JONAH BARRINGTON

PERSONAL SKETCHES OF HIS OWN TIMES, VOL. 2 (OF 3)

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Содержание

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THE FIRE-EATERS

Passion for duelling in Ireland – Ancient duel before the judges and law authorities, &c. &c. at the Castle of Dublin – List of official and judicial duellists in author's time – Family weapons described – The Fire-eaters' Society – Their chiefs – Elegant institution of the Knights of Tara – Description of them – Their exhibitions and meetings – The rules of duelling and points of honour established by the fire-eaters, called the Thirty-six Commandments – Singular duel between the author and Mr. Richard Daley, a remarkable duellist and fop – Daley hit – Author's second the celebrated Balloon Crosby – His singular appearance and character.

It may be objected that anecdotes of duelling have more than their due proportion of space in these sketches, and that no writer should publish feats of that nature (if feats they can be called), especially when performed by persons holding grave offices, or by public functionaries. These are very plausible, rational observations, and are now anticipated for the purpose of being

answered.

It might be considered a sufficient excuse, that these anecdotes refer to events long past; that they are amusing, and the more so as being matters of *fact*, (neither romance nor exaggeration,) and so various that no two of them are at all similar. But a better reason can be given; – namely, that there is no other species of detail or anecdote which so clearly illustrates the character, genius, and manners of a country, as that which exemplifies the distinguishing propensities of its population for successive ages. Much knowledge of a people will necessarily be gained by possessing such a series of anecdotes, and by then going on to trace the decline of such propensities to the progress of civilization in that class of society where they had been prevalent.

As to the objection founded on the rank or profession of the parties concerned, it is only necessary to subjoin the following *short* abstract from a long list of official duellists who have figured away in my time, and some of them before my eyes. – The number of grave personages who appear to have adopted the national taste, (though in most instances it was undoubtedly before their elevation to the bench that they signalised themselves in single combat,) removes from me all imputation of pitching upon and exposing an unusual frailty; and I think I may challenge any country in Europe to show such an assemblage of gallant *judicial* and *official* antagonists at fire and sword as is exhibited even in the following list.[1]

[1] Single combat was formerly a very prevalent and favourite mode of *administering*

Earl Clare, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, fought the Master of the Rolls, the Right Honourable John Philpot Curran, with twelve-inch pistols.

The Earl of Clonmell, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, fought Lord Tyrawly, about his wife, and the Earl Landaff, about his sister; and others, with sword or pistol, on miscellaneous subjects.

The Judge of the County of Dublin, Egan, fought the Master of the Rolls, Roger Barrett,[2] and *three* others; one

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justice in Ireland; the *letter* of that law existed in England; and, not being considered so brutal as bullfights, or other beastly amusements of that nature, it was legally authorised, and frequently performed before the high authorities and their ladies, in the castle-yard of Dublin; —*bishops*, *judges*, and other persons of high office, generally honouring the spectacle with their presence.The last exhibition of that nature I have read of was between two Irish gentlemen, Connor Mac Cormac O'Connor, and Teige Mac Kilpatrick O'Connor. They fought with broadswords and skeens (large knives), in the castle of Dublin, in the presence of the archbishop and all the chief authorities and ladies of rank. They had hewed each other for a full hour, when Mr. Mac Kilpatrick O'Connor happening to miss his footing, Mr. Mac Cormac O'Connor began to cut his head off very expertly with his knife; which, after a good deal of cutting, struggling, and hacking, he was at length so fortunate as to effect; and, having got the head clear off the shoulders, he handed it to the lords justices (who were present), and by whom the head and neck was most graciously received.

[2] On the duel between Judge Egan and Counsellor Roger Barret a curious incident occurred, of hackneyed celebrity, but very illustrative of that volatile eccentricity with which the gravest events were frequently accompanied in that country.On the combatants taking their ground (secundum consuetudinem), Roger (who was the *challenger*) immediately fired without much aim, and missing his antagonist, coolly said, "Egan, now my honour is satisfied," and began to walk away with great stateliness and composure.The judge, however, (who had not fired,) cried aloud, "Hulloa, Roger – hulloa! – stop – stop, Roger; come back here; stay till I take a *shot* at your *honour*!"Roger obeyed; and with the same composure cried out, "Very well, fire away,

with swords.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Right Honourable Isaac Corry, fought the Right Honourable Henry Grattan, a privy counsellor, and the chancellor was hit. He also exchanged shots or thrusts with *two* other gentlemen.

A baron of the exchequer, Baron Medge, fought his brother-in-law and *two* others – a hit.

The Chief Justice, C. P., Lord Norbury, fought Fire-eater Fitzgerald, and *two* other gentlemen, muzzle to muzzle, and frightened Napper Tandy and several besides: one hit only. – Napper was near being hanged for *running away*!

The Judge of the Prerogative Court, Doctor Duigenan, fought *one* barrister and frightened *another* on the ground. – The latter case a very curious one.

The First Counsel to the Revenue, Henry Deane Grady, Esq., K. C., fought Counsellor O'Maher, Counsellor Campbell, and others: – very stout work.

The Right Honourable the Master of the Rolls fought Lord Buckinghamshire, (Chief Secretary, &c.) because he would not dismiss an official person.

The Provost of the University of Dublin, the Right Honourable Hely Hutchinson, fought Mr. Doyle, master in Chancery: they went to the plains of Minden to fight!

Jack."Egan presented, and seemed by his motions determined to finish Roger: – at length he cried out, "Pho! pho! I won't humour you, by G – d! I wouldn't be *bothered* shooting you, Roger! – so now you may go to the devil your own road; or *shake hands*, whichever you like best."The finale may be anticipated. This circumstance is truly Irish; it took place on the site of Donnybrook fair, and some hundreds of *amateurs* were present.

N.B. The spirit of the Hutchinson family was proverbial, and their good nature was no less so.

The Chief Justice C. P. Patterson fought *three* country gentlemen, one of them with swords, another with guns, and wounded *all* of them.

The Right Honourable George Ogle, the Orange chieftain, a privy counsellor, fought Barny Coyle, a whiskey distiller, because he was a *papist*. – They fired eight shots without stop or stay, and no hit occurred: but Mr. Ogle's second broke his own arm by tumbling into a potatoe-trench.

Sir Harding Gifford, late Chief Justice of Ceylon, fought the rebel General Bagenal Harvey at a place called the Scalp, near Dublin. The Chief Justice received a severe, but very *odd* wound. – He eventually, however, suffered no important injury.

Counsellor Dan O'Connell fought the Orange chieftain, who had been *halloo'd* at him by the corporation. The champion of Protestant ascendancy never rose to fight again.

The Collector of the Customs of Dublin, the Honourable Francis Hutchinson, fought the Right Honourable Lord Mountnorris: – a hit. *Cum multis aliis quæ nunc enumerare longum est.*

The reader of this dignified list (which, as I have said, is only a *very* short abridgment[3]) will surely see no great indecorum in an

[3] Two hundred and twenty-seven memorable duels have actually been fought during my grand climacteric.

Admiralty Judge having now and then, when required so to do, exchanged *broadsides*, more especially as they did not militate against the law of nations, and no *ghost* was the consequence.

However, it must be owned that there were occasionally *peaceable* and *forgiving* instances among the barristers. – A brave, thrice-proven, but certainly capricious individual, Mr. Curran, was whipped by a very *savage* nobleman, Lord Clanmorris; and another eminent barrister was *said* to have had his eye saluted by a messenger from a gentleman's lips in the body of the House of Commons. – Yet both those little *incivilities* were arranged very amicably, and without the aid of any deadly weapon whatsoever, I suppose for *variety's* sake. But the people of Dublin used to observe, that a *judgment* came upon Counsellor O'Callaghan, for having kept his friend, Mr. Curran, *quiet* in the horse-whipping affair, inasmuch as his own brains were literally scattered about the ground by a Galway attorney very soon after he had turned pacificator.

To speak after the manner of a *Bulletin*: – "In my time, the number of killed and wounded among the bar was very considerable. – The other learned professions suffered much less."

It is nearly incredible what a singular passion the Irish gentlemen (though in general excellent-tempered fellows) formerly had for fighting each other and immediately becoming friends again. A duel was indeed considered a necessary piece of a young man's *education*, but by no means a ground for any

future animosity with his opponent: – on the contrary, proving the bravery of both, it only cemented their friendship.

One of the most humane men existing, an intimate friend of mine, and a prominent and benevolent public character, but who (as the expression then was) had frequently played both "hilt to hilt" and "muzzle to muzzle," in desperate rencontres, was heard endeavouring to keep a little son of his quiet who was crying for something: – "Come, now, do be a good boy! Come, now," said my friend, "don't cry, and I'll give you a case of nice little *pistols* to-morrow. Come, now, don't cry, and we'll shoot them all in the morning." – "Oh, yes! yes! papa! we'll *shoot them all* in the morning!" responded the child, drying his little eyes and delighted at the notion.

I have heard Sir Charles Ormsby, who affected to be a wit, though at best but a humourist and *gourmand*, liken the story of my friend and his son to a butcher at Nenagh, who in a similar manner wanted to keep *his* son from crying, and effectually stopped his tears by saying, – "Come, now, be a good boy! don't cry, and you shall *kill a lamb* to-morrow! now, won't you be good?" – "Oh yes, yes," said the child, sobbing; "Father, is the *lamb ready*?"

Within my recollection, this national relish for fighting was nearly universal, – originating (I think) in the spirit and habits of former times. When men had a glowing ambition to excel in all manner of feats and exercises, as their forefathers had done, they naturally conceived that single combat in an *honest* way (that is,

not knowing *which* would be perforated) was the most chivalrous and gentlemanly of all possible accomplishments; and this idea gave rise to an assiduous cultivation of personal tactics, and dictated *laws* for carrying them into execution with regularity, honour, and dispatch, among the nobility and gentry of that punctilious nation.

About the year 1777, *Fire-eating* was in great repute in Ireland. No young fellow could *finish his education* till he had exchanged shots with some of his friends or acquaintances. The first questions asked as to a young man's respectability and qualifications (particularly when he proposed for a lady-wife) were, "What family is he of?" – "Did he ever *blaze*?" – His *fortune* was then the last inquiry; because the reply was seldom satisfactory.

Tipperary and Galway were the ablest schools of the duelling science. Galway was most scientific at the sword: Tipperary most practical and prized at the pistol: Mayo not amiss at either: Roscommon and Sligo had many professors and a high reputation in the leaden branch of the pastime.

When I was at the university, Jemmy Keogh, *Buck English*,[4]

[4] The celebrated Buck English was expelled for killing by foul play, and had like to be hanged. The "Fire-eaters" *outlawed* him. – Foul play was never known to occur in that society – save in this instance. English was saved, on his trial, by *one* juror holding out against his *eleven* brethren: – however, as they could not agree, Baron Hamilton ordered them all to be packed in turf kishes, conveyed on cars to the boundary of the county, twenty-seven miles off, and there discharged on foot. At the ensuing assizes all the witnesses against English were duly disposed of – none appeared – and he was acquitted of course.

Cosey Harrison, Crowe Ryan, Reddy Long, Amby Bodkin, Squire Fulton, Squire Blake, Amby Fitzgerald, Terry Magrath, and some others, were supposed to understand the *points of honour* better than any men in Ireland, and were constantly referred to. – Terry Magrath especially was counted a very good opinion.

In the North, the Fallons and the Fentons were the first hands at it; and most counties could then boast their regular *point-of-honour* men. The late chief justice of the common pleas was supposed to understand *the thing* as well as any gentleman in Ireland, and was frequently referred to by the high circles.

In truth, these oracles were in general gentlemen of good connexions[5] and most respectable families, otherwise nobody would either fight or consult them.

Every family had then a case of hereditary pistols, which descended as an heir-loom, together with a long silver-hilted sword, for the use of their posterity. Our family pistols, denominated *pelters*, were brass (I believe my second brother has them still): the barrels were very long and *point-blankers*.

[5] There was an association in the year 1782, (a volunteer corps) which was called the "Independent Light Horse." They were not confined to one district, and none could be admitted but the younger brothers of the most respectable families. They were all both "hilt and muzzle adepts;" – and, that no member might set himself up as greater than another, every individual of the corps was obliged, on entering, to give his honour "that he could cover his fortune with the crown of his hat, and had exchanged a shot or thrust before he was ballotted for."Roscommon and Sligo then furnished some of the finest young fellows (fire-eaters) I ever saw: their spirit and decorum were equally admirable, and their honour and liberality conspicuous on all occasions.

They were included in the armoury of our ancient castle of Ballynakill in the reign of Elizabeth, (the stocks, locks, and hair-triggers were, however, modern,) and had descended from father to son from that period: one of them was named "*sweet lips*," the other "*the darling*." The family rapier was called "*skiver the pullet*" by my grand-uncle, Captain Wheeler Barrington, who had fought with it repeatedly and run through different parts of their persons several Scots officers, who had challenged him all at once for some national reflection. It was a very long, narrow-bladed, straight cut-and-thrust, as sharp as a razor, with a silver hilt, and a guard of buff leather inside it. I kept this rapier as a curiosity for some time; but it was stolen during my absence at Temple.

I knew Jemmy Keogh extremely well, when he was pretty old. He was considered in the main a *peace-maker*, for he did not like any body to fight but himself; and it was universally admitted that he never killed any man who did not well deserve it. He was a plausible, although black-looking fellow, with remarkably thick, long, curled eyebrows closing with a tuft over his nose. He spoke deliberately, reasoned well, and never showed passion. When determined to fight, his brows knit, his eyes fixed, and (as an antagonist) he cut a very unprepossessing figure. I never heard that he was wounded. When he tried to *restrain* his anger, he set his teeth, kept his tongue a close prisoner, and appeared like one with a locked jaw. No man was more universally known in Ireland. He unfortunately shot a *cripple* in the Phœnix Park,

which, though fair enough, did him great mischief. He was land-agent to Bourke of Glinsk, to whom he always officiated as second.

At length, so many quarrels arose without sufficiently *dignified* provocation, and so many things were considered as quarrels *of course*, which were not quarrels at all, – that the principal fire-eaters of the South clearly saw disrepute was likely to be thrown both on the science and its professors, and thought it full time to interfere and arrange matters upon a proper, steady, rational, and moderate footing; and to regulate the time, place, and other circumstances of duelling, so as to govern all Ireland on one principle – thus establishing a uniform, national code of the *lex pugnandi*; proving, as Hugo Grotius did, that it was for the benefit of all belligerents to adopt the same regulations.

In furtherance of this object, a *branch society* had been formed in Dublin termed the "Knights of Tara," which met once a month at the theatre, Capel-street, gave premiums for fencing, and proceeded in the most laudably systematic manner. The amount of admission-money was laid out on silver cups, and given to the best fencers, as prizes, at quarterly exhibitions of pupils and amateurs.

Fencing with the small-sword is certainly a most beautiful and noble exercise: its practice confers a fine, bold, manly carriage, a dignified mien, a firm step, and graceful motion. But, alas! its professors are now supplanted by contemptible groups of smirking quadrillers with unweaponed belts, stuffed breasts, and

strangled loins! – a set of squeaking dandies, whose sex may be readily mistaken, or, I should rather say, is of *no* consequence.

The theatre of the Knights of Tara, on these occasions, was always overflowing: – the combatants were dressed in close cambric jackets, garnished with ribbons, each wearing the favourite colour of his fair one: bunches of ribbons also dangled at their knees, and roses adorned their morocco slippers, which had buff soles, to prevent noise in their lunges. No masks or visors were used as in these more timorous times; on the contrary, every feature was uncovered, and its inflections all visible. The ladies appeared in full morning dresses, each handing his foil to her champion for the day, and their presence animating the singular exhibition. The prizes were handed to the conquerors by the fair ones from the stage-boxes, accompanied each with a wreath of laurel, and a smile then more valued than a hundred victories! The tips of the foils were blackened, and therefore instantly betrayed the hits on the cambric jacket, and proclaimed without doubt the successful combatant. All was decorum, gallantry, spirit, and good temper.

