like to see her—a fine lady she is!

Mr. H. A fine lady, is she? Weel, fine or coarse, I shall like to see her,—and weel I may and must, for I had a brother once I luved as my life; and four years back that brother fell sick here, on his road to the north, and was kindly tended here at the inn at Bannow; and he charged me, puir lad, on his death-bed, if ever fate should quarter me in Bannow, to

inquire for his gude friends at the inn, and to return them his thanks; and so I'm fain to do, and will not sleep till I've done so.—But tell me first, my kind lassy, for I see you are a kind lassy,—tell me, has not this house had a change of fortune, and fallen to decay of late? for the inn at Bannow was pictured to me as a bra' neat place.

Biddy. Ah! that was, may-be, the time the Larkens had it?

Mr. H. The Larkens!—that was the very name: it warms my heart to hear the sound of it.

Biddy. Ay, and quite another sort of an inn this was, I hear talk, in their time,—and quite another guess sort, the Larkens from these Gallaghers.

Mr. H. And what has become of the Larkens, I pray?

Biddy. They are still living up yonder, by the bush of Bannow, in a snug little place of a cabin—that is, the widow Kelly.

Mr. H. Kelly!—but I am looking for Larken.

Biddy. Oh, Larken! that's Kelly: 'tis all one—she was a Kelly before she was married, and in this country we stick to the maiden's name throughout.

Mr. H. The same in our country—often.

Biddy. Indeed! and her daughter's name is Mabel, after the Kellys; for you might have noticed, if it ever happened your honour to hear it, an ould song of Mabel Kelly—*Planxty* Kelly. Then the present Mabel is as sweet a cratur as ever the ould Mabel Kelly was——but I must mind the pratees. (*She goes to lift a pot off the fire.*)

Mr. H. Hold! my gude girl, let me do that for you; mine is a strong haund.

Biddy. I thank your honour,—it's too much trouble entirely for a jantleman like you; but it's always the best jantleman has the *laste* pride.—Then them Kellys is a good race, ould and young, and I love 'em, root and branch. Besides Mabel the daughter, there's Owen the son, and as good a son he is—no better! He got an edication in the beginning, till the troubles came across his family, and the boy, the child, for it's bare fifteen he is this minute, give up all his hopes and prospects, the cratur! to come home and slave for his mother.

Mr. H. Ah, that's weel—that's weel! I luve the lad that makes a gude son.—And is the father *deed?*

Biddy. Ay, dead and deceased he is, long since, and was buried just upon that time that ould sir Cormac, father of the young heiress that is now at the castle above,—the former landlord that was over us, died, see!—Then there was new times and new *takes*, and the widow was turned out of the inn, and these Gallaghers got it, and all wint wrong and to rack; for Mrs. Gallagher, that was, drank herself into her grave unknownst, for it was by herself in private she took it; and Christy Gallagher, the present man, is doing the same, only publicly, and running through all, and the house is tumbling over our ears: but he hopes to get the new inn; and if he does, why, he'll be lucky—and that's all I know, for the dinner is done now, and I'm going in with it —and won't your honour walk up to the room now?

Mr. H. (*going to the ladder*) Up here;

Biddy. Oh, it's not *up* at all, your honour, sure! but down here—through this ways.

Mr. H. One word more, my gude lassy. As soon as we shall have all dined, and you shall have ta'en your ane dinner, I shall beg of you, if you be not then too much tired, to show me the way to that bush of Bannow, whereat this widow Larken's cottage is.

Biddy. With all the pleasure in life, if I had not a fut to stand upon.

[*Exit Mr.* HOPE.—BIDDY *follows with a dish smoking hot.*

Biddy. And I hope you'll find it an iligant Scotch hash, and there's innions plinty—sure the best I had I'd give you; for I'm confident now he's the true thing,—and tho' he is Scotch, he desarves to be Irish, every inch of him. [*Exit* BIDDY DOYLE.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Irish Cabin.—The Kitchen.

Widow LARKEN. *On one side of her,* MABEL *at needle-work; on the other side,* OWEN *her son enters, bringing in a spinning-wheel, which he places before his mother.*

Owen. There, mother, is your wheel mended for you.

Mabel. Oh, as good as new, Owen has made it for you.

Widow. Well, whatever troubles come upon me in this world, have not I a right to be thankful, that has such good childer left me?—Still it grieves me, and goes to the quick of my heart, Mabel, dear, that your brother here should be slaving for me, a boy that is qualified for better.

Owen. And what better can I be than working for my mother—man or boy?

Mabel. And if he thinks it no slavery, what slavery is it, mother?

Owen. Mother, to-day is the day to propose for the new inn—I saw several with the schoolmaster, who was as busy as a bee, penning proposals for them, according as they dictated, and framing letters and petitions for sir William Hamden and miss O'Hara. Will you go up to the castle and speak, mother?

Widow. No, no—I can't speak, Owen.

Owen. Here's the pen and ink-horn, and I'll sit me down, if you'd sooner write than speak.

Widow. See, Owen, to settle your mind, I would not wish to get that inn.

Owen. Not wish to get it! The new inn, mother —but if you had gone over it, as I have. 'Tis the very thing for you. Neat and compact as a nutshell; not one of them grand inns, too great for the place, that never answers no more than the hat that's too big for the head, and that always blows off.

Widow. No, dear, not the thing for me, now a widow, and your sister Mabel—tho' 'tis not for me to say—such a likely, fine girl. I'd not be happy to have her in a public-house—so many of all sorts that would be in it, and drinking, may be, at fairs and funerals, and no man of the house, nor master, nor father for her.

Owen. Sure, mother, I'm next to a father for her. Amn't I a brother? and no brother ever loved a sister better, or was more jealous of respect for her; and if you'd be pleasing, I could be man and master enough.

Widow. (*laughing*) You, ye dear slip of a boy!

Owen. (*proudly, and raising his head high*) Slip of a boy as I am then, and little as you think of me——

Widow. Oh, I think a great deal of you! only I can't think you big nor old, Owen, can I?

Owen. No—nor any need to be big or old, to keep people of all sorts in respect, mother.

Widow. Then he looked like his father—did not he, Mabel?

Mabel. He did—God bless him!

Owen. Now hear me, mother, for I'm going to speak sense. You need not listen, Mabel.

Mabel. But it's what I like to listen to sense, especially yours, Owen.

Owen. Then I can't help it.—You must hear, even if you blush for it.

Mabel. Why would I blush?

Owen. Because you won't be able to help it, when I say Mr. Gilbert.—See!

Mabel. Oh, dear Owen! that's not fair. (*She falls back a little.*)

Owen. Well, mother, it's with you I'm reasoning. If he was your son-in-law——

Widow. Hush! that he'll never be. Now, Owen, I'll grow angry if you put nonsense in the girl's head.

Owen. But if it's in the man's head, it's not a bit nonsense.

Mabel. Owen, you might well say I shouldn't listen to you. [*Exit Mabel.*

Widow. There now, you've drove your sister off.

Owen. Well, Gilbert will bring her on again, may be.

Widow. May be—but that *may be* of yours might lead us all wrong.

[*She lays her hand on* OWEN'*s arm, and speaks in a serious tone.*

Widow. Now, dear, don't be saying one word more to her, lest it should end in a disappointment.

Owen. Still it is my notion, 'tis Mabel he loves.

Widow. Oh! what should you know, dear, o' the matter?

Owen. Only having eyes and ears like another.

Widow. Then what hinders him to speak?

Owen. It's bashfulness only, mother. Don't you know what that is?

Widow. I do, dear. It's a woman should know that best. And it is not Mabel, nor a daughter of mine, nor a sister of yours, Owen, should be more forward to understand than the man is to speak—was the man a prince.

Owen. Mother, you are right; but I'm not wrong neither. And since I'm to say no more, I'm gone, mother. [*Exit* OWEN.

Widow. (*alone*) Now who could blame that boy, whatever he does or says? It's all heart he is, and wouldn't hurt a fly, except from want of thought. But, stay now, I'm thinking of them soldiers that is in town. (*Sighs.*) Then I didn't sleep since ever they come; but whenever I'd be sinking to rest, starting, and fancying I heard the drum for Owen to go. (*A deep groaning sigh.*) Och! and then the apparition of Owen in regimentals was afore me!