The Knights of Tara also had a select committee to decide on all actual questions of honour referred to them: – to reconcile differences, if possible; if not, to adjust the terms and continuance of single combat. Doubtful points were solved generally on the peaceable side, provided women were not insulted or defamed; but when that was the case, the knights were obdurate, and blood must be seen. They were constituted by

ballot, something in the manner of the Jockey Club; but without the possibility of being dishonourable, or the opportunity of cheating each other.

This most agreeable and useful association did not last above two or three years. I cannot tell why it broke up: I rather think, however, the original fire-eaters thought it frivolous, or did not like their own ascendancy to be rivalled. It was said that they threatened direct hostilities against the knights; and I am the more disposed to believe this, because, soon after, a comprehensive code of the laws and points of honour was issued from the Southern fire-eaters, with directions that it should be strictly observed by all gentlemen throughout the kingdom, and kept in their pistol-cases, that ignorance might never be pleaded. This code was not circulated in print, but very numerous written copies were sent to the different county clubs, &c. My father got one for his sons; and I transcribed most of it on some blank leaves. These rules brought the whole business of duelling into a focus, and have been much acted upon down to the present day. They called them in Galway "the *thirty-six* commandments."

As far as my copy went, they appear to have run as follows: —

> The practice of duelling and points of honour settled at Clonmell summer assizes, 1775, by the gentlemen delegates of Tipperary, Galway, Mayo, Sligo, and Roscommon, and prescribed for general adoption throughout Ireland.

Rule 1

The first offence requires the first apology, though the retort may have been more offensive than the insult: example; – A tells B he is impertinent, &c. B retorts, that he lies: yet A must make the first apology, because he gave the first offence, and then (after one fire) B may explain away the retort by subsequent apology.

Rule 2

But if the parties would rather fight on, then, after two shots each, (but in no case before,) B may explain first, and A apologise afterwards.

N.B. The above rules apply to all cases of offences in retort not of a stronger class than the example.

Rule 3

If a doubt exist who gave the first offence, the decision rests with the seconds: if they *won't* decide or *can't* agree, the matter must proceed to two shots, or to a hit, if the challenger require it.

Rule 4

When the *lie direct* is the *first* offence, the aggressor must either beg pardon in express terms; exchange two shots previous to apology; or three shots followed up by explanation; or fire on till a severe hit be received by one party or the other.

Rule 5

As a blow is strictly prohibited under any circumstances amongst gentlemen, no verbal apology can be received for such an insult: the alternatives therefore are – first, the offender handing a cane to the injured party, to be used on his own person, at the same time begging pardon; – second, firing on until one or both are disabled; or thirdly, exchanging three shots, and then asking pardon, *without* the proffer of the *cane*.

If swords are used, the parties engage till one is well blooded, disabled, or disarmed; or until, after receiving a wound, and blood being drawn, the aggressor begs pardon.

N.B. A *disarm* is considered the same as a *disable*: the disarmer may (strictly) break his adversary's sword; but if it be the challenger who is disarmed, it is considered as ungenerous to do so.

In case the challenged be disarmed, and refuses to ask

pardon or atone, he must not be *killed*, as formerly; but the challenger may lay his own sword on the aggressor's shoulder, then break the aggressor's sword, and say, "I spare your life!" The challenged can never revive that quarrel – the challenger may.

Rule 6

If A gives B the lie, and B retorts by a blow (being the two greatest offences), no reconciliation *can* take place till after two discharges each, or a severe hit; —*after* which, B may beg A's pardon humbly for the blow, and then A may explain simply for the lie; – because a blow is *never* allowable, and the offence of the lie therefore merges in it. (See preceding rule.)

N.B. Challenges for undivulged causes may be reconciled on the ground, after one shot. An explanation or the slightest hit should be sufficient in such cases, because no personal offence transpired.

Rule 7

But no apology can be received, in any case, after the parties have actually taken their ground, without exchange of fires.

Rule 8

In the above case, no challenger is obliged to divulge his cause of challenge (if private), unless required by the challenged so to do *before* their meeting.

Rule 9

All imputations of cheating at play, races, &c. to be considered equivalent to a blow; but may be reconciled after one shot, on admitting their falsehood, and begging pardon publicly.

Rule 10

Any insult to a lady under a gentleman's care or protection, to be considered as, by one degree, a greater offence than if given to the gentleman personally, and to be regulated accordingly.

Rule 11

Offences originating or accruing from the support of

ladies' reputation, to be considered as less unjustifiable than any others of the same class, and as admitting of slighter apologies by the aggressor: – this to be determined by the circumstances of the case, but *always* favourably to the lady.

Rule 12

In simple unpremeditated *rencontres* with the small sword, or *couteau-de-chasse* the rule is – first draw, first sheath; unless blood be drawn: then both sheath, and proceed to investigation.

Rule 13

No dumb-shooting or firing in the air admissible *in any case*. The challenger ought not to have challenged without receiving offence; and the challenged ought, if he gave offence, to have made an apology before he came on the ground: therefore, *children's play* must be dishonourable on one side or the other, and is accordingly prohibited.

Rule 14

Seconds to be of equal rank in society with the principals they attend, inasmuch as a second may either choose or

chance to become a principal, and equality is indispensable.

Rule 15

Challenges are never to be delivered at night, unless the party to be challenged intend leaving the place of offence before morning; for it is desirable to avoid all hot-headed proceedings.

Rule 16

The challenged has the right to choose his own weapon, unless the challenger gives his honour he is no swordsman; after which, however, he cannot decline any *second* species of weapon proposed by the challenged.

Rule 17

The challenged chooses his ground: the challenger chooses his distance: the seconds fix the time and terms of firing.

Rule 18

The seconds load in presence of each other, unless they give their mutual honours they have charged smooth and single, which should be held sufficient.

Rule 19

Firing may be regulated – first, by signal; secondly, by word of command; or, thirdly, at pleasure – as may be agreeable to the parties. In the latter case, the parties may fire at their reasonable leisure, but *second presents* and *rests* are strictly prohibited.

Rule 20

In all cases, a miss-fire is equivalent to a shot, and a *snap* or a *non-cock* is to be considered as a miss-fire.

Rule 21

Seconds are bound to attempt a reconciliation *before* the meeting takes place, or *after* sufficient firing or hits, as

specified.

Rule 22

Any wound sufficient to agitate the nerves and necessarily make the hand shake, must end the business for *that day*.

Rule 23

If the cause of meeting be of such a nature that no apology or explanation can or will be received, the challenged takes his ground, and calls on the challenger to proceed as he chooses: in such cases, firing at pleasure is the usual practice, but may be varied by agreement.

Rule 24

In slight cases, the second hands his principal but one pistol; but, in gross cases, two, holding another case ready-charged in reserve.

Rule 25

Where seconds disagree, and resolve to exchange shots themselves, it must be at the same time and at right angles with their principals.

If with swords, side by side, with five paces interval.

N.B. All matters and doubts not herein mentioned will be explained and cleared up by application to the committee, who meet alternately at Clonmell and Galway, at the quarter-sessions, for that purpose.[6]

Crow Ryan, President,
James Keogh, }
Amby Bodkin,} Secretaries.

Additional Galway Articles

Rule 1

No party can be allowed to bend his knee, or cover his side with his left hand; but may present at any level from

[6] The residue of the rules I have found among other papers since the first edition of this book was printed – but they are much defaced. There were eleven or twelve of them only, on *points of honour*. The rules of combat are all given; and they are full of a pugnacious *sophistry*, which would scarcely entertain the reader.

the foot to the eye.

Rule 2

None can either advance or retreat, if the ground be measured. If no ground be measured, either party may advance at his pleasure, even to touch muzzle; but neither can advance on his adversary after the fire, unless the adversary step forward on him.

N.B. The seconds on both sides stand responsible for this last rule being *strictly* observed, bad cases having accrued from neglect of it.

These rules and resolutions of the "Fire-eaters" and "Knights of Tara" were the more deeply impressed on my mind, from my having run a great chance of losing my life, when a member of the university, in consequence of the strict observance of one of them. A young gentleman of Galway, Mr. Richard Daly, then a Templar, had the greatest predilection for single combat of any person (not a society fire-eater) I ever recollect: he had fought sixteen duels in the space of two years; three with swords and thirteen with pistols; – yet, with so little skill or so much good fortune, that not a wound worth mentioning occurred in the course of the whole. This gentleman was called to the Bar; figured afterwards for many years as patentee of the Theatre Royal, Dublin; and had the credit of first introducing that superior woman and actress, Mrs. Jordan, when Miss Francis, on

the Dublin boards.

I was surprised one winter's evening by receiving a written challenge, in the nature of an *invitation*, from Mr. Daly, to fight him early the ensuing morning. I never had spoken a word to him in my life, and scarcely *of* him, and no possible cause of quarrel that I could guess existed between us: however, it being then a decided opinion that a first overture of that nature could *never* be declined, I accepted the *invitation* without any inquiry; writing, in reply, that as to place, I chose the field of Donnybrook fair as the fittest spot for *all* sorts of *encounters*. I had then to look out for a second, and resorted to a person with whom I was very intimate, and who, as he was a curious character, may be worth noticing. He was brother to the unfortunate Sir Edward Crosby, Bart., who was murdered by a court-martial at Carlow, May, 1798. My friend was afterward called "*Balloon* Crosby," being the first aeronaut who constructed an Hibernian balloon, and ventured to take a journey into the sky from Ireland (from Ranelagh Gardens).[7]

Crosby was of immense stature, being near six feet three inches high: he had a comely-looking, fat, ruddy face, and was,

[7] His second ascent was a most unfortunate one for the *spectators*. It took place from the Duke of Leinster's lawn, Merrion-square: the crowds outside were immense, and so many squeezed together and leaned against a thick parapet wall fronting the street, that it yielded to the weight and pressure, and the spectators and parapet wall came tumbling down together a great depth. Several were killed and many disabled; while Crosby sailed quietly over their heads, in all human probability, to be drowned before an hour had expired.

beyond comparison, the most ingenious mechanic I ever knew. He had a smattering of all sciences, and there was scarcely an art or trade of which he had not some practical knowledge. His chambers at college were like a general workshop for all kinds of artisans: he was very good tempered, exceedingly strong, and as brave as a lion – but as dogged as a mule: nothing could change a resolution of his when once made; and nothing could check or resist his perseverance to carry it into execution. He highly approved of my promptness in accepting Daly's invitation; but I told him that I unluckily had no pistols, and did not know where to procure any against the next morning. This puzzled him: but on recollection, he said he had no complete pistols neither; but he had some *old locks*, *barrels*, *and stocks*, which, as they did not originally belong to each other, he should find it very difficult to make any thing of: nevertheless, he would fall to work directly. He kept me up till late at night in his chambers to help him in filing the old locks and barrels, and endeavouring to patch up two or three of them so as to go off and answer that individual job. Various trials were made: much filing, drilling, and scouring were necessary. However, by two o'clock in the morning we had completed three entire pistols, which, though certainly of various lengths and of the most ludicrous workmanship, struck their fire *right well*, and that was all we wanted of them, —*symmetry* (as he remarked) being of no great value upon *these* occasions.

It was before seven o'clock on the 20th of March, with a cold wind and a sleety atmosphere, that we set out on foot for

the field of Donnybrook fair, after having taken some good chocolate and a plentiful draught of cherry-brandy, to keep the cold wind out. On arriving, we saw my antagonist and his friend (Jack Patterson, nephew to the chief justice) already on the ground. I shall never forget Daly's figure. He was a very fine-looking young fellow, but with such a squint that it was totally impossible to say what he looked at, except his nose, of which he never lost sight. His dress (they had come in a coach) made me ashamed of my own: he wore a pea-green coat; a large tucker with a diamond brooch stuck in it; a three-cocked hat with a gold button-loop and tassels, and silk stockings; and a *couteau-de-chasse* hung gracefully dangling from his thigh. In fact, he looked as if already standing in a state of triumph, after having vanquished and trampled on his antagonist. I did not half like his steady position, showy surface, and mysterious squint; and I certainly would rather have exchanged *two* shots with his slovenly friend, Jack Patterson, than *one* with so magnificent and overbearing an adversary.

My friend Crosby, without any sort of salutation or prologue, immediately cried out "*Ground*, gentlemen! *ground – ground!* come, d – n measurement, to work!" and placing me on his selected spot, whispered into my ear "*Medio tutissimus ibis*: never look at the *head* or the *heels*: *hip* the maccaroni! the hip for ever, my boy! hip, hip!" – when my antagonist's second, advancing and accosting mine, said, Mr. Daly could not think of going any further with the business; that he found it was totally a

mistake on his part, originating through misrepresentation, and that he begged to say he was extremely sorry for having given Mr. Barrington and his friend the trouble of coming out, hoping they would excuse it and shake hands with him. To this arrangement I certainly had no sort of objection; but Crosby, without hesitation, said, "We cannot do that *yet* sir: I'll *show* you we *can't*: (taking a little manuscript book out of his breeches pocket,) there's the *rules*! – look at that, sir," continued he, "see No. 7.: – 'No apology can be received *after* the parties meet, *without a fire*.' You see, there's the rule," pursued Crosby, with infinite self-satisfaction; "and a young man on his *first blood* cannot break rule, particularly with a gentleman so used to the sport as Mr. Daly. Come, gentlemen, proceed! proceed!"

Daly appeared much displeased, but took his ground, without speaking a word, about nine paces from me. He presented his pistol instantly, but gave me most gallantly a full front.

It being, as Crosby said, my first blood, I lost no time, but let fly without a single *second* of delay, and without taking aim: Daly staggered back two or three steps; put his hand to his breast; cried, "I'm hit, sir!" and did not fire. Crosby gave me a slap on the back which staggered me, and a squeeze of the hand which nearly crushed my fingers. We got round him: his waistcoat was opened, and a black spot, about the size of a crown-piece, with a little blood, appeared directly on his breast-bone. I was greatly shocked: fortunately, however, the ball had not penetrated; but his brooch had been broken, and a piece of the setting was

sticking fast in the bone. Crosby stamped, cursed the damp powder or under-loading, and calmly pulled out the brooch: Daly said not a word; put his cambric handkerchief doubled to his breast, and bowed. I returned the salute, extremely glad to get out of the scrape, and so we parted without conversation or ceremony; save that when I expressed my wish to know the *cause* of his challenging me, Daly replied that he would *now* give no such explanation, and *his* friend then produced his book of rules, quoting No. 8.: – "If a party challenged accept the challenge without asking the reason of it, the challenger is never bound to divulge it afterward."

My friend Crosby, as I have mentioned, subsequently attempted to go off from Dublin to England in a balloon of his own making, and dropped between Dublin and Holyhead into the sea, but was saved. The poor fellow some time after went abroad, and was supposed to have died far too early for friendship, – which he was eminently capable of exciting. I never saw two persons in face and figure more alike than Crosby and my friend Daniel O'Connell: but Crosby was the taller by two inches, and it was not *so* easy to discover that he was an Irishman.[8]

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[8] It has since been discovered that death did not master him for many years after this report. His history is not a common one. I have lately received a considerable quantity of documents and Mss. collected or written during the period he was supposed to be dead, and at many different places, till a late day. Most of them are to me utterly unintelligible; but there is sufficient to furnish matter for one of the most *curious memoirs* that can be conceived, and altogether novel. So multifarious, however, are the materials, that I fear their due arrangement would be quite beyond my powers.