Enter OWEN, *dancing and singing,*

"Success to my brains, and success to my tongue!
Success to myself, that never was wrong!"

Widow. What is it? What ails the boy? Are ye mad, Owen?

Owen. (*capering and snapping his fingers*) Ay, mad! mad with joy I am. And it's joy I give you, and joy you'll give me, mother darling. The new inn's yours, and no other's, and Gilbert is your own too, and no other's—but Mabel's for life. And is not there joy enough for you, mother?

Widow. Joy!—Oh, too much! (*She sinks on a seat.*)

Owen. I've been too sudden for her!

Widow. No, dear—not a bit, only just give me time—to feel it. And is it true? And am I in no dream now? And where's Mabel, dear?

Owen. Gone to the well, and Gilbert with her. We met her, and he turned off with her, and I come on to tell you, mother dear.

Widow. Make me clear and certain; for I'm slow and weak, dear. Who told you all this good? and is it true?—And my child Mabel *mavourneen!*—Oh, tell me again it's true.

Owen. True as life. But your lips is pale still, and you all in a tremble. So lean on me, mother dear, and come out into God's open air, till I see your spirit come back—and here's your bonnet, and we'll meet Mabel and Gilbert, and we'll all go up to the castle to give thanks to the lady.

Widow. (*looking up to heaven*) Thanks! Oh, hav'n't I great reason to be thankful, if ever widow had! [*Exeunt,* WIDOW *leaning on* OWEN.

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Bannow Castle.

Footmen bringing in Baskets of Flowers.

Miss O'HARA *and Sir* WILLIAM HAMDEN.

Clara. Now, my dear uncle, I want to consult you.

Sir W. And welcome, my child. But if it is

about flowers, you could not consult a worse person, for I scarcely know a rose from a——. What is this you have here—a thistle?

Clara. Yes, sir; and that is the very thing I want your opinion about.

Sir W. Well, my dear, all I know about thistles, I think, is, that asses love thistles—will that do?

Clara. O no, sir—pray be serious, for I am in the greatest hurry to settle how it is all to be. You know it is St. Patrick's day.

Sir W. Yes, and here is plenty of shamrock, I see.

Clara. Yes, here is the shamrock—the rose, the ever blowing rose—and the thistle. And as we are to have Scotch, English, and Irish at our little fête champetre this evening, don't you think it would be pretty to have the tents hung with the rose, thistle, and shamrock joined?

Sir W. Very pretty, my dear: and I am glad there are to be tents, otherwise a fête champetre in the month of March would give me the rheumatism even to think of.

Clara. Oh, my dear sir, not at all. You will be snug and warm in the green-house.

Sir W. Well, Clara, dispose of me as you please—I am entirely at your service for the rest of my days.

Clara. Thank you, sir—you are the best of uncles, guardians, and friends.

[*Miss* O'HARA *goes back and appears to be giving directions to the servants.*

Sir W. Uncle, nature made me—guardian, your father made me—friend, you made me yourself, Clara. (*Sir* WILLIAM *comes forward, and speaks as if in a*

reverie.) And evermore my friendship for her shall continue, though my guardianship is over. I am glad I conquered my indolence, and came to Ireland with her; for a cool English head will be wanting to guide that warm Irish heart.—And here I stand counsel for prudence against generosity!

Clara. (*advancing to him playfully*) A silver penny for your thoughts, uncle.

Sir W. Shall I never teach you economy?—such extravagance! to give a penny, and a silver penny, for what you may have for nothing.

Clara. Nothing can come of nothing—speak again.

Sir W. I was thinking of you, my—*ward* no longer.

Clara. Ward always, pray, sir. Whatever I may be in the eye of the law, I am not arrived at years of discretion yet, in my own opinion, nor in yours, I suspect. So I pray you, uncle, let me still have the advantage of your counsel and guidance.

Sir W. You ask for my advice, Clara. Now let me see whether you will take it.

Clara. I am all attention.

Sir W. You know you must allow me a little prosing. You are an heiress, Clara—a rich heiress —an Irish heiress. You desire to do good, don't you?

Clara. (*with eagerness*) With all my heart!— with all my soul!

Sir W. That is not enough, Clara. You must not only desire to do good, you must know how to do it.

Clara. Since you, uncle, know that so well, you will teach it to me.

Sir W. Dear, flattering girl—but you shall not flatter me out of the piece of advice I have ready for you. Promise me two things.

Clara. And first, for your first.

Sir W. Finish whatever you begin.—Good beginnings, it is said, make good endings, but great beginnings often make little endings, or, in this country, no endings at all. *Finis coronat opus*—and that crown is wanting wherever I turn my eyes. Of the hundred magnificent things your munificent father began——

Clara. (*interrupting*) Oh, sir, spare my father!—I promise you that *I* will finish whatever I begin. What's your next command?

Sir W. Promise me that you will never make a promise to a tenant, nor any agreement about business, but in writing—and empower me to say that you will never keep any verbal promise about business—then, none such will ever be claimed.

Clara. I promise you——Stay!—this is a promise about business: I must give it to you in writing.

[*Miss* O'HARA *sits down to a writing-table, and writes.*

Sir W. (*looking out of the window*) I hope I have been early enough in giving this my second piece of advice, worth a hundred sequins—for I see the yard is crowded with gray-coated suitors, and the table here is already covered with letters and petitions.

Clara. Yes, uncle, but I have not read half of them yet.

[*Presents the written promise to Sir* WILLIAM.

Sir W. Thank you, my dear; and you will be thankful to me for this when I am dead and gone.

Clara. And whilst you are alive and here, if you please, uncle. Now, sir, since you are so kind to say that your time is at my disposal, will you have the goodness to come with me to these gray-coated suitors, and let us give answers to these poor petitioners, who, "as in duty bound, will ever pray."

[*Takes up a bundle of papers.*

Sir W. (*taking a letter from his pocket*) First, my dear niece, I must add to the number. I have a little business. A petition to present from a *protégé* of mine.

Clara. A protégé of yours!—Then it is granted, whatever it be.

Sir W. (*smiling*) Recollect your promise, Clara.

Clara. Oh, true—it must be in writing.

[*She goes hastily to the writing-table, and takes up a pen.*

Sir W. Read before you write, my dear—I insist upon it.

Clara. Oh, sir, when it is a request of yours, how can I grant it soon enough? But it shall be done in the way you like best—slowly—deliberately—(*opening the letter*)—in minuet time. And I will look before I leap—and I'll read before I write. (*She reads the signature.*) Gilbert! Honest Gilbert, how glad I shall be to do any thing for you, independently of your master! (*Reads on, suddenly lets the letter drop, and clasps her hands.*) Sir—Uncle, my dear uncle, how unfortunate I am! Why did not you ask

me an hour ago?—Within this hour I have promised the new inn to another person.

Sir W. Indeed!—that is unfortunate. My poor Gilbert will be sadly disappointed.

Clara. How vexed I am! But I never should have thought of Gilbert for the inn: I fancied he disliked Ireland so much that he would never have settled here.

Sir W. So thought I till this morning. But love, my dear—love is lord of all. Poor Gilbert!

Clara. Poor Gilbert!—I am so sorry I did not know this sooner. Of all people, I should for my own part have preferred Gilbert for the inn, he would have kept it so well.

Sir W. He would so. (*Sighs.*)

Clara. I do so blame myself—I have been so precipitate, so foolish, so wrong—without consulting you even.

Sir W. Nay, my dear, I have been as wrong, as foolish, as precipitate as you; for before I consulted you, I told Gilbert that I could almost *promise* that he should have the inn in consequence of my recommendation. And upon the strength of that *almost* he is gone a courting. My dear, we are both a couple of fools; but I am an old—you are a young one. There is a wide difference—let that comfort you.

Clara. Oh, sir, nothing comforts me, I am so provoked with myself; and you will be so provoked with me, when I tell you how silly I have been.

Sir W. Pray tell me.

Clara. Would you believe that I have literally given it for a song. A man sent me this morning a

copy of verses to the heiress of Bannow. The verses struck my fancy—I suppose because they flattered me; and with the verses came a petition setting forth claims, and a tenant's right, and fair promises, and a proposal for the new inn; and at the bottom of the paper I rashly wrote these words—"*The poet's petition is granted.*"

Sir W. A promise in writing, too!—My dear Clara, I cannot flatter you—this certainly is not a wise transaction. So, to reward a poet, you made him an innkeeper. Well, I have known wiser heads, to reward a poet, make him an exciseman.

Clara. But, sir, I am not quite so silly as they were, for I did not *make* the poet an innkeeper—he is one already.

Sir W. An innkeeper already!—Who do you mean?

Clara. A man with a strange name—or a name that will sound strange to your English ears—Christy Gallagher.

Sir W. A rogue and a drunken dog, I understand: but he is a poet, and knows how to flatter the heiress of Bannow

Clara. (*striking her forehead*) Silly, silly Clara!

Sir W. (*changing his tone from irony to kindness*) Come, my dear Clara, I will not torment you any more. You deserve to have done a great deal of mischief by your precipitation; but I believe this time you have done little or none, at least none that is irremediable; and you have made Gilbert happy, I hope and believe, though without intending it.

Clara. My dear uncle—you set my heart at ease—but explain.

Sir W. Then, my dear, I shrewdly suspect that the daughter of this Christy *What-do-you-call-him* is the lady of Gilbert's thoughts.

Clara. I see it all in an instant. That's delightful! We can pension off the drunken old father, and Gilbert and the daughter will keep the inn. Gilbert is in the green-house, preparing the coloured lamps—let us go and speak to him this minute, and settle it all.

Sir W. Speak to him of his loves? Oh, my dear, you'd kill him on the spot! He is so bashful, he'd blush to death.

Clara. Well, sir, do you go alone, and I will keep far, far aloof. [*Exeunt at opposite sides.*

SCENE III.

Parlour of the Inn.

CHRISTY *and Miss* GALLAGHER.

Christy. (*to Miss* GALLAGHER, *slapping her on her back*) Hould up your head, child; there's money bid for you.

Miss G. Lord, father, what a thump on the back to salute one with. Well, sir, and if money is bid for me, no wonder: I suppose, it's because I have money.

Christy. That's all the rason—you've hit it, Florry. It's money that love always looks for now. So you

may be proud to larn the news I have for you, which will fix Mr. Gilbert, your bachelor, for life, I'll engage—and make him speak out, you'll see, afore night-fall. We have the new inn, dear!—I've got the promise here under her own hand-writing.

Miss G. Indeed!—Well, I'm sure I shall be glad to get out of this hole, which is not fit for a rat or a christian to live in—and I'll have my music and my piano in the back parlour, genteel.

Christy. Oh, Ferrinafad, are you there? It's your husband must go to that expinse, my precious, if he chooses, *twingling* and *tweedling*, instead of the puddings and apple pies—*that* you'll settle betwix yees; and in the honeymoon, no doubt, you've cunning enough to compass that, and more.

Miss G. To be sure, sir, and before I come to the honeymoon, I promise you; for I won't become part or parcel of any man that ever wore a head, except he's music in his soul enough to allow me my piano in the back parlour.

Christy. Asy! asy! Ferrinafad—don't be talking about the piano-forte, till you are married. Don't be showing the halter too soon to the shy horse—it's with the sieve of oats you'll catch him; and his head once in the sieve, you have the halter on him clane. Pray, after all, tell me, Florry, the truth—did Mr. Gilbert ever ax you?

Miss G. La, sir, what a coarse question. His eyes have said as much a million of times.

Christy. That's good—but not in law, dear. For, see, you could not *shue* a man in the four courts for a breach of promise made only with the eyes, jewel.

It must be with the tongue afore witness, mind, or under the hand, sale, or mark—look to that.

Miss G. But, dear sir, Mr. Gilbert is so tongue-tied with that English bashfulness.

Christy. Then Irish impudence must cut the string of that tongue, Florry. Lave that to me, unless you'd rather yourself.

Miss G. Lord, sir—what a rout about one man, when, if I please, I might have a dozen lovers.

Christy. Be the same more or less. But one rich bachelor's worth a dozen poor, that is, for the article of a husband.

Miss G. And I dare say the drum-major is rich enough, sir—for all Scotchmen, they say, is fond of money and *œ*conomie; and I'd rather after all be the lady of a military man. (*Sings.*)

> "I'll live no more at home,
> But I'll follow with the drum,
> And I'll be the captain's lady, oh!"

Christy. Florry! Florry! mind you would not fall between two stools, and nobody to pity you.

Enter BIDDY.

Miss G. Well, what is it?

Biddy. The bed. I was seeing was the room empty, that I might make it; for it's only turned up it is, when I was called off to send in dinner. So I believe I'd best make it now, for the room will be wanting for the tea-drinking, and what not.

Miss G. Ay, make the bed do, sure it's asy, and no more about it;—you've talked enough about it to

make twenty beds, one harder nor the other,—if talk would do. (BIDDY *goes to make the bed.*) And I'm sure there's not a girl in the parish does less in the day, for all the talk you keep. Now I'll just tell all you didn't do, that you ought this day, Biddy.

[*While Miss* GALLAGHER *is speaking to* BIDDY *Mr.* GALLAGHER *opens a press, pours out, and swallows a dram.*

Christy. Oh, that would be too long telling, Florry —and that'll keep cool. Lave her now, and you may take your scould out another time. I want to spake to you. What's this I wanted to say? My memory's confusing itself. Oh, this was it—I didn't till you how I got this promise of the inn: I did it nately— I got it for a song.

Miss G. You're joking,—and I believe, sir, you're not over and above sober. There's a terrible strong smell of the whiskey.

Christy. No, the whiskey's not strong, dear, at-all-at-all!—You may keep smelling what way you plase, but I'm as sober as a judge, still,—and, drunk or sober, always knows and knewed on which side my bread was buttered:—got it for a song, I tell you—a bit of a complimentary, adulatory scroll, that the young lady fancied—and she, slap-dash, Lord love her, and keep her always so! writes at the bottom, *granted the poet's petition.*

Miss G. And where on earth, then, did you get that song?

Christy. Where but in my brains should I get it? I could do that much any way, I suppose, though it was not my luck to be edicated at Ferrinafad.

[*Miss* GALLAGHER *looks back, and sees* BIDDY *behind her.—Miss* GALLAGHER *gives her a box on the ear.*

Miss G. Manners! that's to teach ye.

Biddy. Manners!—Where would I larn them—when I was only waiting the right time to ax you what I'd do for a clane pillow-case?

Miss G. Why, turn that you have inside out, and no more about it.

Christy. And turn yourself out of this, if you plase. (*He turns* BIDDY *out by the shoulders.*) Let me hear you singing *Baltiorum* in the kitchen, for security that you're not hearing my sacrets. There, she's singing it now, and we're snug;—tell me when she stops, and I'll stop myself.

Miss G. Then there's the girl has ceased singing. There's somebody's come in, into the kitchen; may be it's the drum-major. I'll go and see.

[*Exit Miss* GALLAGHER.

CHRISTY, *solus.*

There she's off now! And I must after her, else she'll spoil her market, and my own. But look ye, now—if I shouldn't find her agreeable to marry this Mr. Gilbert, the man I've laid out for her, why here's a good stick that will bring her to rason in the last resort; for there's no other way of rasoning with Ferrinafad. [*Exit* CHRISTY.

SCENE IV.

The Garden of the Widow LARKEN'*s Cottage.*

OWEN *and* MABEL.

Owen. How does my mother bear the disappointment, Mabel, about the inn?

Mabel. Then to outward appearance she did not take it so much to heart as I expected she would. But I'm sure she frets inwardly—because she had been in such hopes, and in such spirits, and so proud to think how well her children would all be settled.

Owen. Oh, how sorry I am I told her in that hurry the good news I heard, and all to disappoint her afterwards, and break her heart with it.

Mabel. No, she has too good a heart to break for the likes. She'll hold up again after the first disappointment—she'll struggle on for our sakes, Owen.

Owen. She will: but Mabel dearest, what do you think of Gilbert?

Mabel. (*turning away*) I strive not to think of him at all.

Owen. But sure I was not wrong there—he told me as much as that he loved you

Mabel. Then he never told me that much.

Owen. No! What, not when he walked with you to the well?

Mabel. No. What made you think he did?