DUELLING EXTRAORDINARY

Frequency of election-duels – Ludicrous affair between Frank Skelton and an exciseman – Frank shoots the exciseman and runs away – His curious reasons – Sir J. Bourke's quadrille duel, with five hits – Mr. H. D. G * * * y's remarkable meeting with Counsellor O'Maher – O'Maher hit – Civil proposition of G * * *'s second – G * * *'s gallant letter to the author on his election for Maryborough – Honourable Barry Yelverton challenged by nine officers at once – His elucidation of the Fire-eaters' Resolutions – Lord Kilkenny's memorable duels and law-suits – His Lordship is shot by Mr. Ball, an attorney – The heir to his title (the Hon. Somerset Butler) challenges Counsellor Burrowes – The latter hit, but his life saved by some gingerbread nuts – Lord Kilkenny's duel with Counsellor Byrne – The counsellor wounded – Counsellor Guinness escapes a rencontre – Sketch of Counsellor M'Nally – His duel with the author – His three friends: all afterward hanged – M'Nally wounded – Bon-mot of Mr. Harding – The affair highly beneficial to M'Nally – His character, marriage, and death – Ancient mode of fighting duels – The lists described – Duel of Colonel Barrington with Squire Gilbert on horseback – Both wounded – Gilbert's horse killed – Chivalrous conclusion.

Our elections were more prolific in duels than any other public

meetings: they very seldom originated at a horse-race, cock-fight, hunt, or at any place of amusement: folks then had pleasure in view, and "something else to do" than to quarrel: but at all elections, or at assizes, or, in fact, at any place of business, almost every man, without any very particular or assignable reason, immediately became a violent partisan, and frequently a furious enemy to somebody else; and gentlemen often got themselves shot before they could tell what they were fighting about.

At an election for Queen's County, between General Walsh and Mr. Warburton, of Garryhinch, about the year 1783, took place the most curious duel of any which occurred within my recollection. A Mr. Frank Skelton, one of the half-mounted gentlemen described in the early part of the first volume, – a boisterous, joking, fat young fellow, called a harmless blackguard, – was prevailed on, much against his grain, to challenge Roberts, the exciseman of the town, for running the butt-end of a horse-whip down his throat the night before, while he sat drunk and sleeping with his mouth open. The exciseman insisted that snoring at a dinner-table was a personal offence to every gentleman in company, and would therefore make no apology.

Frank, though he had been nearly choked, was very reluctant to fight; he said "he was sure to die if he did, as the exciseman could snuff a candle with his pistol-ball; and as he himself was as big as a hundred dozen of candles, what chance could he have?" We told him jocosely to give the exciseman no time to take aim

at him, by which means he might perhaps hit his adversary first, and thus survive the contest. He seemed somewhat encouraged and consoled by the hint, and most strictly did he adhere to it.

Hundreds of the towns-people went to see the fight on the green of Maryborough. The ground was regularly measured; and the friends of each party pitched a ragged tent on the green, where whiskey and salt beef were consumed in abundance. Skelton having taken his ground, and at the same time two heavy drams from a bottle his foster-brother had brought, appeared quite stout till he saw the balls entering the mouths of the exciseman's pistols, which shone as bright as silver, and were nearly as long as fusils. This vision made a palpable alteration in Skelton's sentiments: he changed colour, and looked about him as if he wanted some assistance. However, their seconds, who were of the same rank and description, handed to each party his case of pistols, and half-bellowed to them – "blaze away, boys!"

Skelton now recollected his instructions, and *lost no time*: he cocked *both* his pistols at once; and as the exciseman was deliberately and most scientifically coming to his "dead level," as he called it, Skelton let fly.

"Holloa!" said the exciseman, dropping his level, "I'm *battered*, by J – s!"

"Oh! the devil's cure to you!" said Skelton, instantly firing his second pistol.

One of the exciseman's legs then gave way, and down he came on his knee, exclaiming, "Holloa! holloa! you blood-thirsty

villain! do you want to take my life?"

"Why, to be sure I do!" said Skelton. "Ha! ha! have I *stiffened* you, my lad?" Wisely judging, however, that if he staid till the exciseman recovered his legs, he might have a couple of shots to stand, he wheeled about, took to his heels, and got away as fast as possible. The crowd shouted; but Skelton, like a hare when started, ran the faster for the shouting.

Jemmy Moffit, his own second, followed, overtook, tripped up his heels, and cursing him for a disgraceful rascal, asked "why he ran away from the exciseman?"

"Ough thunther!" said Skelton, "how many holes did the villain want to have *drilled* into his carcase? Would you have me stop to make a *riddle* of him, Jemmy?"

The second insisted that Skelton should return to the field, to be *shot at*. He resisted, affirming that he had done *all* that *honour* required. The second called him "*a coward*!"

"By my sowl," returned he, "my dear Jemmy Moffit, may be so! you may call me a coward, if you please; but I did it all for *the best*."

"The *best*? you blackguard!"

"Yes," said Frank: "sure it's *better* to be a *coward* than a *corpse*! and I must have been either *one* or *t'other* of them."

However, he was dragged up to the ground by his second, after agreeing to fight again, if he had another pistol given him. But, luckily for Frank, the last bullet had stuck so fast between the bones of the exciseman's leg that he could not stand. The friends

of the latter then proposed to strap him to a tree, that he might be able to shoot Skelton; but this being positively objected to by Frank, the exciseman was carried home: his first wound was on the side of his thigh, and the second in his right leg; but neither proved at all dangerous.

The exciseman, determined on *gauging* Frank, as he called it, on his recovery challenged Skelton in his turn. Skelton accepted the challenge, but said he was *tould* he had a right to choose his own weapons. The exciseman, knowing that such was the law, and that Skelton was no swordsman, and not anticipating any new invention, acquiesced. "Then," said Skelton, "for my weapons, I choose my *fists*: and, by the powers, you diabolical exciseman, I'll give you such a *basting* that your nearest relations shan't know you." Skelton insisted on his right, and the other not approving of this species of combat, got nothing by his challenge; the affair dropped, and Skelton triumphed.

The only modern instance I recollect to have heard of as applicable to No. 25., (refer to the regulations detailed in last sketch,) was that of old John Bourke, of Glinsk, and Mr. Amby Bodkin. They fought near Glinsk, and the old family steward and other servants brought out the present Sir John, then a child, and held him upon a man's shoulder, to see papa fight. On that occasion, both principals and seconds engaged: they stood at right angles, ten paces distant, and all began firing together on the signal of a pistol discharged by an umpire. At the first volley, the two principals were touched, though very slightly. The second

volley told better; – both the seconds, and Amby Bodkin, Esq. staggered out of their place: they were well hit, but no lives lost. It was, according to custom, an election squabble.

The Galway rule, No. 2., was well exemplified in a duel between an old and very particular friend of mine and a Counsellor O'Maher, who had given offence, yet I believe was the challenger: no ground was measured; they fired *ad libitum*. G., never at a loss upon such occasions, took his ground at once, and kept it steadily. O'Maher began his career at a hundred paces distance, advancing obliquely, and gradually contracting his circle round his opponent, who continued changing his front by corresponding movements; both parties now and then aiming, as feints, then taking down their pistols. This *pas de deux* lasted more than half an hour, as I have been informed: – at length, when the assailant had contracted his circle to firing distance, G. cried out, suddenly and loudly: O'Maher obeyed the signal, and instantly fired: G. returned the shot, and the challenger reeled back *hors de combat*.

On the same occasion, Mr. O'Maher's second said to G.'s, (the famous Counsellor Ned Lysight,) "Mr. Lysight, take care: – your pistol is cocked!" – "Well, then," said Lysight, "cock yours, and let me take a slap at you, as we are idle!" However, this proposition was not acceded to.

There could not be a greater *game-cock* (the Irish expression for a man of determined courage) than my friend G – . That he was not only spirited himself, but the cause of infusing

spirit into others, will appear from the following humorous letter which I received from him during my contested election for Maryborough. That election gave rise to many characteristic Irish adventures, for which this volume does not afford compass. Lord Castlecoote, the returning officer, (himself also a joint *proprietor*,) evinced an excessive horror of becoming acquainted with the *reporters*. Some person having jocularly told him of my friend's letter, it became a subject of great amusement, and afforded a variety of anecdotes for the Honourable Robert Moore, who supported me on that election against his brother, the Marquis of Drogheda.

"Dublin, Jan. 29th, 1800.

"My dear Jonah,

"I have this moment sent to the mail coach-office two bullet-moulds, not being certain which of them belongs to the *reporters*: suspecting, however, that you may not have time to *melt* the *lead*, I also send half-a-dozen bullets, merely to keep *you going* while others are preparing.

"I lament much that my situation and political feeling prevent me from seeing you *exhibit* at Maryborough.

"Be *bold, wicked, steady*, and *fear nought*!

"Give a line to yours, truly,

"H. D. G.

"Jonah Barrington, Esq."

I took his advice: – our friendship was long and close; and we never (that I am aware of) had any cause for coolness.

There could not be a better elucidation of Rule No. 5. of the code of honour, than an anecdote of Barry Yelverton, second son of Lord Avonmore, baron of the exchequer. – Barry was rather too odd a fellow to have been accounted at all times perfectly *compos mentis*. He was a barrister. In a ball-room on circuit, where the officers of a newly arrived regiment had come to amuse themselves and set the Munster lasses agog, Barry, having drunk too many bumpers, let out his natural dislike to the military, and most grossly insulted several of the officers; abusing one, treading on the toes of another, jostling a third, and so forth, till he had got through the whole regiment. Respect for the women, and the not choosing to commit themselves with the black gowns on the first day of their arrival, induced the insulted parties to content themselves with only requiring Barry's address, and his hour of being seen the next morning. Barry, with great satisfaction, gave each of them his card, but informed them that sending to him was unnecessary; – that he was *his own second*, and would meet every man of them at eight o'clock next morning, in the ball-room; concluding by desiring them to bring their swords, as that was always his weapon. Though this was rather a curious rendezvous, yet, the challenged having the right to choose his weapon, and the place being *à propos*, the officers all attended next day punctually, with the surgeon of the regiment and a due proportion of small-swords, fully expecting that some of his brother gownsmen would join in the rencontre. On their arrival, Barry requested to know how many gentlemen

had done him the honour of giving him the invitation, and was told their names, amounting to nine. "Very well, gentlemen," said Yelverton, "I am well aware I abused some of you, and gave others an offence equivalent to a blow, – which latter being the greatest insult, we'll dispose of those cases first, and I shall return in a few minutes fully prepared."

They conceived he had gone for his sword, and friends. But Barry soon after returned alone, and resumed thus: – "Now, gentlemen, those to each of whom I gave an equivalent to a blow will please step forward." Four of them accordingly did so, when Barry took from under his coat a bundle of switches, and addressed them as follows: – "Gentlemen, permit me to have the honour of handing each of you a switch, (according to the rule No. 5. of the Tipperary Resolutions,) wherewith to return the blow, if you feel any particular desire to put that extremity into practice. I fancy, gentlemen, that settles *four* of you; and as to the rest, here, (handing one of his cards to each, with *I beg your pardon* written above his name) that's agreeable to No. 1. (reading the Rule). Now I fancy *all* your cases are disposed of; and having done my duty according to the Tipperary Resolutions, which I will never swerve from, – if, gentlemen, you are not satisfied, I shall be on the bridge to-morrow morning, with a case of *barking-irons*." The officers stared, first at him, then at each other: the honest, jolly countenance and drollery of Barry were quite irresistible; first a smile of surprise, and then a general laugh, took place, and the catastrophe was their asking Barry

to dine with them at the mess, where his eccentricity and good humour delighted the whole regiment. The poor fellow grew quite deranged at last, and died, I believe, in rather unpleasant circumstances.

The late Lord Mount Garret (afterward Earl of Kilkenny) had for several years a great number of law-suits on his hands at once, particularly with some insolvent tenants, whose causes had been gratuitously taken up by Mr. Ball, an attorney; – Mr. William Johnson and several other gentlemen of the circuit took their briefs. His Lordship was dreadfully tormented. He was naturally a very clever man, and devised a new mode of carrying on his law-suits, not being able, as he said, to trust his attorney out of his sight.

He engaged a clientless attorney, named Egan, as his working solicitor, at a very liberal yearly stipend, upon the express terms of his undertaking *no other business whatsoever*, and holding his office solely in his Lordship's own house and under his own eye and direction. His Lordship applied to Mr. Fletcher (afterward judge) and to myself, requesting an interview; whereupon, he informed us of his situation: that there were generally eight or ten counsel pitted against him; but that he would have much more reliance on the advice and *punctual* attendance of *two* certain, than of *ten* straggling gentlemen; and that, under the full conviction that one of us at least would always attend the court when his causes were on, and not leave him in the lurch as he had been left, he had directed his attorney to mark on our two

briefs *ten times* the amount of what the fees should be on the other side: "Because," said his Lordship, "if you don't attend, to a certainty I must engage *ten* counsel, as well as my opponents." The singularity of the proposal set us laughing, in which his Lordship joined.

Fletcher and I accepted the offer: we did punctually and zealously attend these numerous trials, and were most liberally feed; but most unsuccessful in our efforts; for we never were able to gain a single cause, verdict, or motion, for our client.

The principle of strict justice certainly was with his Lordship; but certain formalities of the law were decidedly against him: he had, in fact, adopted an *obsolete* mode of proceeding as a short cut: thus, perceiving himself likely to be foiled, he determined to take another course, quite out of *our* line, and a course whereby no suit is decided in modern days – namely *fight it out*, "muzzle to muzzle," with the attorney and *all* the counsel on the other side.

The first procedure on this determination was a direct challenge from his Lordship to the attorney, Mr. Ball: it was accepted, and a duel immediately followed, in which his Lordship got the worst of it. He was wounded by the attorney at each shot, the first taking place in his Lordship's right arm, which probably saved the solicitor, as his Lordship was a most accurate marksman. The noble challenger received the second bullet in his side, but the wound was not dangerous. The attorney's skin remained quite whole.

My Lord and the attorney having been thus disposed of for

the time being, the Honourable Somerset Butler (his Lordship's son) now took the field, and proceeded, according to due form, by a challenge to Mr. Peter Burrowes, &c., the senior of the adversaries' counsel (now judge commissioner of insolvents). The invitation not being refused, the combat took place, one chilly morning, near Kilkenny. Somerset knew his business well; but Peter had had no practice whatever in *that line* of *litigation*– being good tempered and peaceable.

Few persons feel too *warm* on such occasions, of a *cold* morning, and Peter formed no exception to the general rule. An old woman who sold spiced gingerbread nuts in the street they passed through accosted the party, extolling her nuts to the very skies, as being well spiced, and fit to expel the wind, and to warm any gentleman's stomach and bowels as well as a dram. Peter bought a pennyworth on the advice of his second, Dick Waddy, an eminent attorney, and duly receiving the change of a sixpenny-piece, marched off to the scene of action munging his gingerbread.

Preliminaries being soon arranged – the pistols given – ten steps measured – the flints hammered – and the feather-springs set – Somerset, a fine dashing young fellow, full of spirit, activity, and animation, after making a few graceful attitudes, and slapping his arms together as hackney-coachmen do in frosty weather, to make their fingers supple – gave elderly Peter (who was no posture-master) but little time to take his fighting position: – in fact, he had scarcely raised his pistol

to a wabbling level, before Somerset's ball came *crack-dash* against Peter's body! The halfpence rattled in his pocket: Peter dropped; Somerset fled; Dick Waddy roared "murder," and called out to Surgeon Pack. Peter's clothes were ripped up; and Pack, *secundum artem*, examined the wound: – something like a black hole designated the spot where the lead had penetrated the abdomen. The doctor shook his head, and pronounced but one short word – "*mortal!*" – it was, however, more expressive than a long speech. Peter groaned; his friend Waddy began to think about the coroner; his brother barristers sighed heavily, and Peter was supposed to be departing this world (but, as they all *endeavoured* to persuade him, *for a better*); – when Surgeon Pack, after another *fatal*, taking leave of Peter, and leaning his hand on the grass to assist him in rising, felt something hard, took it up, and looked at it curiously: the spectators closed in the circle, to see Peter die; the patient turned his expiring eyes toward Surgeon Pack, as much as to say – "Good bye to you all, lads!" – when lo! the doctor held up to the astonished assembly the *identical bullet*, which, having rattled among the heads and harps, and gingerbread nuts, in Peter's waistcoat-pocket, had flattened its own body on the surface of a copper, and left His Majesty's bust distinctly imprinted and accurately designated, in black and blue shading, on his subject's carcase! Peter's heart beat high; and finding that his Gracious Sovereign, and the gingerbread, had saved his life, lost as little time as possible in rising from the sod: a bandage was applied round his body, and in a short time he was

able (though of course he had no reason to be over-*willing*) to begin another combat.[9]

His Lordship having now, on his part, recovered from the attorney's wounds, considered it high time to recommence hostilities according to his original plan of the campaign; and the engagement immediately succeeding was between him and the late Counsellor John Byrne, king's counsel, and next in rotation of his learned adversaries.