Owen. Why, the words he said about you when he met me, was—where's your sister Mabel? Gone to

the well, Gilbert, says I. And do you think a man that has a question to ask her might make bold to step after her? says he. Such a man as you—why not? says I. Then he stood still, and twirled a rose he held in his hand, and he said nothing, and I no more, till he stooped down, and from the grass where we stood pulled a sprig of clover. Is not this what *you* call shamrock? says he. It is, says I. Then he puts the shamrock along with the rose—How would *that* do? says he.

Mabel. Did he say that, Owen?

Owen. Yes, or how would they look together? or, would they do together? or some words that way; I can't be particular to the word—you know, he speaks different from us; but that surely was the sense; and I minded, too, he blushed up to the roots, and I pitied him, and answered——

Mabel. Oh, what did you answer?

Owen. I answered and said, I thought they'd do very well together; and that it was good when the Irish shamrock and the English rose was united.

Mabel. (*hiding her face with her hands*) Oh Owen, that was too plain.

Owen. Plain! Not at all—it was not. It's only your tenderness makes you feel it too plain—for, listen to me, Mabel. (*Taking her hand from her face.*) Sure, if it had any meaning particular, it's as strong for miss Gallagher as for any body else.

Mabel. That's true:—and may be it was that way he took it—and may be it was her he was thinking of——

Owen. When he asked me for you? But I'll not

mislead you—I'll say nothing; for it was a shame he did not speak out, after all the encouragement he got from me.

Mabel. Then did he get encouragement from you?

Owen. That is—(*smiling*)—taking it the other way, he might understand it so, if he had any conscience. Come now, Mabel, when he went to the well, what did he say to you? for I am sure he said something.

Mabel. Then he said nothing—but just put the rose and shamrock into my hand.

Owen. O! did he?—And what did you say?

Mabel. I said nothing.—What could I say?

Owen. I wish I'd been with you, Mabel.

Mabel. I'm glad you were not, Owen.

Owen. Well, what did he say next?

Mabel. I tell you he said nothing, but cleared his throat and hemmed, as he does often.

Owen. What, all the way to the well and back, nothing but hem, and clear his throat?

Mabel. Nothing in life.

Owen. Why, then, the man's a fool or a rogue.

Mabel. Oh, don't say that, any way. But there's my mother coming in from the field. How weak she walks! I must go in to bear her company spinning.

Owen. And I'll be in by the time I've settled all here. [*Exit* MABEL.

OWEN, *solus.*

Oh! I know how keenly Mabel feels all, tho' she speaks so mild. Then I'm cut to the heart by this behaviour of Gilbert's:—sure he could not be so cruel

to be jesting with her!—he's an Englishman, and may be he thinks no harm to jilt an Irishwoman. But I'll show him—— but then if he never asked her the question, how can we say any thing?—Oh! the thing is, he's a snug man, and money's at the bottom of all,—and since Christy's to have the new inn, and miss Gallagher has the money!—Well, it's all over, and I don't know what will become of me.

Enter Mr. ANDREW HOPE.

Mr. H. My gude lad, may your name be Larken?

Owen. It is, sir—Owen Larken, at your service—the son of the widow Larken.

Mrs. H. Then I have to thank your family for their goodness to my puir brother, years ago. And for yourself, your friend, Mr. Christy Gallagher, has been telling me you can play the bugle?

Owen. I can, sir.

Mr. H. And we want a bugle, and the *pay*'s fifteen guineas; and I'd sooner give it to you than three others that has applied, if you'll list.

Owen. Fifteen guineas! Oh! if I could send that money home to my mother! but I must ask her consent. Sir, she lives convenient, just in this cabin here—would you be pleased to step in with me, and I'll ask her consent.

Mr. H. That's right,—lead on, my douce lad—you ken the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Kitchen of the Widow LARKEN'S *Cottage.*

A Door is seen open, into an inner Room.

MABEL, *alone,*

(*Sitting near the door of the inner room, spinning and singing.*) *

Sleep, mother, sleep! in slumber blest,
It joys my heart to see thee rest.
Unfelt in sleep thy load of sorrow;
Breathe free and thoughtless of to-morrow;
And long, and light, thy slumbers last,
In happy dreams forget the past.
Sleep, mother, sleep! thy slumber's blest,
It joys my heart to see thee rest.

Many's the night she wak'd for me,
To nurse my helpless infancy:
While cradled on her patient arm,
She hush'd me with a mother's charm.
Sleep, mother, sleep! thy slumber's blest,
It joys my heart to see thee rest.

And be it mine to soothe thy age,
With tender care thy grief assuage.
This hope is left to poorest poor,
And richest child can do no more.
Sleep, mother, sleep! thy slumber's blest.
It joys my heart to see thee rest.

[*While* MABEL *is singing the second stanza,* OWEN *and* ANDREW HOPE *enter. Mr.* HOPE *stops short and listens: he makes a sign to* OWEN *to*

* This song is set to music by Mr. Webbe.

stand still, and not to interrupt MABEL—*while* OWEN *approaches her on tiptoe.*

Mr. H. (*aside*) She taks my fancy back to dear Scotland, to my ain hame, and my ain mither, and my ain Kate.

Owen. So Mabel! I thought you never sung for strangers?

[MABEL *turns and sees Mr.* HOPE—*She rises and curtsies.*

Mr. H. (*advancing softly*) I fear to disturb the mother, whose slumbers are so blest, and I'd fain hear that lullaby again. If the voice stop, the mother may miss it, and wake.

Mabel. (*looking into the room in which her mother sleeps, then closing the door gently*) No, sir,—she'll not miss my voice now, I thank you—she is quite sound asleep.

Owen. This is Mr. Andrew Hope, Mabel—you might remember one of his name, a serjeant Hope.

Mabel. Ah! I mind—he that was sick with us, some time back.

Mr. H. Ay, my brother that's dead, and that your gude mither was so tender of, when sick, charged me to thank you all, and so from my soul I do.

Mabel. 'Twas little my poor mother could do, nor any of us for him, even then, though we could do more then than we could now, and I'm glad he chanced to be with us in our better days.

Mr. H. And I'm sorry you ever fell upon worse days, for you deserve the best; and will have such again I trust. All I can say is this—that gif your brother here gangs with me, he shall find a brother's care though life fra' me.

Owen. I wouldn't doubt you; and that you know, Mabel, would be a great point, to have a friend secure in the regiment, if I thought of going.

Mabel. If!—Oh! what are you thinking of, Owen? What is it your talking of going? (*Turning towards the door of her mother's room suddenly.*) Take care, but she'd wake and hear you, and she'd never sleep easy again.

Owen. And do you think so?

Mabel. Do I think so? Am not I sure of it? and you too, Owen, if you'd take time to think and feel.

Owen. Why, there's no doubt but it's hard, when the mother has reared the son, for him to quit her as soon as he can go alone; but it is what I was thinking: it is only the militia, you know, and I'd not be going out of the three kingdoms ever at all; and I could be sending money home to my mother, like Johnny Reel did to his.

Mabel. Money is it? Then there's no money you could send her—not the full of Lough Erne itself, in golden guineas, could make her amends for the loss of yourself, Owen, and you know that.

Mr. H. And I am not the man that would entice you to list, or gang with me, in contradiction to your duty at home, or your interest abroad: so (*turning to* MABEL) do not look on me as the tempter to evil, nor with distrust, as you do, kind sister as you are, and like my own Kate; but hear me coolly, and without prejudice, for it is his gude I wish.

Mabel. I am listening then, and I ask your pardon if I looked a doubt.

Mr. H. The gude mother must wish above all things here below the weal and *advancement* and the

honour of her bairns; and she would not let the son be tied to her apron-strings, for any use or profit to herself, but ever wish him to do the best in life for his sel'. Is not this truth, gude friends—plain truth?

Mabel. It is then—I own that: truth and sense too.

Owen. Now, see there, Mabel.

Mr. H. And better for him to do something abroad than digging at home; and in the army he might get on,—and here's the bugle-boy's pay.

Mabel. Is it a bugle-boy you are thinking of making him?

Mr. H. That's the only thing I could make him. I wish I could offer better.

Mabel. Then, I thank you, sir, and I wouldn't doubt ye—and it would be very well for a common boy that could only dig: but my brother's no common boy, sir.

Owen. Oh, Mabel!

Mabel. Hush, Owen! for it's the truth I'm telling, and if to your face I can't help it. You may hide the face, but I won't hide the truth.

Mr. H. Then speak on, my warm-hearted lassy, speak on.

Mabel. Then sir, he got an edication while ever my poor father lived, and no better scholar they said, for the teaching he got:—but all was given over when the father died, and the troubles came, and Owen, as he ought, give himself up intirely for my mother, to help her, a widow. But it's not digging and slaving he is to be always:—it's with the head,

as my father used to say, he'll make more than the hands; and we hope to get a clerk's place for him sometime, or there will be a schoolmaster wanting in this town, and that will be what he would be fit for; and not——but it's not civil, before you, a soldier, sir, to say the rest.

Mr. H. Fear not, you will not give offence.

Mabel. And not to be spending his breath blowing through a horn all his days, for the sake of wearing a fine red coat. I beg your pardon again, sir, if I say too much—but it's to save my brother and my mother.

Mr. H. I like you the better for all you've said for both.

Owen. And I'm off entirely:—I'll not list, I thank you, sir.

[MABEL *clasps her hands joyfully, then embraces her brother.*

Mr. H. And I'll not ask you to list—and I would not have asked it at all but that a friend of yours told me it would be the greatest service I could do you, and that it was the thing of all others you wished.

Owen. That friend was Christy Gallagher: but he was mistaken—that's all.

Mabel. I hope that's all. But I've no dependance on him for a friend, nor has my mother.

Owen. Why, he was saying to me, and I could not say against it, that he had a right to propose for the inn, if he could, though Gilbert and we wanted to get it.

Mabel. Then I wonder why Christy should be preferred rather than my mother.

Owen. Then that's a wonder,—and I can't understand how that was.

Mr. H. I have one more thing to say, or to do, which I should like better, if you'll give me leave. If there's a difficulty aboot the rent of this new inn that you are talking of, I have a little spare money, and you're welcome to it:—I consider it as a debt of my brother's, which I am bound to pay; so no obligation in life—tell me how much will do.

[*Takes out his purse.*

Owen and *Mabel*. You are very kind—you are very good.

Mr. H. No, I am not—I am only just. Say only how much will do.

Owen. Alas! money won't do now, sir. It's all settled, and Christy says he has a promise of it in writing from the lady.

Mr. H. May be this Christy might sell his interest, and we will see—I will not say till I find I can do. Fare ye weel till we meet, as I hope we shall, at the dance that's to be at the castle. The band is to be there, and I with them, and I shall hope for this lassy's hand in the dance.

Mabel. (*aside*) And Gilbert that never asked me! (*Aloud*) I thank you, kindly, sir, I sha'n't go to the dance at-all-at-all, I believe,—my mother had better take her rest, and I must stay with her—a good night to you kindly.

[*Exit* MABEL *into her mother's room.*

Mr. H. This sister of yours would leave me no heart to carry back to Scotland, I fear, but that I'm a married man already, and have my own luve—a

Kate of my own, that's as fair as she, and as gude, and that's saying much.

Owen. (*aside*) Much more than Florinda Gallagher will like to hear.

Mr. H. I shall thank you if you will teach me, for my Kate, the words of that song your sister was singing when we came in.

Owen. I believe it's to flatter me you say this, for that song is my writing.

Mr. H. Yours?

Owen. Mine, such as it is.

Mr. H. Sic a ane as you are then, I'm glad you are not to be a bugle-boy: your sister is right.

Owen. I'll teach you the words as we go along.

Mr. H. Do so;—but mind now this song-writing do not lead you to idleness. We must see to turn your edication to good account. (*Aside*) Oh, I will never rest till I pay my brother's debt, some way or other, to this gude family. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CHRISTY *alone.*

So this Scotchman could not list Owen. *Couldn't* nor *wouldn't*, that's what he says; and the Scotchman looked very hard at me as he spoke: moreover, I seen

Mr. Gilbert and him with their two heads close together, and that's a wonder, for I know Gilbert's not nat'rally fond of any sort of Scotchman. There's something brewing:—I must have my wits about me, and see and keep sober this night, if I can, any way. From the first I suspicted Mr. Gilbert had his heart on Mabel. (BIDDY DOYLE *puts her head in*) Biddy Doyle! What the mischief does that head of yours do there?

Biddy. Nothing in life, sir: only just to see who was in it, along with yourself, because I thought I hard talking enough for two.

Christy. You, girl, have curiosity enough for two, and two dozen, and too much! So plase take your head and yourself out of that, and don't be overharing my private thoughts; for that was all the talking ye hard, and *my* thoughts can't abide listeners.

Biddy. I'm no listener—I ax your pardon, sir: I scorn to listen to your thoughts, or your words even.

[*Exit* BIDDY.

Christy. That girl has set me topsy-turvy. Where was I?—Oh! this was it. Suppose even, I say, suppose this Gilbert's fancy should stick to Mabel, I might manage him, nevertheless. I've a great advantage and prerogative over this Englishman, in his having never been dipped in the Shannon. He is so *under cow*, with bashfulness now, that I don't doubt but what in one of his confusions I could asy bring him to say Yes in the wrong place; and sooner than come to a perplexing refusal of a young lady, he might, I'll engage, be brought about to marry the girl he didn't like, in lieu of the girl he did. We

shall see——but hark! I hear Ferrinafad's voice, singing, and I must join, and see how the thing's going on, or going off. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Miss GALLAGHER *and* GILBERT *at a Tea-Table.*

Gilb. (*aside*) Now would I give five golden guineas this minute that her father, or any mortal man, woman, or child in the varsal world, would come in and say something; for 'tis so awk'ard for I to be sitting here, and I nothing to say to she.

Miss G. (*aside*) When will the man pay me the compliment to speak, I wonder? Wouldn't any body think he'd no tongue in that mouth of his, screwed up, and blushing from ear to ear?

Enter CHRISTY.

Christy. Hoo! hoo! hoo!—How's this—both of yees mute as fishes the moment I come in? Why I hard you just now, when my back was turned, singing like turtle-doves—didn't I, Florry?

Miss G. Indeed, sir, as to turtle-doves, I'm not sinsible; but Mr. Gilbert requisted of me to be favouring him with a song, which I was complying with, though I'm not used to be singing without my piano.

Christy (*aside*) Sorrow take your piano! you're not come there yet.

Miss G. I wonder the drum-major isn't come yet. Does he expect tea can be keeping hot for him to the end of time? He'll have nothing but slop-dash, though he's a very genteel man. I'm partial to the military

school, I own, and a Highlander too is always my white-headed boy.

Gilb. (*astonished*) Her white-headed boy?—Now, if I was to be hanged for it, I don't know what that means.

Miss G. Now where can you have lived, Mr. Gilbert not to know *that*?

Christy. (*aside*) By the mass, he's such a matter-o'-fact-man, I can't get round him with all my wit.

Miss G. Here's the drum-major! Scarlet's asy seen at a distance, that's one comfort!

Enter Mr. HOPE.

Mr. H. I'm late, miss Florinda, I fear, for the tea-table; but I had a wee-wee bit of business to do for a young friend, that kept me.

Miss G. No matter, major, my tapot defies you. Take a cup a tea. Are you fond of music, major?

Mr. H. Very fond of music, ma'am—do you sing or play?

Miss G. I do play—I plead guilty to that I own. But in this hole that we are in, there's no room fitting for my piano. However, in the new inn which we have got now, I'll fix my piano elegant in the back-parlour.

Mr. H. In the mean time, miss Florinda, will you favour us with a song?

Christy. And I'll be making the punch, for I'm no songstress. Biddy! Biddy Doyle! hot water in a jerry.

Miss G. Indeed I'm not used to sing without my piano; but, to oblige the major, I'll sing by note.

Miss GALLAGHER *sings.*

Softly breathing through the heart,
  When lovers meet no more to part;
That purity of soul be mine,
  Which speaks in music's sound divine.

'Midst trees and streams of constant love,
  That's whispered by the turtle-dove;
Sweet cooing cushat all my pray'r,
  Is love in elegance to share.

Mr. H. That's what I call fine, now! Very fine that. [GILBERT *nods.*

Miss G. (*aside*) Look at that Englishman, now, that hasn't a word of compliment to throw to a dog, but only a nod. (*Aloud*) 'Tis the military that has always the souls for music, and for the ladies—and I think, gentlemen, I may step for'ard, and say I'm entitled to call upon you now:—Mr. Gilbert, if you've ever a love-song in your composition.