His Lordship was much pleased with the spot upon which his son had chosen to hit Counsellor Peter, and resolved to select the same for a hit on Counsellor John. The decision appeared to be judicious; and, as if the pistol itself could not be ignorant of its destination, and had been gratified at its own previous accuracy and success, (for it was the same,) it sent a bullet in the identical level, and Counsellor Byrne's carcase received a precisely similar compliment with Counsellor Burrowes's: – with this difference; that as the former had no gingerbread nuts, the matter appeared more serious. I asked him during his illness how he felt when he received the *crack*? he answered, just as if he had been punched by the mainmast of a man of war! – certainly a grand simile; but how far my friend Byrne was enabled to form the comparison he never divulged to me.

My Lord having got through two counsellors, and his son a

[9] Mr. Peter Burrowes, K. C., was my old friend and schoolfellow. He was one of those persons whom every body likes: – there never was a better hearted man! We were at Temple together.

third, it became the duty of Captain Pierce Butler (brother to Somerset) to take *his* turn in the lists. The barristers now began not much to relish this species of *argument*; and a gentleman who followed next but one on the list owned fairly to me, that he would rather be on *our* side of the question: but it was determined by our noble client, so soon as the first series of combats should be finished, to begin a new one, till he and *the lads* had tried the mettle or "touched the inside" of all the remaining barristers. Mr. Dick Guinness, a very good-humoured, popular, *lisping*,[10] dapper little pleader, was next on the list; and the Honourable Pierce Butler, his intended slaughterer, was advised, for *variety's sake*, to put what is called the *onus* on that gentleman, and thereby force *him* to become the challenger, – which he was told by a young parson would considerably *diminish* the crime of *killing* him.

Dick's friends *kindly* and candidly informed him that he could have but little chance – the Honourable Pierce being one of the most resolute of a courageous family, and quite an undeviating marksman: that he had, besides, a hot, persevering, thirsty spirit, which a *little* fighting would never quench: and as Dick was secretly informed that he would to a certainty be forced to battle (it being his *turn*), and his speedy dissolution being nearly as certain, he was recommended to settle all his worldly concerns

[10] Lord Clare (when attorney-general) coming out of the Exchequer, which was much crowded, was asked who was *speaking*. "Speaking!" said Fitzgibbon; "nobody – Dick Guinness is *whistling* a demurrer."

without delay.

But it was to be otherwise. – Providence took Dick's part, and decided that there should be no coroner's inquest held on his body. The Honourable Pierce injudiciously put his *onus* (and rather a *wicked* one) on Dick in *open court* before the *judge*; an uproar ensued, and the Honourable Pierce hid himself under the table: however, the sheriff lugged him out, and prevented that encounter effectually; Pierce with *great* difficulty escaping immediate incarceration on giving his *honour never* to meddle with Dick, his members, or appurtenances, for three years, commencing from the day of his *onus*. This was an interruption which the Kilkenny family could not have foreseen; and at length his Lordship, finding that neither the laws of the land, nor those of battle, were likely to adjust affairs to his satisfaction, suffered them to be terminated by the three duels already narrated.

Counsellor Leonard M'Nally, well known both at the English and Irish bars, and in the dramatic circles as author of that popular little piece "Robin Hood," &c., was one of the strangest fellows in the world. His figure was ludicrous: he was very short, and nearly as broad as long: his legs were of unequal length, and he had a face which no washing could clean: he wanted one thumb, the absence of which gave rise to numerous expedients on his part; and he took great care to have no nails, as he regularly eat every morning the growth of the preceding day: he never wore a glove, lest he should appear to be guilty of *duplicity* in concealing the want of thumb. When in a hurry, he generally took

two thumping steps with the short leg, to bring up the space made by the long one; – and the bar, who never missed a favourable opportunity of naming people, called him "one *pound* two." As being a *poet*, the bar wags termed him "*Olympus*." He possessed, however, a fine eye, and by no means an ugly countenance; a great deal of middling intellect; a shrill, full, good forensic voice; great quickness at cross examination, with sufficient adroitness at defence; and in Ireland he was both the staff and standing-dish of the criminal jurisdictions: in a word, M'Nally was a good-natured, hospitable, talented, dirty fellow, and had, by the latter qualification, so disgusted the circuit bar, that they refused to receive him at their mess – a cruelty I set my face against, and every summer circuit endeavoured to vote him into the mess, but always ineffectually; his neglect of his person, the shrillness of his voice, and his low solicitor company, being assigned as reasons which never could be got over.

M'Nally had done something in the great cause of Napper and Dutton, which brought him into still further disrepute with the bar. Anxious to regain his station by some act equalising him with his brethren, he determined to offend or challenge some of the most respectable members of the profession, who, however, showed no inclination to oblige him in that way. He first tried his hand with Counsellor * * *, a veteran of the bar, but who, upon this occasion, according to the decision of his fellows, refused the combat. M'Nally, who was as intrepid as possible, by no means despaired, and was so obliging as to honour me with the next

chance; in furtherance thereof, on very little provocation, to my surprise, and by no means to my satisfaction, gave me the retort *not* courteous in the Court of King's Bench.

I was well aware of his object; and, not feeling comfortable under this public insult, told him (taking out my watch), "M'Nally, you shall meet me in the Park in an hour."

The little fellow's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the invitation: never, perhaps, was any person so rejoiced at a good chance of going out of the world before dinner time. He instantly replied, "In *half an hour*, if you please," comparing, at the same moment, his watch with mine: – "I hope you won't *disappoint* me," continued he.

"Never fear, Mac," answered I, "there's not a gentleman at the bar will be ashamed to fight you *to-morrow*, provided you live so long, which I can't promise; – though I confess I wish you had selected some other of your friends for so very disagreeable an operation."

We had no time to spare, so parted, to get ready. The first man I met was Mr. Henry Harding, a huge, wicked, fighting King's County attorney. – I asked him to come out with me: to him it was "fine sport." I also summoned Rice Gibbon, a surgeon, who being the most ostentatious fellow imaginable, brought an immense bag of surgical instruments, &c. from Mercers Hospital. In forty-five minutes we were regularly posted in the middle of the review-ground in the Phœnix-park, and the whole scene, to any person not so seriously implicated, must have been irresistibly ludicrous.

The sun shone brightly; and Surgeon Gibbon, to lose no time in case of a hit, spread out all his polished instruments, dissecting-knives, forceps, scalpels, saws, tourniquets, probes of all lengths, &c., on the *grass*, glittering in the light on one side of me. I am sure it looked more like a *regimental* preparation before a battle, than for an individual encounter: – every thing was ranged in surgical order, ready for the most desperate operations; while a couple of young pupils from Mercers Hospital unfurled their three-tailed bandages like so many streamers. My second having stepped nine paces, then stood at the other side, handed me a case of pistols, and desired me to "*work* away by J – s." – M'Nally stood before me, very like a beer-barrel on its stilling, and by his side were ranged three unfortunate barristers, who were all soon afterward hanged and beheaded for high-treason; – namely, John Sheers, (who was his second, and had given him his *point-blanks*,) with Henry Sheers and Bagenal Harvey, who came as *amateurs*. Both of the latter, I believe, were amicably disposed, but a negociation would not be admitted by M'Nally, (to whom it was of great consequence to fight a *King's Counsel*,) and to it we went. M'Nally presented so coolly, that I could plainly see I had but little chance of being missed, so I thought it best to lose no time on my part. The poor fellow staggered, and cried out, "I am hit!" and I felt some little twitch myself, which I could not at the moment account for. Never did I experience so miserable a feeling. He had received my ball directly in the centre of his ribs. My doctor rushed at him with the zeal and activity of a dissecting

surgeon, and in one moment, with a long knife, which he thrust eagerly into his waistband, ripped up his clothes to the skin, and exposed his naked carcase to the bright sun.

The ball appeared to have hit the buckle of his suspenders (*vulgariter*, gallows), by which it had been partially impeded, and had turned round, instead of entering his paunch. While I was still in dread as to the result, my second, after seeing that he had been so protected by the suspenders, inhumanly exclaimed, "By J – , Mac, you are the only *rogue* I ever knew that was *saved* by the *gallows*!" – I felt quite happy that he was not dangerously hurt.

On returning home, I found I had not got off quite so well as I thought; the skirt of my coat was perforated on both sides, and a scratch just enough to break the skin had taken place on both my thighs. I did not know this while on the ground, but it accounts for the *twitch* I spoke of.

My opponent soon recovered, and after the *precedent* of being wounded by a King's Counsel, no barrister could afterward decently refuse to give him satisfaction. He was, therefore, no longer insulted, and the poor fellow has often told me since that my shot was his salvation. He subsequently got Curran to bring us together at his house, and a more zealous partisan I never had than M'Nally proved himself, on my contest for the city of Dublin, during which he did me good service.

Leonard was a great poetaster; and having fallen in love with a Miss Ianson, daughter to a very rich attorney, of Bedford-row, London, he wrote on her the celebrated song of

"The Lass of Richmond Hill" (her father had a lodge there). She could not withstand this, and returned his flame. This young lady was absolutely beautiful, but quite a slattern in her person. She likewise had a turn for versification, and was therefore altogether well adapted to her lame lover, particularly as she never could spare time from her poetry to *wash her hands*; a circumstance in which M'Nally was *sympathetic*. The father, however, notwithstanding all this, refused his consent; and consequently, M'Nally took advantage of his *dramatic* knowledge, by adopting the precedent of Barnaby Brittle, and bribed a barber to lather old Ianson's *eyes* as well as his *chin*, and with something rather sharper too than Windsor soap. Slipping out of the room, while her father was getting rid of the lather and the smart, this Sappho, with her limping Phaon, escaped, and were united in the holy bands of matrimony the same evening; and she continued making, and M'Nally correcting, verses, till it pleased God to call his angel away. This curious couple conducted themselves, both generally and toward each other, extremely well, after their union. Old Ianson partly forgave them, and made some settlement upon their children.

The *ancient* mode of duelling in Ireland was generally on *horseback*. The combatants gallopped past each other, at a distance marked out by posts which prevented a nearer approach: they were at liberty to fire at any time from the commencement to the end of their course; but it must be at a hand-gallop: their pistols were charged alike with a *certain* number of bullets, slugs,

or whatever was most convenient, as agreed.

There had been, from time immemorial, a spot marked out on level ground near the Doone of Clapook, Queen's County, on the estate of my grand-uncle, Sir John Byrne, which I have often visited as *classic ground*. It was beautifully situated, near Stradbally; and here, according to tradition and legendary tales, the old captains and chieftains used to meet and decide their differences. Often did I walk it over, measuring its dimensions step by step. The bounds of it are still palpable, above sixty or seventy steps long, and about forty wide: large stones remain on the spot where, I suppose, the posts originally stood to divide the combatants, which were about eight or nine yards asunder – being the nearest point from which they were to fire. The time of firing was voluntary, so as it occurred during their course, and, as before stated, in a hand-gallop. If the quarrel was not terminated in one course, the combatants proceeded to a second; and if it was decided to go on after their pistols had been discharged, they then either finished with short broad-swords on horseback, or with small-swords on foot; but the tradition ran, that when they fought with small-swords, they always adjourned to the rock of Donamese, the ancient fortress of the O'Moors and the Princes of Offely. This is the most beautiful inland ruin I have seen in Ireland. There, in the centre of the old fort, on a flat green sod, are still visible the deep indentures of the feet both of principals, who have fought with small rapiers, and their seconds: every modern visitor naturally stepping into the same marks,

the indentures are consequently kept up; and it is probable that they will be deeper a hundred years hence than they were a twelvemonth ago.

My grandfather, Colonel Jonah Barrington, of Cullenaghmore, had a great passion for hearing and telling stories of old events, particularly respecting duels and battles fought in his own neighbourhood, or by his relatives: and as these were just adapted to make impression on a very young curious mind, like mine, at the moment nearly a *carte blanche*, (the Arabian Nights, for instance, read by a child, are never forgotten by him,) I remember, as if they were told yesterday, many of his recitals and traditionary tales, especially those he could himself attest; and his face bore, to the day of his death, ample proof that he had not been idle among the combatants of his own era. The battle I remember best, because I heard it oftenest and through a variety of channels, was one of my grandfather's, about the year 1759. He and a Mr. Gilbert had an irreconcilable grudge. (I forget the cause, but I believe it was a very silly one.) It increased every day, and the relatives of both parties found it must inevitably end in a combat, which, were it postponed till the sons of each grew up, might be enlarged perhaps from an individual into a regular *family* engagement. It was therefore thought better that the business should be ended at once; and it was decided that they should fight on horseback on the green of Maryborough; that the ground should be one hundred yards of race, and eight of distance; the weapons of each, two holster pistols, a broad-bladed

but not very long sword (I have often seen my grandfather's,) with basket handle, and a skeen, or long broad-bladed dagger: the pistols to be charged with one ball and swan-drops.

The entire country, for miles round, attended to see the combat, which had been six months settled and publicly announced, and the county-trumpeter, who attended the judges at the assizes, was on the ground. My grandfather's second was a Mr. Lewis Moore, of Cremorgan, whom I well recollect to have seen – he long survived my grandfather: Gilbert's was one of his own name and family – a captain of cavalry.

All due preliminaries being arranged, the country collected and placed as at a horse-race, and the ground kept free by the gamekeepers and huntsmen mounted, the combatants started, and gallopped toward each other. Both fired before they reached the nearest spot, and missed. The second course was *more fortunate*. My grandfather received many of Gilbert's shot full in his face: the swan-drops penetrated no deeper than his temple and cheek-bones; the large bullet luckily passed him. The wounds, not being dangerous, only enraged old Jonah Barrington; and the other being equally willing to continue the conflict, a fierce battle, hand to hand, ensued: but I should think they did not close totally, or they could not have escaped with life.

My grandfather got three cuts, which he used to exhibit with great glee; one on the thick of the right arm, a second on his bridle-arm, and the third on the outside of the left hand. His hat, which he kept to the day of his death, was also sliced in

several places; but both had iron skull-caps under their hats, which probably saved their brains from remaining upon the green of Maryborough.

Gilbert had received two pokes from my grandfather on his thigh and his side, but neither disabling. I fancy he had the best of the battle, being as strong as, and less irritable than, my grandfather, who, I suspect, grew, toward the last, a little ticklish on the subject; for he rushed headlong at Gilbert, closed, and instead of striking at his person, thrust his broad-sword into the horse's body as often as he could, until the beast dropped with his rider underneath him: my grandfather then leaped off his horse, threw away his sword, and putting his skeen, or broad dagger, to the throat of Gilbert, told him to ask his life or die, as he must do either one or the other in half a minute. Gilbert said he would ask his life only upon the terms that, without apology or conversation, they should shake hands heartily and be future friends and companions, and not leave the youths of two old families to revenge their quarrel by carving each other. These terms being quite agreeable to my grandfather, as they breathed good sense, intrepidity, and good heart, he acquiesced; and from that time they were the most intimately attached and joyous friends and companions of the county wherein they resided.

My grandfather afterward fought at Clapook Squire Neddy Fitzgerald, who was badly shot. On this occasion, old Gilbert was my grandfather's second: – I remember well seeing him; as I do also, about the same time, the late Chief Justice (then

Serjeant) Pattison, who had come down to Cullenaghmore to visit my grandfather, and, as I afterward discovered, to cheat him of a borough and two seats in parliament, which he effected. Gilbert brought me a great many sweet things; and I heard that evening so many stories of fights at Clapook, and on the ridge of Maryborough, that I never forgot them; and it is curious enough that I have all my life taken the greatest delight in hearing of, or reading about, ancient battles and chivalrous adventures. Nothing amuses me more to this day; and hence perhaps it is, that I recollect those tales and traditions at the present moment with perfect distinctness and accuracy: my memory seldom fails me in any thing, and least of all in recitals such as the foregoing.[11]

[11] I have found many notes respecting such-like matters, in old Ms. books, &c. &c.; particularly two or three at the end of an old Cookery book, in Ms., by my great-grandmother Lady Byrne, of Timogue, in her own hand-writing, in 1729, with several receipts purporting to be by Lady Rory O'Neil, of Smithfield, Dublin, who died in 1741, at a great age. I shall revive this subject in another volume, which I contemplate.

GEORGE HARTPOLE

Curious fatality in the Hartpole family – Characteristic sketch of the last of the name – Description of Shrewl Castle – The chapel and cemetery – Strictures on epitaph-writing – Eccentricities of the Earl of Aldborough – His Lordship proposes his sister, Lady Hannah Stratford, as *returning-officer* for the borough of Baltinglass – Consequent disturbances – The North-Briton put on his mettle, but out-manœuvred – "Lending to *the Lord*" – Successful conspiracy to marry Hartpole to the daughter of a village inn-keeper – He is stabbed by his wife, and deserts her in consequence – He forms an attachment to Miss Maria Otway, whom he marries, under the plea of his previous connexion being illegal – Unfortunate nature of this union – Separation of the parties – Hartpole's voyage to Portugal, his return, and death – Sundry other anecdotes of the Stratford family.

In the year 1791, George Hartpole, of Shrewl Castle, Queen's County, Ireland, had just come of age. He was the last surviving male of that name, which belonged to a popular family, highly respectable, and long established in the county. Few private gentlemen commenced life with better promise, and none better merited esteem and happiness. He was my relative by blood; and though considerably younger, the most intimate and dearest friend I had.

His father, Robert, had married a sister of the late and present Earls of Aldborough. She was the mother of George; and through this connexion originated my intercourse with that eccentric nobleman and his family.

A singular fatality had attended the Hartpole family from time immemorial. The fathers seldom survived the attainment of the age of 23 years by their elder sons, which circumstance gave rise to numerous traditionary tales of sprites and warnings.[12]

[12] The country authorities were very wise, very grave, and very grim on this subject; but, after all, I suspect the most natural way of accounting for the fatality alluded to is, that the old gentlemen were commonly among the *hardest livers* in the country, and consequently, the gout was certain to be their companion, and generally their executioner.If wood be kept *alternately* in and out of moisture, it rots soon: – if it is *always* in water, it never decays. A man's constitution and rum-punch may to a degree resemble wood and water in this respect. The hardest *incessant* drinkers I ever recollect lived to a great age, were generally healthy, and usually made their exit, at last, by apoplexy, without troubling either doctor, parson, or apothecary: while, on the contrary, most of those who were only *intermitting* boozers, died much earlier; their *finisher* being, nine times out of ten, gout in the head or stomach: a cause, however, occasionally varied by a broken neck by a fall from a horse, when riding home from a housewarming, or drowning in a ditch, whilst watering their horses after the *dogh à dourish*. A few were smothered in shaking bogs, whilst attending the turf-cutters, &c. &c.It required at least three days and nights incessant *hard going* to kill a drinker of the first class. It cost Squire Luke Flood of Roundwood, a place situated in Queen's County, *five* days and nights hard working at port before he could *finish* either himself or the piper. Old Squire Lewis Moor of Cremorgan died, by way of *variety*, at seventy-six, of a violent *passion*, because his wife became jealous of his proceedings with the kitchen-maid. A few died of Drogheda usquebaugh, and several of *sore ancles*. I recollect, in fact, many of the most curious deaths and burials in Ireland that ever took place in any country under heaven. None of them were considered as being *melancholy events*, since every *hard going* squire then generally took his full turn in this world, and died by some *coup de grace*, as stated: however, he was commonly regretted by all his

Robert, as usual with the gentlemen of his day, was the dupe of agents, and the victim of indolence and hospitality. He had deposited his consort in the tomb of her fathers, and had continued merrily enjoying the convivialities of the world (principally in the night-time) till his son George had passed his 22nd year, and then punctually made way for *the succession*, leaving George inheritor of a large territory, a moderate income, a tattered mansion, an embarrassed rent-roll, and a profound ignorance (without the consciousness of it) of business in all departments.

George, though not at all handsome, had completely the mien and manners of a gentleman. His features accorded well with his address, bespeaking the cordiality of a friend and the ardour of an Irishman. His disposition was mild – his nature brave, generous, and sincere: on some occasions he was obstinate and peevish; on others, somewhat sullen and suspicious; but in his friendships, George Hartpole was immutable.

His stature was of the middle height, and his figure exhibited no appearance either of personal strength or constitutional vigour: his slender form and the languid fire of his eye indicated excitation without energy; yet his spirits were moderately good, and the most careless observer might feel convinced that he had sprung from no ordinary parentage – a circumstance which then had due influence in Ireland, where agents, artisans, and attorneys had not as yet supplanted the ancient nobility and

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acquaintance and family, except his *eldest son*.

gentry of the country.

Shrewl Castle, the hereditary residence of the Hartpoles, was in no way distinguishable from the numerous other castellated edifices now in a state of dilapidation throughout the whole island – ruins which invariably excite a retrospect of happier times, when the resident landlord, reverenced and beloved, and the cheerful tenant, fostered and protected, felt the natural advantages of their reciprocal attachment; a reflection which leads us to a sad comparison with modern usages, when the absent lord and the mercenary agent have no consideration but the rents, no solicitude but for their collection; when the deserted tenantry keep pace in decline with the deserted mansion; when the ragged cottager has no master to employ, no guardian to protect him! – pining, and sunk in the lowest state of want and wretchedness, —*sans* work, *sans* food, *sans* covering, *sans* every thing, – he rushes forlorn and desperate into the arms of destruction, which in all its various shapes stands ready to receive him. The reflection is miserable, but true: – such is Ireland since the year 1800.

Hartpole's family residence, picturesquely seated on a verdant bank of the smooth and beautiful Barrow, had, during the revolutions of time, entirely lost the character of a fortress: patched and pieced after all the numberless orders of village architecture, it had long resigned the dignity of a castle without acquiring the comforts of a mansion: yet its gradual descent, from the stronghold of powerful chieftains to the rude dwelling of an

embarrassed gentleman, could be traced even by a superficial observer. Its half-levelled battlements, its solitary and decrepit tower, and its rough, dingy walls, (giving it the appearance of a sort of habitable *buttress*,) combined to portray the downfall of an ancient family.

Close bounding the site of this ambiguous heritage was situate the ancient burial-place of the Hartpole family and its followers for ages. Scattered graves, some green – some russet – denoted the recentness or remoteness of the different interments; and a few broad flag-stones indented with defaced or illegible inscriptions, and covering the remains of the early masters of the domain, just uplifted their mouldering sides from among weeds and briars, and half disclosed the only objects which could render that cemetery interesting.

One melancholy yew-tree, spreading wide its straggling branches over the tombs of its former lords and the nave of an ancient chapel, (its own hollow trunk proclaiming that it could not long survive,) seemed to await, in awful augury, the honour of expiring with the last scion of its hereditary chieftains.

To me the view of this melancholy tree always communicated a low feverish sensation, which I could not well account for. It is true, I ever disliked to contemplate the residence of the dead:[13]

[13] I never could get over certain disagreeable sensations and awe at the interment of *any* person. So strongly, indeed, have I been impressed in this way, that I formed a resolution, which (with one exception) I have strictly adhered to these forty years, – namely, never to attend the funeral even of a relative. I have now and then indulged a whim of strolling over a country church-yard, occasionally to kill time when travelling,

but that of the Hartpole race, bounding their hall of revelry, seemed to me a check upon all hilarity; and I never could raise my spirits in any room, or sleep soundly in any chamber, which overlooked that sanctuary.

The incidents which marked the life of the last owner of Shrewl Castle were singular and affecting, and on many points may tend to exhibit an instructive example. Nothing, in fact, is better calculated to influence the conduct of society, than the biography of those whose career has been conspicuously marked either by eminent virtues or peculiar events. The instance of George Hartpole may serve to prove, were proof wanting, that matrimony, as it is the most irrevocable, so is it the most precarious step in the life of mortals; and that sensations of presentiment and foreboding (as I have already more than once maintained) are not always visionary.

I was the most valued friend of this ill-fated young man. To me his whole heart was laid open; – nor was there one important circumstance of his life, one feeling of his mind, concealed from me. It is now many years since he paid his debt to nature; and, by her course, I shall not much longer tarry to regret his departure; but, whilst my pilgrimage continues, that regret cannot be extinguished.

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in other instances for statistical purposes: but, in general, the intelligible and serious inscriptions on the tomb-stones are so mingled and mixed with others too ridiculous even for the brain of a stone-cutter to have devised, that the rational and preposterous, alternately counteracting each other, made a sort of equipoise; and I generally left an ordinary church-yard pretty much in the same mood in which I entered it.

George had received but a moderate education, far inadequate to his rank and expectations; and the country life of his careless father had afforded him too few conveniences for cultivating his capacity. His near alliance, however, and intercourse with the Aldborough family, gave him considerable opportunities to counteract, in a better class of society, that tendency to rustic dissipation to which his situation had exposed him, and which, at first seductive, soon becomes habitual, and ruinous in every way to youthful morals.

Whatever were the other eccentricities or failings of Robert, Earl of Aldborough (the uncle of Hartpole), the hyperbolical ideas of importance and dignity which he had imbibed, though in many practical instances they rendered him ridiculous, still furnished him with a certain address and air of fashion which put rustic vulgarity out of his society, and, combined with a portion of classic learning and modern belles-lettres, never failed to give him an entire ascendancy over his ruder neighbours. This curious character exhibited a pretty equal proportion of ostentation and meanness.[14]

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[14] Hartpole, though he despised the empty arrogance of his uncle, yet saw that his Lordship knew the world well and profited by that knowledge: – he therefore occasionally paid much attention to some of my Lord's *worldly* lectures; and had he observed the *best* of them, though he might possibly have appeared less amiable, he would doubtless have been far more fortunate. But Hartpole could not draw the due distinction between the folly of his uncle's ostentation and the utility of his address; disgusted with the one, he did not sufficiently practise the other; and despised the idea of acting as if he knew the world, lest he should be considered as affecting to know too much of it.

The most remarkable act of his Lordship's life was an experiment regarding his sister, Lady Hannah Stratford. The borough of Baltinglass was in the patronage of the Stratford family; and on that subject, his brothers, John and Benjamin, never gave him a peaceable moment: they always opposed him, and generally succeeded. He was determined, however, to make a new kind of burgomaster or returning-officer, whose adherence he might religiously depend on. He therefore took his *sister*, Lady Hannah, down to the corporation, and recommended *her* as a fit and proper returning-officer for the borough of Baltinglass! Many highly approved of her Ladyship, by way of a *change*, and a double return ensued – a man acting for the brothers, and the lady for the nobleman. This created a great battle. The honourable ladies of the family all got into the thick of it: some of them were well trounced – others gave as good as they received: the affair made a great uproar in Dublin, and informations were moved for and granted against some of the ladies. However, the brothers, as was just, kept the borough, and his Lordship never could make any farther hand of it.

The *high*-ways of Lord Aldborough, and the *by*-ways with which he intersected them, are well exhibited by an incident that occurred to him when the country was rather disturbed in 1797. He proceeded in great state, with his carriage, outriders, &c. to visit the commanding officer of a regiment of cavalry which had just arrived in that part of the country. On entering the room, he immediately began by informing the officer "that

he was the Earl of Aldborough, of Belan Castle; that he had the finest mansion, demesne, park and fish-ponds in that county, and frequently did the military gentlemen the *honour* of inviting them to his dinners;" – adding, with what he thought a dignified politeness, "I have come from my castle of Belan, where I have all the conveniences and luxuries of life, for the especial purpose of saying, Major, I am glad to see the military in my county, and have made up my mind to give *you*, Major, my countenance and protection." The Major, who happened to be rather a rough soldier and of a country not famed for the softness of its manners, could scarcely repress his indignation at his Lordship's arrogant politeness: but when the last sentence was pronounced, he could restrain himself no longer: – "Coontenance and proteection!" repeated he contemptuously, two or three times: "as for your *proteection*, Mister my Lord, Major M'Pherson is always able to proteect himsel; and as for your *coontenance*, by heeven I would not tak it for your eerldom!"

His Lordship withdrew, and the Major related the incident as a singular piece of assurance. My Lord, however, knew the world too well to let the soldier's answer stick against himself: – next day he invited *every* officer of the regiment to dinner, and so civilly, that the Major lost all credit with his brother officers for his surly reply to so hospitable a nobleman! Nay, it was even whispered among them at mess, that the Major had actually *invented* the story, to show off his own wit and independence; – and thus Lord Aldborough obtained complete revenge.

On another occasion, his Lordship got off better still: – being churchwarden of Baltinglass parish, he did not please the rector, Bob Carter, as to his mode of accounting for the money in the poor-boxes. The peer treated Bob (who was as hard-going, good-hearted, devil-may-care a parson as any in Ireland) with the greatest contempt. The parson, who felt no sort of personal respect for my Lord, renewed his insinuations of his Lordship's *false arithmetic*, until the latter, highly indignant, grew wroth, and would give Bob no further satisfaction on the matter: upon which, the rector took the only revenge then in his power, by giving out a *second* charity sermon, inasmuch as the proceeds of the first had not been productive. The hint went abroad, the church was crowded, and to the infinite amusement of the congregation, Bob put forth as his text – "Whosoever *giveth* to the *poor, lendeth* to the *Lord*." The application was so clear, that the laugh was irresistible. Bob followed up his blow all through the sermon, and "the Lord" was considered to be completely blown; but skilfully enough, he contrived to give the matter a turn that disconcerted even the Rev. Bob himself. After the sermon was concluded, his Lordship stood up, publicly thanked Bob for his most *excellent text* and charity sermon, and declared that he had no doubt the Lord Lieutenant or the bishop would very soon promote him, according to his extraordinary merits, which he was ready to vouch, in common with the rest of the parishioners; finally begging of him to have the sermon *printed*!

Hartpole's fortune on the death of his father was not large;

but its increase would be great and *certain*, and this rendered his adoption of any money-making profession or employment unnecessary. He accordingly purchased a commission in the army, and commenced his *entré* into a military life and general society with all the advantages of birth, property, manners, and character.

A cursory observation of the world must convince us of one painful and inexplicable truth; – that there are some men (and frequently the best) who, even from their earliest youth, appear born to be the victims of undeviating misfortune; whom Providence seems to have gifted with free-agency only to lead them to unhappiness and ruin. Ever disappointed in his most ardent hopes – frustrated in his dearest objects – his best intentions overthrown – his purest motives calumniated and abused, – no rank or station suffices to shelter such an unfortunate: —*ennui* creeps upon his hopeless mind, communicates a listless languor to a sinking constitution, and at length he almost joyfully surrenders an existence which he finds too burdensome to be supported.[15]

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[15] I cannot better illustrate the state of a person so chased by misery, than by quoting a few unpublished lines, the composition of a very young lady, Miss M. T., with whom, and with whose amiable family, I have the pleasure of being intimate.I am aware that I do her great injustice by quoting these particular verses – some of the most *inferior* of her writings; but they seem so much to the point, that I venture to risk her displeasure. She is not, indeed, irritable; and I promise to atone for my error by a few further quotations from her superior compositions.I.I never sought a day's reposeBut some sharp thorn pierced my breast;I never watch'd the evening's close,And hoped a heaven of rest;But soon a darkling cloud would comeAthwart the prospect bright,And, pale

Such nearly was the lot of the last of the Hartpoles. He had scarcely commenced a flattering entrance into public life, when one false and fatal step, to which he was led first by a dreadful accident, and subsequently by his own benevolent disposition, worked on by the chicanery of others, laid the foundation of all his future miseries.