Gilb. Love-song I can't say, ma'am; but such as I have—I'm no great hand at composition—but I have one song—they call it, *My choice of a wife.*

Miss G. Pray let's have it, sir.

Christy. Now for it, by Jabus.

Mr. H. Give it us, Mr. Gilbert.

Enter BIDDY *with hot water, and exit.*

GILBERT *sings.*

There's none but a fool will wed on a sudden,
Or take a fine miss that can't make a pudding;
If he get such a wife, what would a man gain, O!
But a few ballad tunes on a wretched piano?

Some ladies than peacocks are twenty times prouder,
Some ladies than thunder are twenty times louder;
But I'll have a wife that's obliging and civil—
For me, your fine ladies may go to the devil!

Miss G. (*rising*) Sir, I comprehend your song, coarse as it is, and its moral to boot, and I humbly thank ye, sir. (*She curtsies low.*) And if I live a hundred year, and ninety-nine to the back of that, sir, I will remember it to you, sir.

Christy. (*leaving the punch which he had been making, comes forward with a lemon in his hand*) Wheugh! wheugh! wheugh! Ferrinafad!

Gilb. (*aside*) Ferrinafad!—the man's mad!

Miss G. Father, go your ways back to your punch. Here stands the only *raal* gentleman in company (*pointing to the drum-major*), if I'm to make the election.

Christy. Major, you can't but drink her health for that compliment.

[*He presents a glass of punch to Mr.* HOPE.

Mr. H. Miss Gallagher's health, and a gude husband to her, and *soon.*

Miss G. And soon!—No hurry for them that has choice.

Christy. That has money, you mane, jewel. Mr. Gilbert, you did not give us your toast.

Gilb. Your good health, ma'am—your good health, sir,—Mr. Hope, your good health, and your fireside in Scotland, and in pa'tic'lar your good wife.

Miss G. (*starting*) Your wife, sir! Why, sir, is't possible you're a married man, after all?

Mr. H. Very possible, ma'am—thank Heaven and my gude Kate.

Miss G. His gude Kate!—Well, I hate the Scotch accent of all languages under the sun.

Christy. In a married man, I suppose you *mane,* Florry?

Miss G. This is the way with officers continually —passing themselves for bachelors.

Christy. Then Florry, we'd best recommend it to the drum-major the next town he'd go into, to put up an advertisement in capitals on his cap, warning all women whom it may consarn, that he is a married man.

Miss G. 'Tis no consarn of mine, I'll assure you, sir, at any rate; for I should scorn to think of a Scotchman any way. And what's a drum-major, after all? [*Exit in a passion.*

Christy. Bo boo! bo boo! bo boo! there's a tantarara now; but never mind her, she takes them tantarums by turns. Now depend upon it, Mr. Gilbert, it's love that's at the bottom of it all, clane and clear.

Gilb. It's very like, sir,—I can't say.

Christy. Oh, but I *can* say—I know her, egg and bird. The thing is, she's mad with you, and that has set her all through other.—But we'll finish our tumbler of punch.

[*Draws forwards the table, and sets chairs.*

Gilb. (*aside*) Egg and bird!—mad! All through other!—Confound me if I understand one word the man is saying; but I will make him understand me, if he can understand plain English.

Mr. H. (*aside*) I'll stand by and see fair play. I have my own thought.

Gilb. Now Mr ——, to be plain with you at once —here's fifty guineas in gold, and if you will take them, and give me up the promise you have got of the new inn, you shall be welcome. That's all I have to say, if I was to talk till Christmas—and fewest words is best in matters of business.

Christy. Fifty guineas in gold!—Don't part with

a guinea of them, man, put 'em up again. You shall have the new inn without a word more, and into the bargain my good-will and my daughter—and you're a jantleman, and can't say *no* to that, any way.

Gilb. Yes, but I can though: since you drive me to the wall, I must say no, and I do say no. And, dang it, I would have been hanged almost as soon as say so much to a father. I beg your pardon, sir, but my heart is given to another. Good evening to you.

Christy. (*holding him as he attempts to go*) Take it coolly, and listen to me, and tell me—was you ever married before, Mr. Gilbert?

Gilb. Never.

Christy. Then I was—and I can tell you that I found to my cost, love was all in all with me before I was married, and after I had been married a twel'-month, money was all in all with me; for I had the wife, and I had not the money, and without the money, the wife must have starved.

Gilb. But I can work, sir, and will, head, hands, and heart, for the woman I love.

Christy. Asy said—hard done. Mabel Larken is a very pretty girl. But wait till I tell you what Kit Monaghan said to me yesterday. I'm going to be married, sir, says he, to me. Ay, so you mintioned to me a fortnight ago, Kit, says I—to Rose Dermod, isn't it? says I. Not at all, sir, says he—it is to Peggy M'Grath, this time. And what quarrel had you to Rose Dermod? says I. None in life, sir, says he; but Peggy M'Grath had two cows, and Rose Dermod had but the one, and in my mind there is not the differ of a cow betwix' one woman and another. Do you understand me now, Mr. Gilbert?

Gilb. Sir, we shall never understand one another —pray let me go, before I get into a passion.

[*Breaks from* CHRISTY, *and exit.*

Christy. Hollo! Hollo! Mr. Gilbert! (GILBERT *returns.*) One word more about the new inn. I've done about Florry; and, upon my conscience, I believe you're right enough—only that I'm her father, and in duty bound to push her as well as I can.

Gilb. Well, sir, about the inn: be at a word with me; for I'm not in a humour to be trifled with.

Mr. H. (*aside*) Fire beneath snow! who'd ha' thought it?

Christy. Then, if it was sixty guineas instead of fifty, I'd take it, and you should have my bargain of the inn.

Mr. H. (*aside*) I'll not say my word until I see what the bottom of the men are.

Gilb. (*aside*) Why, to make up sixty, I must sell my watch even; but I'll do it—any thing to please Mabel. (*Aloud*) Well, sixty guineas, if you won't give it for less.

Christy. Done! (*Eagerly.*)

Mr. H. Stay, stay, Mr. Gilbert! Have a care, Mr. Gallagher!—the lady might not be well pleased at your handing over her written promise, Mr. Gallagher—wait a wee bit. Don't conclude this bargain till you are before the lady at the castle.

Gilb. So best—no doubt.

Christy. All one to me—so I pocket the sixty.

Mr. H. (*aside to* GILBERT) Come off.

Gilb. We shall meet then at the castle to-night: till then, a good day to you, Mr. Gallagher.

[*Exeunt* GILBERT *and Mr.* HOPE.

Christy. Good night to ye kindly, gentlemen. There's a fool to love for you now! If I'd ax'd a hundred, I'd ha' got it. But still there's only one thing. Ferrinafad will go mad when she learns I've sold the new inn, and she to live on in this hole, and no place for the piano. I hope Biddy did not hear a sentence of it. (*Calls*) Biddy! Biddy Doyle! Biddy, can't ye?

Enter BIDDY.

Biddy. What is it?

Christy. Did you hear any thing? Oh, I see ye did by your eyes. Now, hark'ee, my good girl: don't mention a sentence to Ferrinafad of my settling the new inn, till the bargain's complate, and money in both pockets—you hear.

Biddy. I do sir. But I did not hear afore.

Christy. Becaase, she, though she's my daughter, she's crass—I'll empty my mind to you, Biddy.

Biddy. (*aside*) He has taken enough to like to be talking to poor Biddy.

Christy. Afore Florry was set up on her high horse by that little independency her doting grandmother left her, and until she got her head turned with that Ferrinafad edication, this Florry was a good girl enough. But now what is she?—Given over to vanities of all sorts, and no comfort in life to me, or use at all—not like a daughter at all, nor mistress of the house neither, nor likely to be well married neither, or a credit to me that way! And saucy to me on account of that money of hers I liquidated unknown'st.

Biddy. True for ye, sir.

Christy. Then it all comes from the little finger getting to be the master of me; for I'm confident that when sober, I was not born to be a rogue nat'rally. Was not I honest Christy once? (*ready to cry.*) Oh, I'm a great penitent! But there's no help for it now.

Biddy. True for you, sir.

Christy. I'm an unfortunate cratur, and all the neighbours know it.—So, Biddy dear, I've nothing for it but to take another glass

Biddy. Oh! no, sir, not when you'll be going up to the castle to the lady—you'll be in no condition.

Christy. Tut, girl—'twill give me heart. Let's be merry any way. [*Exit, singing,*

"They say it was care killed the cat,
That starved her, and caused her to die;
But I'll be much wiser than that,
For the devil a care will care I."

SCENE III.

Widow LARKEN'S *Cottage.*

Widow LARKEN, MABEL, *and* GILBERT.

Gilb. And could you doubt me, Mabel, after I told you I loved you?

Mabel. Never would nor could have doubted, had you once told me as much, Mr. Gilbert.

Widow. There was the thing, Mr. Gilbert—you know it was you that was to speak, if you thought of her.

Gilb. Do not you remember the rose and the shamrock?

Widow. Oh! she does well enough; and that's what her heart was living upon, till I killed the hope.

Gilb. You!—killed the hope!—I thought you were my friend.

Widow. And so I am, and was—but when you did not speak.

Gilb. If I had not loved her so well, I might have been able, perhaps, to have said more.

Widow. Then that's enough. Mabel mavourneen, wear the rose he give you now—I'll let you—and see it's fresh enough. She put it in water—oh! she had hope still!

Mabel. And was not I right to trust him, mother?

Gilb. Mabel, if I don't do my best to make you happy all my days, I deserve to be——that's all! But I'm going to tell you about the new inn: that's what I have been about ever since, and I'm to have it for sixty guineas.

Enter OWEN, *rubbing his hands.*

Owen. You see, mother, I was right about Gilbert and Mabel. But Mr. Hope and the band is gone up to the castle. Come, come!—time to be off!—no delay!—Gilbert! Mabel, off with you! (*He pushes them off.*) And glad enough ye are to go together. Mother dear, here's your bonnet and the cloak,—here, round ye throw—that's it—take my arm. (*Widow stumbles as he pulls her on.*) Oh, I'm putting you past your speed, mother.

Widow. No, no.—No fear in life for the mother that has the support of such a son.

SCENE IV.

A large Apartment in Bannow Castle, ornamented with the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock.—The hall opens into a lawn, where the country-people are seen dancing.

Enter CLARA, *Sir* WILLIAM HAMDEN, *and a train of dancers.*

Clara. Now, sir, as we have here English, Scotch, and Irish dancers, we can have the English country-dance, the Scotch reel, and the Irish jig.

Sir W. Then to begin with the Irish jig, which I have never seen.

Clara. You shall see it in perfection.

[*An Irish jig is danced, a Scotch reel follows, and an English country-dance. When* CLARA *has danced down the country-dance, she goes with her partner to Sir* WILLIAM HAMDEN.

Clara. We are going out to look at the dancers on the lawn.

Sir W. Take me with you, for I wish to see those merry dancers—I hear them laughing. I love to hear the country-people laugh: theirs is always *the heart's laugh.* [*Exeunt Sir* WILLIAM *and* CLARA.

[*The dancers recommence, and after dancing for a few minutes, they go off just as Sir* WILLIAM *and* CLARA *return, entering from the hall door.*

Clara. My dear uncle, thank you for going out among these poor people, and for speaking so kindly to them. One would think that you had lived in Ireland all your life, you know so well how to go *straight* to Irish heads and Irish hearts by kindness,

and by what they love almost as well, *humour*, and good-humour. Thank you again and again.

Sir W. My dear niece, you need not thank me; for if you had nothing to do with these people—if you had never been born—I should have loved the Irish for their own sakes. How easy it is to please them! How easy to make them happy; and how grateful they are, even for a few words of kindness.

Clara. Yes. This I may say without partiality—whatever other faults my countrymen have, they certainly are a grateful people. My father, who knew them well, taught me, from my childhood, to trust to Irish gratitude.

Sir W. (*changing his tone*) But, on the other hand, it is my duty to watch over your Irish generosity, Clara. Have you made any more promises, my dear, since morning?

Clara. Oh! no, sir; and I have heartily repented of that which I made this morning: for I find that this man to whom I have promised the new inn is a sad drunken, good-for-nothing person; and as for his daughter, whom I have never yet seen——

Sir W. (*looking towards the entrance from the lawn*)

> "But who is this? What thing of sea or land?
> Female of sex it seems—
> That so bedeck'd, ornate and gay,
> Comes this way sailing."

Enter Miss GALLAGHER.

Miss G. Sir, I beg pardon. But I was told miss O'Hara would wish to speak with Christy Gallagher, and I'm his daughter—he not being very well to-night. He will be up with miss in the morning—

but is confined to his bed with a pain about his heart, he took, just when I was coming away.

[CHRISTY'*s voice heard, singing, to the tune of* "St. Patrick's day in the morning,"

"Full bumpers of whiskey
Will make us all frisky,
On Patrick's day in the morning."

Miss G. (*aside*) Oh! King of glory, if he is not come up after all!

Clara. "What noise is that, unlike the former sound?"

Sir W. Only some man, singing in honour of St. Patrick, I suppose.

Enter CHRISTY GALLAGHER, BIDDY *trying to hold him back.*

Christy. Tut! let me in: I know the lady is here, and I must thank her as becoming——

[CLARA *puts her hand before her face, and retires as he advances.*

Miss G. Oh! father, keep out—you're not in a condition.

Sir W. John! Thomas! carry this man off.

Christy. Ah, now, just let me remark to his honour—did he ever hear this song in England? (*He struggles, and sings, while they are carrying him off,*)

"O'Rourke's noble feast shall ne'er be forgot,
By those who were there, or by those who were not."

But it was not O'Rourke's noble feast at all, it was O'Hara's noble feast, to the best of my knowledge—I'll take my affidavit; and am not I here, on the spot, ready and proud to fight any one that denies the contrary? Let me alone, Florry, for I'm no babby to be

taken out of the room. Ready and proud, I say I am, to fight any tin men in the county, or the kingdom itself, or the three kingdoms entirely, that would go for to dare for to offer to articulate the contrary. So it's miss O'Hara for ever, huzza! a! a! a! a!

Sir W. Carry him off this instant. Begone!

[*The servants carry off* CHRISTY GALLAGHER, *while he sings, to the tune of* "*One bottle more,*"

"Oh, give me but whiskey, continted I'll sing,
Hibernia for ever, and God save the king!"

[*Miss* GALLAGHER *directs and expedites her father's retreat.*

Clara. Shame! shame! Is this the tenant I have chosen?

Miss G. Indeed, and indeed, then, miss O'Hara, I often preach to him, but there's no use in life preaching to him—as good preaching to the winds! for, drunk or sober, he has an answer ready at all points. It is not wit he wants, sir.

Sir W. And he is happy in having a daughter, who knows how to make the best of his faults, I see. What an excellent landlord he will be for this new inn!

Miss G. Oh, certainly, sir—only it's being St. Patrick's night, he would be more inexcusable; and as to the new inn, please Heaven! he shall get no pace on earth till he takes an oath afore the priest against spirits, good or bad, for a twil'month to come, before ever I trust a foot of his in the new inn.

Clara. But, ma'am, from your own appearance, I should apprehend that you would not be suited to the

business yourself. I should suppose you would think it beneath you to keep an inn.

Miss G. Why, ma'am—why, sir—you know when it is called an hotel, it's another thing; and I'm sure I've a great regard for the family, and there's nothing I wouldn't do to oblige miss O'Hara.

Clara. Miss Gallagher, let me beg that if you wish to oblige me——

Enter GILBERT.

Sir W. Well, Gilbert?

Gilb. Only, sir, if you and miss O'Hara were at leisure, sir, one Mr. Andrew Hope, the master of the band, would wish to be allowed to come in to sing a sort of a welcome home they have set to music, sir, for miss O'Hara.

Clara. I do believe this is the very song which that drunken man gave me this morning, and for which I gave him the promise of the inn. I shall be ashamed to hear the song.

Sir W. Let *me* hear it, at all events. Desire Mr. Andrew Hope, and his merry-men-all, to walk in. [*Exit* GILBERT.

Enter Mr. HOPE *and band.—Some of the country-people peep in, as if wishing to enter.*

Sir W. Come in, my good friends.

Enter, among others, the Widow LARKEN *and* MABEL, *and* OWEN.—BIDDY *follows timidly.—Miss* GALLAGHER *takes a conspicuous place.—Sir* WILLIAM *and* CLARA *continue speaking.*

Sir W. Did Gilbert introduce his bride elect to you, Clara?