While quartered with his regiment at Galway, in Ireland, his gun, on a shooting party, burst in his hand, which was so shattered, that it was long before his surgeon could decide that amputation might be dispensed with.

During the protracted period of his indisposition he was confined to his chamber at a small inn, such as Ireland then exhibited in provincial towns. The host, whose name was Sleven, had two daughters, both of whom assisted in the business. The elder, Honor, had long been celebrated as a vulgar wit and humourist, the cleverest of all her female contemporaries; and the bar, on circuits, frequented her father's house purposely to be amused by her repartees. Her coarse person was well calculated to protect her moral conduct; and she jested and took her glass

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as twilight on a tomb,My hopes grew dim in night.II.Oft have I mark'd the heav'nly moonWandering her pathless wayAlong the midnight's purple noon,More fair – more loved than day:But soon she flung her shadowy wreathO'er dark eternity,As a faint smile on the cheek of death'Twixt hope and agony.III.Oft on the rainbow's bloom I've gazed,Arch'd as a gate of heaven,Till gushing showers its portals razed,And bathed the brow of even.'Tis thus young hopes illume the skyOf Life's dark atmosphere,Yet, like the rainbow's splendid dye,They meet and disappear.IV.Ev'n so, the mirth of man is madness; —His joy as a sepulchral light,Which shows his solitude and sadness,But chaseth not the night.

with reasonable *moderation*. Besides entertaining the bar, she occasionally amused the judges also; and Lord Yelverton, the chief baron, (who admired wit in *any body*,) was Honor's greatest partisan.

Such females ever appeared to me unnatural and disgusting. A *humorous* and vulgar Amazon, who forgets her own sex, can scarcely expect that ours will recollect it.

Mary, the younger sister, was of a different appearance and character. She was as mild and unassuming as, from her low occupation and habits of life, could be expected: though destitute of any kind of talent, she yet appeared as if somewhat better born than Honor, and her attention to her guests was at the same time assiduous but properly reserved; which conduct, contrasted with the masculine effrontery of the other, gave her, in my mind, a great superiority.

It must have been remarked by every person who has observed the habits and manners of provincial towns, that the distinctions of society are frequently suspended by the necessary familiarities of a contracted circle, and that inferior females frequently excite (especially among youthful military) sensations of tenderness which in a metropolis would never have been thought of – at least in the same point of view. And here the evil genius of Hartpole first commenced her incantations for his ruin.

Throughout George's painful and harassing confinement, the more than assiduous care of Mary Sleven could not escape the observation of the too sensitive convalescent. Hartpole has often

described to me the rise and progress of the giddy, romantic feeling which then seized upon him; how he used to catch her moistened eye watching his interrupted slumbers, or the progress of his recovery; and when she was conscious of being perceived, how the mantling blush would betray a degree of interest far beyond that of an ordinary attendant.

Mary was *rather* well-looking; though there was little to captivate, there was nothing about her to excite his distaste: he was not permitted to have society; and thus, being left nearly alone with this young female during many weeks of pain and solitude, and accustomed to the solicitude of a woman, (so exquisite to a man in every state of suffering,) Hartpole discovered in the sequel, that a feeling of *gratitude* of the highest order had sunk deeper than he wished within his bosom.

He could not but perceive, indeed, that the girl actually *loved* him, and his vanity of course was alive to the disclosure; but his honourable principles prevented him from taking any advantage of that weakness, which she could not conceal, and whereto he could not be blind. It was in truth a dangerous situation for both. There were, as I have said, no external objects to divert George's mind from this novel sensation; there was no one to point out its folly or interrupt its progress. Her partiality flattered him in his seclusion, and led his thoughts gradually and imperceptibly into a channel inconsistent with the welfare of himself, the honour of his family, and the becoming pride of a gentleman. It certainly was, after all, a sort of non-descript passion: it was not actually

love.

Meanwhile the keen masculine understanding of Honor soon perceived the game which it would be wise in her to play, and conceived a project whereby to wind up Hartpole's feeling to the pitch she wanted, and insensibly to lead his gratitude to love, and his love to *matrimony*. This was Honor's aim; but she overrated her own penetration, and deceived herself as to Hartpole's character: she *overacted* her part, and consequently diminished its effect.

At length, awakened from his vision of romantic gratitude, and beginning to open his eyes to the views of the two women, my friend felt ashamed of his facility, and mustered up sufficient resolution to rescue himself from the toils they were spreading for his capture. He had never made *any species* of *proposal* to Mary, and she could not, with just or honest hope, look to marriage with a person so greatly her superior. On his perfect recovery, he determined, by going over to England, to avoid all their machinations; and he also determined that his departure should be abrupt.

The keen and rapid eye of the designing Honor, however, soon discovered the secret of his thoughts; and guessing the extent of his resolution, she artfully impressed upon him (under the affectation of concealing it) the *entire* attachment of her pining sister; but at the same time communicated Mary's resolution to be seen by him no more – "since it would be useless further to distract her devoted heart by cultivating society from which she

must so soon be separated for ever."

Here Honor was again mistaken: – no melting looks, no softening blandishments, now intervened to oppose George's pride or stagger his resolution. He had only to struggle with *himself*; and after a day and night of calm reflection, he fully conquered the dangers of his high-flown *gratitude*, and departed at day-break from the inn without even desiring to see the love-lorn and secluded Mary.

The sisters were thus totally disappointed. He had paid munificently for the trouble he had given them, written a letter of grateful thanks to Mary, left her a considerable present, and set off to Dublin to take immediate shipping for England.

Hartpole now congratulated himself on his escape from the sarcasms of the world, the scorn of his family, and his own self-condemnation. He had acted with honour; he had done nothing wrong; and he had once more secured that rank in society which he had been in danger of relinquishing. In Dublin he stopped at the Marine Hotel, whence the packet was to sail at midnight, and considered himself as on the road to Stratford-place, London, which his uncle, Lord Aldborough, had built, and where his Lordship then resided.

The time of embarkation had nearly arrived when a loud shriek issued from an adjoining chamber to his, at the hotel. Ever alive to any adventure, Hartpole rushed into the room, and beheld – Mary Sleven! She was, or affected to be, fainting, and was supported by the artful Honor, who hung over her, apparently

regardless of all other objects, and bemoaning, in low accents, the miserable fate of her only sister.

Bewildered both by the nature and suddenness of this rencontre, Hartpole told me that for a moment he nearly lost his sight – nay, almost his reason; but he soon saw through the scheme, and mustered up sufficient courage to withdraw without explanation. He had, in fact, advanced to the door, and was on the outside step, the boat being ready to receive him, when a second and more violent shriek was heard from the room he had just quitted, accompanied by exclamations of "She's gone! she's gone!" Hartpole's presence of mind entirely forsook him; he retraced his steps, and found Mary lying, as it should seem, quite senseless, in the arms of Honor: his heart relented; his evil genius profited by the advantage; and he assisted to restore her. Gradually Mary's eyes opened; she regarded George wildly but intently, and having caught his eye, closed hers again – a languid, and, as it were, an involuntary pressure of his hand, conveying to him her sensations. He spoke kindly to her: she started at the sound, and *renewed the pressure* with *increased* force. As she slowly and gradually revived, the scene became more *interesting*. A medical man being (by preconcert) at hand, he ordered her restorative cordials. Madeira only could at the moment be procured. She put the glass to her mouth, sipped, looked tenderly at Hartpole, and offered it him; her lips had touched it; he sipped also; the patient smiled; the doctor took a glass; Hartpole pledged him; glass followed glass, until George was bewildered! The

artful Honor soon substituted another bottle: it was Hartpole's first wine after his accident, and quickly mounted to his brain.

Thus did an hour flit away, and, meanwhile, the packet had sailed. Another person affected also to have lost his passage while occupied about the patient, and this turned out to be a *Catholic priest*. Refreshments were ordered: the doctor and the priest were pressed to partake of the fare: the Madeira was replenished: the moments fled! The young man's brain was inflamed; and it is only necessary to add, that the morning's sun arose, not on the happy George, but on the happy *Mary*, the wedded wife of Hartpole.

I will not attempt to describe the husband's feelings when morning brought reflection. Every passion met its foe within his bosom: every resolve was overwhelmed by an adverse one: his sensitive mind became the field of contest for tumultuous emotions; until, worn out by its own conflicts, it sank into languor and dejection. He had lost himself! he therefore yielded to his fate, abandoned all idea of further resistance, and was led back in chains by the triumphant sisters.

None of his family or connexions would ever receive her; and George for awhile, sunk and disgraced, without losing all his attachment for the girl, had lost all his tranquillity. After two years' struggle, however, between his feelings for her and his aspirations after a more honourable station in society, the conspiracy which had effected his ruin, being by chance discovered, arose before his eye like a spectre, and, as if through

a prism, the deception appeared in the clearest colours.

A revulsion followed, and the conflict became still more keen within his breast: but, at length, his pride and resolution prevailed over his sensibility, and he determined (after providing amply for her) to take advantage of that statute which declares null and void all marriages between a Catholic and a Protestant solemnised by a popish priest. He made this determination; it was just; but, unfortunately, he lingered as to its *execution*. Her influence was not extinguished; and she succeeded in inducing him to procrastinate from time to time the fatal resolve. She could not, it is true, deny that he had been inveigled, and had made up her own mind, should he stand firm, to accept a liberal provision, and submit to a legal sentence, which indeed could not be resisted.

As the propriety of Mary's moral conduct had never been called in question, she might, after all, be able to obtain a match more adapted to her station and to every thing except her ambition: but the coarse and vulgar Honor miscalculated all. She irritated and wound up Mary almost to madness; and in this state, her characteristic mildness forsook her; she became jealous of all other women, and hesitated not daily to lavish abuse on the passive and wretched Hartpole.

One morning, in Dublin, where they were residing, he came to my house in a state of trembling perturbation. He showed me a wound on his hand, and another slight one from a knife's point indented on his breast-bone. Mary, he said, had, in a paroxysm of rage, attempted to stab him whilst sitting at breakfast: he had,

with difficulty, wrested the knife from her grasp, and left the house never to return to it. He could in fact no longer feel *safe* in her society; and therefore, arranging all his necessary concerns, he repaired to Edinburgh, where his regiment was quartered.

The suit for a decree of nullity was immediately commenced, but no effective proceedings were ever taken, nor any sentence in the cause pronounced, owing to events still more unfortunate to poor Hartpole.

Prior to this fatal act of George's, I had never observed an attachment on his part toward any female, save a very temporary one to a young lady in his neighbourhood, whom few men could see without strong feelings of admiration; – the second daughter of Mr. Yates, of Moon, a gentleman of the old school, almost antediluvian in his appearance, and of good fortune in County Kildare.

The beauty of Myrtle Yates arose nearly to perfection. It was of that brilliance with which poets and romance writers endeavour to adorn the most favoured of their heroines. Had she lived of yore, the Grecian sculptor or Roman artist might have profited by charms which they could never *fancy*: – she might have been the model for a Venus, or, at a later era, sat for a Madonna. Nature, indeed, seemed to have created her solely for the blandishments of affection; and her whole form appeared susceptible of being dissolved in love.

In a word, at twenty, Myrtle Yates was wholly irresistible; not a youth of her country, who had a heart, could boast of its

insensibility; and perhaps she owed to the bewildering number of those admirers the good fortune of not devoting herself to any of them.

Yet Hartpole's attachment to Myrtle Yates was neither deep nor lasting. He considered her *too* attractive – perhaps too *yielding*; and had he always adhered to the same principle of judgment, it is possible he might have yet existed.

On his return from Scotland he immediately repaired to Clifton, to drink the waters for a severe cold which could no longer be neglected, and required medical advice and a balmy atmosphere. Here fate threw in the way of this ill-fated youth another lure for his destruction, but such a one as might have entrapped even the most cautious and prudent. Love, in its genuine and rational shape, now assailed the breast of the ever-sensitive Hartpole; and an attachment sprang up fatal to his happiness, and eventually to his existence.

At Clifton, my friend made the acquaintance of a lady and gentleman, in whose only daughter were combined all the attractive qualities of youth, loveliness, and amiability. Their possessor moved in a sphere calculated to gratify his pride; and those who saw and knew the object of George's new attachment could feel no surprise at the vehemence of his passion.

The unfortunate young man, however, sorely felt that his situation under these circumstances was even more dreadful than in the former connexion. Loving one woman to adoration, and as yet the acknowledged husband of another, it is not easy to

conceive any state more distracting to a man of honour. His agitated mind had now no suspension of its misery, save when lulled into a temporary trance by the very lassitude induced by its own unhappiness.

He wrote to me, expressing the full extent of his sensations – that is, as fully as pen could convey them. But imperfect indeed must be all expression which attempts to describe intensity of feeling. It was from blots and scratches, and here and there the dried-up stain of an hieroglyphic tear, rather than from words, that I gathered the excess of his mental agony. He required of my friendship to *advise* him – a task, to the execution of which I was utterly incompetent. All I could properly advise him to, was what I knew he would not comply with; namely, to come over to Ireland, and endeavour to conquer the influence of his passion, or at least to take no decisive step in divulging it till the law had pronounced its sentence on his existing connexion.

Hartpole had strong feelings of honour as to this latter. For a length of time he could scarcely reconcile himself to the idea of publicly annulling what he had publicly avowed; and it was only by urging on his consideration the fact, that the ceremony by a popish priest in no such case legally constituted a marriage, that he was prevailed on to seek for a decree of *nullity*. Such decree was not indeed absolutely *necessary*; but to have it upon record was judged advisable. Though the incipient proceedings had been taken by his proctor, they were not completed, and Mary Sleven's marriage *never* was formally declared a nullity

by the sentence of the Ecclesiastical Court, nor was she ever judicially separated from the deluded Hartpole.

Under all these circumstances, I was totally bewildered as to what ought to be my friend's future conduct, when I was one morning greatly surprised by the sudden appearance of Hartpole at my breakfast-table, obviously in better health: – he looked very superior to what I had expected; his eye sparkled, and there was an air of satisfaction diffused both over his features and address which convinced me that some decisive step had been taken by him. He lost no time in telling me that he had actually proposed for Miss Otway to her father and mother; that she herself had consented; that Mr. and Mrs. Otway had come over to have his fortune investigated, and wished to see me with as little delay as convenient; and concluded by saying, that he was most anxious to introduce me to the source of all his terrestrial happiness.

I could not but start on hearing all this, and declined entering at all into the business with Mr. Otway till George had given me a written license to communicate with him as I pleased. He acceded to all I desired, and the next morning I waited on that gentleman – (Mr. Cooke Otway, of Castle Otway).

I never felt more embarrassed in my life than at this interview. I had in the interim made myself master of Mr. Otway's character, and the knowledge by no means contributed to ease my scruples or diminish my embarrassment. However, to my surprise, a very short time disposed of both, and in a way which I had heretofore conceived quite impossible.

I found Colonel Cooke Otway a strong-minded, decided, gentlemanly man, obviously with more head than heart, – sensible, and practically good-natured; – in short, one of those well-trained persons who appear to be quite off-handed, yet, on closer remark, are obviously *in reservation*.

He introduced me to Mrs. Otway, whose character required no research. It was ordinary, but amiable: she had evidently great kindness of heart, and her conduct was uniformly reported to be such as left nothing to amend either as wife or mother: she appeared to be in declining health, whilst her daughter, in the full bloom of youth and first blush of ripening beauty, presented a striking contrast.

I also read, as far as its hitherto slight development would admit, the character of Maria Otway. I could perceive neither the languor of love nor the restlessness of suspense at all predominant in her feelings. Perfect ease and entire resignation appeared to sit most cheerfully on her brow: she seemed voluntarily to consider the wish of her parents as the rule of her destiny; and it was perceptible that Hartpole had the *love* entirely at his own disposal.

Maria united in her appearance, her manners, and her obvious disposition, most of those amiable and engaging traits which the age of eighteen can develope in a female. – Her figure, in height rather below the middle stature, had arrived at that proportionate fulness which forms the just medium between the round and slender, and without the defects of either gives the advantages of

both. Her limbs, cast in the mould of perfect symmetry, moved with that ease and moderate activity which constitute the natural grace of female action. Her features small, and not justifying the epithet of "beautiful," yet formed in their assemblage a blooming and expressive index of the young heart that ruled them: the imperfections of the profile were lost in the brilliant delicacy of the complexion which embellished it. Her blue eyes were untutored; but her smile was intoxicating; and my friend was bound and fettered in the trammels of female witchery.

In my own judgment, Maria Otway was certainly at that time a most interesting young female: still her beauty, obviously aided by youth, health, and thoughtless happiness, was not of that animated and vigorous cast on which we so often see neither time, care, nor age make quick impression: it was, on the other hand, that soft and delicate loveliness to which years and family are such inveterate and sometimes rapid enemies.

Over such a person as Hartpole, the victory of Miss Otway's beauty was complete; and the result of that unfortunate passion convinces me that a man (unless his judgment be superior to his sensibility) cannot commit an act of greater folly than to encourage an attachment to any woman whom he thinks every body else must admire as well as himself. George at first was inclined to resist his passion, but he did not *fly from the cause of it*, and he therefore fell a victim to romantic love as he had before done to romantic gratitude.

Mr. Otway at once opened the business, and told me Hartpole

had referred him to me for a statement of his estates and financial situation. On this point I had come fully prepared. Hartpole's circumstances exceeded rather than fell below Mr. Otway's expectation.

"I am quite satisfied, my dear sir," said he to me, with a significant nod; "you know that in Ireland we always make some allowances for the Stratford consanguinity."

I now found my embarrassment recommence, but determined, at every risk, to free myself from all future responsibility or reproach: I therefore informed Col. Otway explicitly of Hartpole's marriage, and that no sentence had as yet been pronounced to declare that marriage a nullity, though in point of law it was so.

Having heard me throughout with the greatest complacency, he took me by the hand: – "My dear sir," said he with a smile which at first surprised me, "I am happy to tell you that I was fully apprised, before I came to Ireland, of every circumstance you have related to me as to that woman, and had taken the opinions of several eminent practitioners on the point, each of whom gave without any hesitation exactly the same opinion you have done: my mind was therefore easy and made up on that subject before I left England, and I do not consider the circumstance any impediment to the present negotiation."

It is not easy to describe the relief thus afforded me; though, at the same time, I must own I was somewhat astonished at this seeming *nonchalance*. We parted in excellent humour with each

other, and I believe he was my friend to the day of his death.

The negotiation went on: *Miss Sleven* was no more regarded; and after a deal of discussion, but no difference of opinion, the terms were agreed on, and settlements prepared, for a marriage, in all its results as unfortunate for the young people, and *as culpable in the old*, as any that ever came within my recollection.

A circumstance of singular and not very auspicious nature occurred on the first step toward the completion of that ill-starred alliance. It was necessary to procure a license from the Prerogative Court for the solemnization of the marriage in the city of Dublin, and Hartpole's uncle, the Honourable Benjamin O'Neil Stratford (now Earl of Aldborough), attended with George upon Doctor Duigenan, then judge of the prerogative, for that purpose.

The doctor (who when irritated was the most outrageous judge that ever presided in a court of justice) was on the bench officiating upon their arrival. Benjamin conceived that his rank and intimacy with the doctor would have procured him at least common civility; but in this he was egregiously mistaken.

Benjamin O'Neil Stratford, who attended his nephew on that dangerous expedition, was endowed with several good-natured qualities, but, as folks said, rather inclined to the pleasures of *litigation*. In every family which is not very popular, there is always one, of whom people in general say, "Oh! he is *the best of them*:" and this was Benjamin's reputation as to the Stratford

family.[16]

On their arrival in the presence of the doctor, who pretended never to know any body in Court, he asked, "Who *those people* were?" and on being informed, proceeded to inquire what business brought them there.

The Honourable Benjamin answered, "that he wanted a marriage-license for his nephew, George Hartpole, of Shrewl

[16] The noble Earl had then also the appellation of "Blind Ben," which had been conferred on him by the agreeable and witty Lady Aldborough, and which ought not to have been by any means considered derogatory, inasmuch as his name is certainly *Benjamin*, and one of his eyes is actually "*not at home*;" and as the abrupt mode of its quitting his Lordship's service was rather humorous, it may be amusing to mention it.He had once (as he thought) the honour of killing a crane. Benjamin's evil genius, however, maliciously scattered the shot, and the crane had only been what they call in Ireland *kilt*; but feeling pretty sure that her death was determined on, she resolved to die heroically, and not unrevenged. She fell, and lying motionless, seduced her assassin to come and wring her head off, according to the usual rules and practice of humanity by fowlers. The honourable sportsman approached triumphantly, and stooping to seize the *spolia opima*, Madam Crane, (having as good eyes of her own as the one that took aim at her,) in return for his compliment, darted her long bill plump into the head of the Honourable Benjamin O'Neil Stratford, entering through the very same casement which he had closed the shutters of to take *his aim*. In fact, she turned the honourable gentleman's eye clean out of its natural residence; and being thus fully gratified by extinguishing the light in one of her enemy's lanterns, she resigned her body to be plucked, stuffed, and roasted, in the usual manner, as was performed accordingly. Thus, though her slayer was writhing in agony, his *family* was fully revenged by *feasting* on his *tormentor*. Daily consultations were held to ascertain whether her long rapier had not actually penetrated the *brain* of the Honourable Benjamin. One of the tenants being heard to say, in a most untenant-like manner, that it might in such case be *all for the best*, was asked his reason for so undutiful an expression; and replied, that if she had just pricked his honour's brain, maybe it might have let out the *humours*, which would have done no harm either to his honour or to Baltinglass.

Castle, Esq., and Miss Maria Otway, of Castle Otway, County Tipperary."

He had scarcely pronounced the words when the doctor, rising, with the utmost vehemence roared out, "George Hartpole! George Hartpole! is that the rascal who has *another wife* living?"

George, struck motionless, shrank within himself; but Benjamin, not being so easily frightened, said something equally warm, whereupon the doctor, without further ceremony, rushed at him, seized him by the collar, and cried, "Do you want me to countenance bigamy, you villains?" at the same time roaring to his crier and servants to "turn the fellows out!" which order, if not literally, was virtually performed, and the petitioners for a license congratulated themselves upon their providential escape from so outrageous a judge of prerogative.

The fact was, a suit of nullity had been actually *commenced* in the Court, but its merits never having been stated, the judge only knew Hartpole as a married man *de facto*, and it certainly could not appear very correct of the Honourable Benjamin to apply to the *same* judge who was to try the validity of the *first* marriage, to grant his license for the solemnization of a *second* while the first remained undecided. On Hartpole's mind the circumstance made an indelible impression, and he never afterward took any further proceedings in the cause then instituted.

Hartpole returned to me and recounted the adventure, affecting to treat it as a jest against his uncle. But it was a vain disguise; although, by struggling sharply with his feelings, he in

some degree overcame them.

But what was now to be done, since no license could be obtained in Dublin? A general consultation was held; Mr. Otway (still singularly to me) appeared to regard the circumstance as a mere *bagatelle*. I thought *far otherwise*; and it was so deeply engraven on Hartpole's mind, that he mentioned it to me not three days previous to his dissolution, as having foreboded all his subsequent misfortunes.

It was at length agreed on that he should be married in the diocese of Kildare, by a license from the bishop's surrogate there. This was in effect accomplished. I did not attend at the ceremony; after which, the parties pursued their journey to Castle Otway, where, in the midst of every thing that was desirable on earth, Hartpole commenced the trial of his new connexion.

In spite of these apparent advantages, however, my friend soon began either to find or conjure up new and dangerous sources of uneasiness. He continued some months at Castle Otway, listless and devoured by *ennui*– pining for a change of scene, and longing to return to his hereditary domain. His health gradually, although slowly, declined; yet he took no medical advice: remote symptoms of consumption began to exhibit themselves, and the effects of care upon a constitution naturally irritable favoured their development. But, amidst all this, he fancied for awhile that he possessed every thing he could wish for; – his wife daily improved in her person, her manners were delightful, her conduct unexceptionable.

Maria was adored by her parents, but adored to a degree that tended eventually to create her misery: the thought of separating from them was to her almost unbearable; she durst scarcely look at such an event with firmness. Her reluctance could not be concealed from the sharp eye of her uneasy husband. Every mark of affection lavished by her on her parents he considered as if filched from him. He thought her heart should have no room for *any* attachments but to himself, whereas it had been wholly preoccupied by filial tenderness, that true passion of nature. In a word, she had never *loved* Hartpole, for whom she felt no other than a neutral species of attachment. Neither her mind nor her person had arrived at their full maturity, when she was called upon to love; and under such circumstances, she really evinced more affection for her husband than I supposed she would do, but far less than he expected.

At length it was agreed that they should come, on a visit, to my house in Dublin for some time, and that her mother should afterwards stay with her at Shrewl Castle till Maria was gradually reconciled to the dreaded change, and to final residence with a man whom I believe she early discovered was not exactly calculated to make her happy. The story of Mary Sleven, I believe, she had not heard; if she had, I am pretty sure she never would have left the protection of her father.

When Hartpole arrived at my house, I soon perceived that my gloomy auguries had been too well grounded. I found his mind bewildered; he received no enjoyment from reading; his health

did not permit strong exercise; he took no pleasure in new and strange society; but, on the contrary, pined for his own home, his free associates, his steward, his tenants, his colliers, and above all, for a passive, fond companion who should have no wish but her husband's.

Now, none of these things were to Maria's taste, and she yielded to the inroads of discontent, as I think, unreasonably: still, this feeling never showed itself with offensive prominence. She gave way to every desire expressed by her husband, but her acquiescence seemed to me like that of a *victim*. I have often noticed that, even whilst she intimated her obedience, her averted eye betrayed a rebel tear, and she only awaited the moment when it might gush out with safety, and relieve her.

I perceived that, unless some step was taken to occupy George's mind, a residence at Shrewl Castle would surely proclaim to the world both his folly and his ruin. I therefore applied to Mr. Pelham, then secretary in Ireland, to appoint Hartpole to the office of high sheriff for Queen's County for the ensuing year, 1794. My application was immediately conceded. I also took out for him a commission of the peace. Meanwhile his old castle was in part newly furnished, and I was happy to see that he felt a sort of gratification in the appointment of sheriff; and though in a state of health badly calculated to execute the duties of such an office, the occupation of his mind would, I hoped, make ample amends for his necessary personal exertions. If that year had passed favourably, it was my intention to have

recommended a tour to some foreign country, where change of climate and of scene might tend to restore my friend's health, to amuse his mind, and perhaps to make a desirable alteration in the feelings both of himself and his wife: – but Heaven decreed otherwise.

While on their visit at my house, I perceived, in Hartpole's disposition, among other traits which so close a communion could scarcely fail to develope, one which I had never before suspected in him, and calculated to prove the certain and permanent source of unhappiness. Jealousy is of all others the most terrible of human passions. When once it fixes its roots in a hasty, sanguine nature, it becomes master of every action and every word; and reason, justice, and humanity, all fly before it! When it pervades a less ardent spirit, impetuosity is bridled; but the desire of revenge is no less powerful, and too often seeks gratification in the exercise of cold treachery or petty annoyance: in either case, the eye magnifies every object which can at all feed the greediness of suspicion. When this passion has any fair cause, it may be justifiable, and a crisis generally ends it; but when no cause exists, save in the distempered fancy of a sinking constitution, it is permanent and invincible.

Such was the case with my friend: his jealousy had no fixed object on which to fasten itself, but wandered from person to person. Indeed, it could have no resting-place; for, in this point of view, Maria was blameless. But in the eye of my friend she had guilt – the guilt of being attractive. He conceived that every

body must love her as he did himself, and fancied that a female universally admired could not be universally *ungrateful*.

This melancholy and morbid state of mind appeared to me likely to increase from residence in a metropolis, and I hastened his departure for Shrewl Castle, to take upon himself the office of high sheriff. I did not go with them, for my mind misgave me: her mother met them there, and innocently completed the ruin of her children by a step the consequences whereof should ever be a warning to wives, to parents, and to husbands!

At Shrewl, Mrs. Otway perceived George's ideal malady: she was a silly woman, who fancied she was wise, and thought she never could do wrong because she always intended to do right. She proposed to Maria a most desperate remedy to cure her husband of his jealousy, though she did not reflect that it might probably be at the expense of his existence, and certainly of her daughter's duty. They conspired together, and wrote two or three letters directed to Mrs. Hartpole, without signature, but professing love and designating meetings. These they took measures to drop so as Hartpole might accidentally find some of them, and thus they thought in the end to convince him of his folly, and *laugh* him out of his suspicions.

The result may be easily anticipated by those who have read with attention the character of the husband. He became outrageous; the developement did not pacify him; and his paroxysm was nearly fatal. Maria was in consequence but little better, and the unexpected result of her own injudicious conduct

nearly distracted the unhappy mother. But it was too late to retrieve their error: the die was thrown. Hartpole was inflexible; and the first I heard of it was Maria's departure to her father's, and a final separation: – and thus, after a marriage of a few months, that ill-starred young man, completely the sport of fortune, became once more solitary! Labouring under the false idea that he could soon conquer his attachment, he made Maria an ample separate maintenance, and determined to go to Lisbon, where he thought a change of scene might, perhaps, restore his peace, and the climate his shattered constitution.

Before he sailed, I endeavoured in vain to reconcile them. She did not love him well enough to risk a further residence at Shrewl, in the absence of her connexions; and his mind was case-hardened against the whole family from which she sprang. His reasons to me for parting from her finally were at least plausible.

"I acquit her at once," said he, "of ever having shown a symptom of impropriety, nay, even of giddiness: there I was wrong, and I own it: but she has proved herself perfectly capable of, and expert at, *deception*; and the woman that has practised deception for *my* sake would be equally capable of practising it for *her own*. So far from *curing my error*, she has confirmed me in it; and when confidence ceases separation ought to ensue."

Hartpole shortly after embarked for Portugal, and only returned to terminate his short career by a lingering and painful death.

On his arrival at Lisbon without any amendment either in

mind or body, I felt, and I am sure he did himself, that the world was fast receding from him. The rough manners of one Lieutenant Waters, the person whom he had chosen as a *led captain*, were little congenial to his own characteristic mildness. He had, however, Simon, a most faithful Scotch valet; and after a few posts, I conceived, from his letters, that his spirits had very much improved, when a circumstance occurred which, had he been in health, would have been merely ludicrous; but which the shattered state of his nerves rendered him almost incapable of bearing up against.

On his marriage he had given the commission in the army which he then held to Mr. Otway, his brother-in-law (I believe, now, General Otway); on his separation, however, he determined to resume the profession, and accordingly purchased a commission in a regiment of the line then raising by his uncle the late Lord Aldborough; and he had been gazetted previously to his departure.

After he had been a short time at Lisbon, some mischievous person, for some mischievous object, informed his uncle that he had been dead a fortnight! and, without further inquiry, that nobleman resold George's commission, and an announcement appeared in the newspapers, that Hartpole had fallen a victim at Lisbon, to consumption, the rapid progress of which had rendered his case hopeless even before he quitted Ireland, – adding the name of the party who had succeeded him in his regiment.

Now the fact was, that the climate of Lisbon had been of great service to his health; and he was quickly recovering strength and spirits when, taking up, one day, an English paper, he read the above-mentioned paragraph.

His valet described to me coarsely the instantaneous effect of this circumstance on his master's mind. It seemed to proclaim his fate by anticipation: – his commission was disposed of, under the idea that he was actually dead; every melancholy reflection crowded upon him; he totally relapsed; and I firmly believe that paragraph was his death-blow. After lingering several months longer, he returned to England, and I received a letter requesting me to meet him without delay at Bristol, and stating that he had made his will. I immediately undertook the journey, and took him over a horse which I conceived adapted to him at that time. His sister (the present Mrs. Bowen, of Rutland-square) was with him. His figure was emaciated to the last degree, and he was sinking rapidly into the grave. He was attended by a very clever young physician of that place, a Doctor Barrow, and I soon perceived that the doctor had fallen a victim to the charms of Miss Hartpole.