Clara. Yes, Mabel Larken, that girl with the sweet modest countenance—and her mother, that respectable-looking woman; and her brother, I see, is here, that boy with the quick, intelligent eyes. I know all the family—know them all to be good; and these were the people I might have served! Oh, fool! fool!

Sir W. Well, well, well, 'tis over now, my dear Clara—you will be wiser another time. Come, Mr. Hope, give us a little flattery, to put us in goodhumour with ourselves.

[*The band prelude; but just as they begin, Sir* WILLIAM *sees* CHRISTY, *who is coming in softly, holding back the skirts of his coat.—Sir* WILLIAM *in a loud voice exclaims,*

Turn out that man! How dare you return to interrupt us, sir? Turn out that man!

Christy. (*falling on his knees*) Oh! please your honour, I beg your pardon for one minute: only just give me lave to *insense* your honour's honour. I'm not the same man at all.

Sir W. Stand up, stand up—an Englishman cannot bear to see a man kneel to him. Stand up, pray, if you can.

Christy. Then I can, plase your honour (*rises*), since I got a shock.

Clara. What shock? What do you mean?

Christy. Oh, nothing in life, miss, that need consarn you—only a fall I got from my horse, which the child they set to lead me would put me up upon, and it come down and kilt me; for it wasn't a proper horse for an unfortunate man like me, that was overtaken, as I was then; and it's well but I got a kick of the baast.

Sir W. Do you say you were kicked by a horse?

Christy. Not at all, plase your honour—I say *it was well but* I got a kick of the baast. But it's all for the best now; for see, I'm now as sober as a jidge, and *quite* as any lamb; and if I'd get lave only just to keep in this here corner, I would be no let or hinderance to any. Oh! dear miss, spake for me! I'm an ould man, miss, that your father's honour was partial to always, and called me *honest* Christy, which I was once, and till his death too.

Sir W. What a strange mixture is this man!

Clara. Pray let him stay, uncle—he's sober now.

Sir W. Say not one word more, then; stand still there in your corner.

Christy. And not a word for my life—not breathe, even—to please you! becaase I've a little business to mintion to the lady. Sixty guineas to resave from Mr. Gilbert, yonder. Long life to you, miss! But I'll say no more till this Scotchman has done with his fiddle and his musics.

Sir W. I thought, sir, you were not to have spoken another syllable.

[CHRISTY *puts his finger on his lips, and bows to Sir* WILLIAM *and to* CLARA.

Sir W. Now, Mr. Hope.

Mr. HOPE *sings, and the Band join in chorus,*

Though Bannow's heiress, fair and young,
Hears polish'd praise from ev'ry tongue;
Yet good and kind, she'll not disdain
The tribute of the lowly swain.
The heart's warm welcome, Clara, meets thee;
Thy native land, dear lady, greets thee.

That open brow, that courteous grace,
Bespeaks thee of thy generous race;

Thy father's soul is in thy smile—
Thrice blest his name in Erin's isle.
The heart's warm welcome, Clara, meets thee;
Thy native land, dear lady, greets thee.

The bright star shining on the night,
Betokening good, spreads quick delight;
But quicker far, more glad surprise,
Wakes the kind radiance of her eyes.
The heart's warm welcome, Clara, meets thee;
Thy native land, dear lady, greets thee.*

Christy. Then I'm not ashamed, any way, of that song of mine.

Sir W. Of yours?—Is it possible that it is yours?

Clara. It is indeed. These are the very lines he gave me this morning.

Christy. And I humbly thank you, madam or miss, for having got them set to the musics.

Clara. I had nothing to do with that. We must thank Mr. Hope for this agreeable surprise.

Christy. Why, then, I tank you, Mr. Drum.

Mr. H. You owe me no thanks, sir. I will take none from you.

Christy. No—for I didn't remember giving you the copy. I suppose Florry did.

Miss G. Not I, sir.

Christy. Or the schoolmaster's foul copy may be, for it was he was putting the song down for me on paper. My own hand-writing shaking so bad, I could not make a fair copy fit for the lady.

Mr. H. Mr. Gallagher, don't plunge farther in falsehood—you know the truth is, that song's not yours.

Christy. Why, then, by all——

* Set to music by Mr. Webbe.

Mr. H. Stop, stop, Mr. Gallagher—stop, I advise you.

Christy. Why, then, I won't stop at any thing—for the song's my own.

Mr. H. In one sense of the word, may be, it may be called your own, sir; for you bought it, I know.

Christy. I bought it? Oh, who put that in your Scotch brains? Whoever it was, was a big liar.

Biddy. No liar at all, sir—I ax your pardon—'twas I.

Christy. And you overheard my thoughts, then, talking to myself—ye traitor!

Biddy. No, sir—again I ax your pardon; no listener Biddy Doyle. But I was at the school-master's, to get him pen a letter for me to my poor father, and there with him I heard how Christy bought the song, and seen the first copy—and the child of the house told me all about it, and how it was lift there by Mr. Owen Larken.

Sir W. and *Clara.* (*joyfully*) Owen Larken!—you?

Christy. All lies! Asy talk!—asy talk—asy to belie a poor man.

Mr. H. If you tell the truth, you can tell us the next verse, for there's another which we did not yet sing.

Christy. Not in my copy, which is the original.

Sir W. If you have another verse, let us hear it—and that will decide the business.

Christy. Oh, the devil another line, but what's lame, I'll engage, and forged, as you'll see.

Mr. Hope *sings.*

Quick spring the feelings of the heart,
When touch'd by Clara's gen'rous art;
Quick as the grateful shamrock springs,
In the good fairies' favour'd rings.

Clara. What does Christy say now?

Christy. Why, miss, I say that's well said for the shamrock any way. And all that's in it for me is this—the schoolmaster was a rogue that did not give me that verse in for my money.

Sir W. Then you acknowledge you bought it?

Christy. What harm, plase your honour? And would not I have a right to buy what pleases me—and when bought and ped for isn't it mine in law and right? But I am mighty unlucky this night. So, come along, Florry—we are worsted see! No use to be standing here longer, the laughing-stock of all that's in it—Ferrinafad.

Miss G. Murder! Father, then here's all you done for me, by your lies and your whiskey! I'll go straight from ye, and lodge with Mrs. Mulrooney. Biddy, what's that you're grinning at? Plase to walk home out of that.

Biddy. Miss Florinda, I am partly engaged to dance; but I won't be laving you in your downfall: so here's your cloak—and lane on me.

Widow. Why, then, Biddy, we'll never forget you in our prosperity.

Mabel and *Owen.* Never, never. You're a good girl, Biddy.

[*Exeunt Miss* GALLAGHER, BIDDY, *and* CHRISTY.

Clara. I am glad they are gone.

Sir W. I congratulate you, my dear niece, upon having got rid of tenants who would have disgraced your choice.

Clara. These (*turning to* OWEN, MABEL, *and her mother,*) these will do honour to it. My written promise was to *grant the poet's petition.* Owen, you are *the poet*—what is your petition?

Owen. May I speak?—May I say all I wish?

Clara and *Sir W.* Yes, speak—say all you wish.

Owen. I am but a young boy, and not able to keep the new inn; but Mr. Gilbert and Mabel, with my mother's help, would keep it well, I think; and it's they I should wish to have it, ma'am, if it were pleasing to you.

Sir W. And what would become of yourself, my good lad?

Owen. Time enough, sir, to think of myself, when I've seen my mother and sister settled.

Sir W. Then as you won't think of yourself, I must think for you. Your education, I find, has been well begun, and I will take care it shall not be left half done.

Widow. Oh, I'm too happy this minute! But great joy can say little.

Mabel. (*aside*) And great love the same.

Mr. H. This day is the happiest I have seen since I left the land of cakes.

Gilb. Thank you, Mr. Hope. And when I say thank you, why, I feel it. 'Twas you who helped us at the dead lift.

Sir W. You see I was right, Gilbert; the Scotch make good friends. (GILBERT *bows.*) And now, Clara, my love, what shall we call the new inn—for it must have a name? Since English, Scotch, and Irish, have united to obtain it, let the sign be the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock.

END OF COMIC DRAMAS.

C. BALDWIN, PRINTER, NEW BRIDGE-STREET.

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