The patient had, however, declined but little in appetite, when the disorder fixed itself in his throat, and he ceased to have the power of eating: he now entirely gave himself up as a person who must die of hunger. This melancholy scene almost distracted me. The doctor gave us little consolation; and Hartpole himself, though reduced to such a state, was really the most cheerful of

the party, evincing a degree of resignation at once heroic and touching. His will had been prepared by Mr. Lemans of Bristol, (to me a perfect stranger,) and executed whilst I was in Ireland: he informed us all that I was joint executor with two of his uncles.

On the morning of Hartpole's death he sent for me to rise and come to him. I found him in an *agony of hunger*– perspiration in large drops rolling down his face. He said neither food nor liquid could descend into his stomach; that his ribs had contracted inward, as if convulsively drawn together; and that he was in great pain. I cannot describe my emotion! He walked about his room and spoke to me earnestly on many subjects, on some of which I have been, and ever shall be, totally silent. At length he called me to the window: – "Barrington," said he, "you see at a distance a very green field?" "Yes," I replied. "Well," continued George, "it is my dying request that I may be buried there *to-morrow evening*."

He spoke so calmly and strongly, that I felt much surprised. He observed this, and said, "It is true: *I am in the agonies of death*." I now called in the doctor and Hartpole's servant: the invalid sat down upon the bed; and when he took me by the hand, I shuddered, for it was burning hot, whilst every nerve and sinew seemed to be in spasmodic action, then iced and clammy. I never had been in collision with a dying person before: he pressed my hand with great fervour, and murmured, "My friend!" – these were the last words I heard him utter. I looked in his face: his eyes were glazed – his lips quivered – he laid his head on the

pillow, and expired.

This awful scene, to me so perfectly new, overpowered me, and for a few minutes I was myself totally insensible.

I disobeyed Hartpole's injunctions respecting his funeral; for I had his body enclosed in a leaden coffin and sent to be interred at Shrewl Castle, in the cemetery of his ancestors, wherein his remains were not admitted without much reluctance by his ungrateful sister and her husband, who resided there in his absence.

On the reading of the will, his first bequest appeared to be to "his friend Barrington, six thousand pounds," together with the reversion of his landed estates and collieries, by moieties, on the death of each of his sisters without children: one had been some years married and had none; the other was unmarried, but soon after made a match with a respectable gentleman of very considerable property, but whom I should think few young ladies of fortune would have fancied.

The uncles would not act as executors; considered me as an interloper; and commenced a suit to annul the will, as prepared under undue influence. Fortunately for my reputation, I had never known or even seen the persons who prepared it. I was in another kingdom at the time, and had not seen Hartpole for many months before its execution: *his sister* was with him; not I. – I was utterly unacquainted with his will or its contents.

I got a decree without delay. The family of Stratford, who preferred *law* to all other species of *pastime*, appealed. My decree

was confirmed, and they were burdened with the whole costs; and in effect paid me six thousand pounds, on an amicable arrangement. My reversion yielded me nothing; for I fancy the sisters have since had nearly twenty children between them to inherit it.

Thus ended Hartpole's life, and thus did a family become extinct, of the most respectable description. I neither looked to nor expected any legacy from my friend, beyond a mourning-ring. He left numerous other bequests, including a considerable one to Mary Sleven, whose fate I never heard.

The sequel of Maria Otway's history was not much less melancholy than that of her unhappy partner, as she died prematurely, by the most affecting of all deaths, some time after – childbirth. I saw her after the separation, but never after George's decease. As I predicted, her style of beauty was not calculated to *wear well*; and even before she was out of her teens, Maria Otway *had been* much handsomer. Her manner became more studied – of course, less graceful: and that *naïveté*, which had rendered her so engaging to my friend, was somewhat superseded by the affectation of fashionable manners.

Maria, I think, *never* had been attached to Hartpole; and within two years after his decease, she made another and a most unexceptionable match – namely, with Mr. Prittie, the present member for Tipperary: but Providence seemed to pursue fatally even the relict of my friend; and, at the age of twenty-three, death cut off the survivor of that union which an unconcerned spectator

would have deemed so auspicious. It was said and believed, (but I do not wish to be understood as vouching the report,) that after Mrs. Prittie's death a prediction of that event was found written by herself six months before it occurred, designating the precise time of her departure.

I have been diffuse on the memoirs of Hartpole, because I felt myself interested in almost every material event of his career. To overlook our friendship, indeed, and his liberality, would have been ungrateful, in any memoir of myself.[17]

Before I quit these "records," and the associations which they excite, I am tempted once more to revert to the peculiarities of the Stratford family, which indeed present an ample field for anecdote. More curious or dissimilar characters never, surely, bore the same name.

Earl Robert, one of those who declared war against me on Hartpole's death, was surnamed "The Peer of a Hundred Wills;" and it is matter of fact, that, upon a trial at law in County Wicklow, since his Lordship's death, fifty-one different wills were produced, together with a great number of affidavits, &c., also signed by the Earl. Several of these documents are of the most singular description, highly illustrative of the Earl's character, and I should think among the most extraordinary papers existing.

It was a general rule with this peer to make a will or codicil in favour of any person with whom he was desirous of carrying

[17] George Hartpole was sponsor to my only son.

a point, – taking especial care that the party should be made acquainted with his proceeding: no sooner, however, was his end accomplished, and other game started, than a fresh instrument annulled all the provisions of the preceding one! Thus, if desirous of obtaining a lady's regards, *he made a will in her favour*, and let her find it *by accident*. He at length got 50,000*l.* with a granddaughter of the Duke of Chandos, and brought her over to Belan.

In the cause before mentioned I was specially retained by the late Earl John, to argue that his brother was *mad*, and Mr. Plunkett was retained specially as my opponent, to argue that he was *sane*. In support of *our* positions it was that the fifty wills were produced; and I hesitate not to say, that *either* of them, had it emanated from any other individual than his Lordship, would have been deemed conclusive of insanity. But the jury had known the party whose vagaries they were summoned to decide upon; and therefore found, as usual, in favour of his Lordship's *last* will. I subsequently asked one of those gentlemen the grounds of their verdict; and his answer was – "We all knew well that the testator was more * * * * * than fool: did you ever hear of any body *taking him in*?" – and, the truth is, the jury were right; for I never met with a man who had more worldly tact than Robert, Earl of Aldborough, and, owing to my close connexion with his nephew, Hartpole, I had abundant opportunities of judging, as well as by his extraordinary correspondence and transactions with myself.

The present Countess Dowager of Aldborough was in the habit of uttering *jeux d'esprit* with more spirit and grace than

any woman in the world: she often cut deeply; but so keen and polished was the edge of her wit, that the patient was never mangled; or if he was, nobody consoled him in his tortures.

The cause of her naming the Honourable and Reverend Paul Stratford, her brother-in-law, "Holy Paul," was droll enough. Mount Neil, a remarkably fine old country-house, furnished in the ancient style, was that ecclesiastic's family mansion, wherein he resided many years, but of which it was thought he at last grew tired. One stormy night, this house (some time after it had been insured to a large amount) most perversely and miraculously took fire: (the common people still say, and verily believe, it was *of its own accord*:) no water was to be had; of course the flames raged *ad libitum*: the tenants bustled, jostled, and tumbled over each other, in a general uproar and zeal to save his Reverence's "great house:" his Reverence alone, meek and resigned, beheld the voracious element devour his hereditary property – piously and audibly attributing the evil solely to the just will of Providence as a punishment for his having vexed his mother some years before, when she was troubled with a dropsy. Under this impression, the Honourable and Reverend Paul adopted the only rational and pious means of extinguishing the conflagration: he fell on his bare knees in front of the blazing pile, and, with clasped and uplifted hands, and in the tone of a saint during his martyrdom, besought the Lord to show him mercy, and extinguish a flame which was setting all human aid at defiance! The people around, however, did not place

equal reliance on the interposition of Providence, – which, as a country fellow very judiciously observed, "might be employed somewhere else at the time, and unable to look to his Reverence's *consarns*:" so they continued, while practicable, to bring out the furniture piecemeal, and range it on the grass-plat. Paul no sooner perceived the result of their exertions than, still on his knees, he cried out – "Stop! stop! throw all my valuable goods and chattels back into the flames! never fly, my friends, in the *face* of Heaven! When the Almighty resolved to burn my house, he most certainly intended to burn the furniture. I feel resigned. The Lord's will be done! Throw it *all* back again!"

The tenants reluctantly obeyed his orders; but, unfortunately for "Holy Paul," the Insurance Company, when applied to for payment of his losses, differed altogether from his Reverence as to the agency of Providence, and absolutely refused to pay any part of the damage incurred. Paul declared it would be a crime in him to *insist* by a *law-suit* upon payment; and that he'd rather lose all his insurance than bring any act of Providence into the Court of Exchequer, which never was renowned for any great skill in ecclesiastical polity. In tithe cases, they showed no sort of *partiality* to the clergy; and never would pay the least attention in any instance to assertions from the board of first-fruits without putting the clergy to the *trouble* of producing their *witnesses*.

The Honourable and Rev. Paul, however, got into disrepute by this occurrence, and his nephew declined being married by him. In fact, the fault of Holy Paul was, love of money: he had

very good property, but was totally averse to paying away any thing. He was put into prison by his niece's husband, where he long remained rather than render an account; and when at length he settled the *whole* demand, refused to pay a few pounds fees, and continued voluntarily in confinement until his death. Notwithstanding, greatly to his credit, he bestowed large sums in charity.

HAMILTON ROWAN AND THE BAR

Sketch of the character of Mr. Hamilton Rowan – His Quixotic spirit of philanthropy – Case of Mary Neil taken up by Mr. Rowan – Dinner-club among the briefless barristers of Dublin – Apparition of Mr. Hamilton Rowan and his dog – More frightened than hurt – An unanswerable query – Mr. Rowan's subsequent adventures – The Rev. Mr. Jackson – He is brought up to receive sentence for high-treason, and expires in Court.

There were few persons whose history was connected with that of Ireland during my time, who excited my interest in a greater degree than Mr. Hamilton Rowan. Points of this gentleman's character have been unfavourably represented by persons who knew little or nothing of his life, and that too, long after he had ceased to be a politician. I may claim perfect disinterestedness when I state that I never had the least social intercourse with Mr. Rowan, whose line of politics was decidedly opposed to my own.

Archibald Hamilton Rowan (I believe he still lives) is a gentleman of most respectable family and of ample fortune: considered merely as a private character, I fancy there are few who will not give him full credit for every quality which does

honour to his station in society. As a philanthropist, he certainly carried his ideas even beyond reason, and to a degree of excess which I really think laid in his mind the foundation of all his enthusiastic proceedings, both in common life and in politics.

The first interview I had with this gentleman did not occupy more than a few minutes; but it was of a most impressive nature, and though now nearly forty years back, appears as fresh to my eye as if it took place yesterday: in truth, I believe it must be equally present to every individual of the company who survives, and is not too old to remember any thing.

There is generally in every metropolis some temporary incident which serves as a common subject of conversation; something which *nominally* excites interest, but which in fact nobody cares a *sous* about, though for the day it sells all the newspapers, and gives employment to every tongue, till some new occurrence happens to work up curiosity and change the topic.

In 1788, a very young girl, of the name of Mary Neil, had been ill-treated by a person unknown, aided by a woman. The late Lord Carhampton was reported to be the transgressor, but without any proof whatsoever of his Lordship's culpability. The humour of Hamilton Rowan, which had a sort of Quixotic tendency to resist all oppression and to redress every species of wrong, led him to take up the cause of Mary Neil with a zeal and enthusiastic perseverance which nobody but the knight of La Mancha could have exceeded. Day and night the ill-treatment of

this girl was the subject of his thoughts, his actions, his dreams: he even went about preaching a kind of crusade in her favour, and succeeded in gaining a great many partisans among the citizens; and, in short, he eventually obtained a legal *conviction* of the woman as accessory to a crime, the *perpetrator* whereof remained undiscovered, and she accordingly received, and most justly, sentence of death. Still Mary Neil was not bettered by this conviction: she was utterly unprovided for, had suffered much, and was quite wretched. Yet there were not wanting persons who doubted her truth, decried her former character, and represented her story as that of an impostor: this, though not credited, not only hurt the feelings and philanthropy, but the pride of Hamilton Rowan; and he vowed personal vengeance against all her calumniators, high and low.

At this time about twenty young barristers, including myself, had formed a dinner-club in Dublin: we had taken large apartments for the purpose; and, as we were not yet troubled with *too much* business, were in the habit of faring luxuriously every day, and taking a bottle of the best claret which could be obtained.[18]

There never existed a more cheerful, witty, nor half so cheap a dinner-club. One day, whilst dining with our usual hilarity, the servant informed us that a gentleman below stairs desired

[18] One of us, Counsellor Townley Fitgate, (afterwards chairman of Wicklow County,) having a pleasure-cutter of his own in the harbour of Dublin, used to send her to smuggle claret for us from the Isle of Man: he made a friend of one of the tide-waiters, and we consequently had the very best wines on the cheapest possible terms.

to be admitted *for a moment*. We considered it to be some brother-barrister who requested permission to join our party, and desired him to be shown up. What was our surprise, however, on perceiving the figure that presented itself! – a man, who might have served as a model for a Hercules, his gigantic limbs conveying the idea of almost supernatural strength: his shoulders, arms, and broad chest, were the very emblems of muscular energy; and his flat, rough countenance, overshadowed by enormous dark eyebrows, and deeply furrowed by strong lines of vigour and fortitude, completed one of the finest, yet most formidable figures I had ever beheld. He was very well dressed: close by his side stalked in a baggy Newfoundland dog of corresponding magnitude, with hair a foot long, and who, if he should be voraciously inclined, seemed well able to devour a barrister or two without overcharging his stomach: – as he entered, indeed, he alternately looked at us and then up at his master, as if only awaiting the orders of the latter to commence the "onslaught." His master held in his hand a large, yellow, knotted club, slung by a leathern thong round his great wrist: he had also a long small-sword by his side, adorned by a purple ribbon.

This apparition walked deliberately up to the table; and having made his obeisance with seeming courtesy, a short pause ensued, during which he looked round on all the company with an aspect, if not stern, yet ill-calculated to set our minds at ease either as to *his* or *his dog's* ulterior intentions.

"Gentlemen!" at length he said, in a tone and with an air at once so mild and courteous, nay, so polished, as fairly to give the lie, as it were, to his gigantic and threatening figure: "Gentlemen! I have heard with very great regret that some members of this club have been so indiscreet as to calumniate the character of Mary Neil, which, from the part I have taken, I feel identified with my own: if any gentleman present hath done so, I doubt not he will now have the candour and courage to avow it. —*Who* avows it?" The dog looked up at him again: he returned the glance; but contented himself, for the present, with patting the animal's head, and was silent: so were we. He repeated, "*Who* avows it?"

The extreme surprise indeed with which our party was seized, bordering almost on consternation, rendered all *consultation* as to a reply out of the question; and never did I see the old axiom, that "what is every body's business is nobody's business," more thoroughly exemplified. A few of the company whispered each his neighbour, and I perceived one or two steal a fruit-knife under the table-cloth, in case of extremities; but no one made any reply. We were eighteen in number; and as neither would or could answer for the others, it would require eighteen replies to satisfy the giant's single query; and I fancy some of us *could not* have replied to his satisfaction, and stuck to the truth into the bargain.

He repeated his demand (elevating his tone each time) thrice: "Does any gentleman avow it?" A faint buzz now circulated round the room, but there was no *answer* whatsoever.

Communication was cut off, and there was a dead silence: at length our visitor said, with a loud voice, that he must suppose, *if* any *gentleman* had made observations or assertions against Mary Neil's character, he would have had the *courage* and spirit to avow it: "therefore," continued he, "I shall take it for granted that my information was erroneous; and, in that point of view, I regret having *alarmed*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.