

LYNDE FRANCIS

THE DODD FAMILY
ABROAD, VOL. II

Francis Lynde
The Dodd Family Abroad, Vol. II

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The Dodd Family Abroad, Vol. II:

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Charles James Lever

The Dodd Family

Abroad, Vol. II

LETTER I. KENNY JAMES DODD TO THOMAS PURCELL, ESQ., OF THE GRANGE, BRUFF

Constance

My dear Tom, – I got the papers all safe. I am sure the account is perfectly correct. I only wish the balance was bigger. I waited here to receive these things, and now I discover that I can't sign the warrant of attorney except before a consul, and there is none in this place, so that I must keep it over till I can find one of those pleasant functionaries, – a class that between ourselves I detest heartily. They are a presumptuous, under-bred, consequential race, – a cross between a small skipper and smaller Secretary of Legation, with a mixture of official pedantry and maritime off-handedness that is perfectly disgusting. Why our reforming economists don't root them all out I cannot conceive. Nobody

wants, nobody benefits by them; and save that you are now and then called on for a "consular fee," you might never hear of their existence.

I don't rightly understand what you say about the loan from that Land Improvement Society. Do you mean that the money lent must be laid out on the land as a necessary condition? Is it possible that this is what I am to infer? If so, I never heard anything half so preposterous! Sure, if I raise five hundred pounds from a Jew, he has no right to stipulate that I must spend the cash on copper coal-scuttles or potted meats! I want it for my own convenience; enough for him that I comply with his demands for interest and repayment. Anything else would be downright tyranny and oppression, Tom, – as a mere momentary consideration of the matter will show you. At all events, let us get the money, for I'd like to contest the point with these fellows; and if ever there was a man heart and soul determined to break down any antiquated barrier of cruelty or domination, it is your friend Kenny Dodd! As to that printed paper, with its twenty-seven queries, it is positive balderdash from beginning to end. What right have they to conclude that I approve of subsoil draining? When did I tell them that I believed in Smith of Deanstown? Where is it on record that I gave in my adhesion to model cottages, Berkshire pigs, green crops, and guano manure? In what document do these appear? Maybe I have my own notions on these matters, – maybe I keep them for my own guidance too!

You say that the gentry is all changing throughout the whole

land, and I believe you well, Tom Purcell. Changed indeed must they be if they subscribe to such preposterous humbug as this! At all events, I repeat we want the money, so fill up the blanks as you think best, and remit me the amount at your earliest, for I have barely enough to get to the end of the present month. I don't dislike this place at all. It is quiet, peaceful, – humdrum, if you will; but we've had more than our share of racket and row lately, and the reclusion is very grateful. One day is exactly like another with us. Lord George – for he is back again – and James go a-fishing as soon as breakfast is over, and only return for supper. Mary Anne reads, writes, sews, and sings. Mrs. D. fills up the time discharging Betty, settling with her, searching her trunks for missing articles, and being reconciled to her again, which, with occasional crying fits and her usual devotions, don't leave her a single moment unoccupied! As for me, I'm trying to learn German, whenever I'm not asleep. I've got a master, – he is a Swiss, and maybe his accent is not of the purest; but he is an amusing old vagabond, – an umbrella-maker, but in his youth a travelling-servant. His time is not very valuable to him, so that he sits with me sometimes for half a day; but still I make little progress. My notion is, Tom, that there's no use in either making love or trying a new language after you're five or six and twenty. It's all up-hill work after that, believe me. Neither your declensions nor declarations come natural to you, and it's a bungling performance at the best. The first condition of either is to have your head perfectly free, – as little in it as need be.

So long as your thoughts are jostled by debts, duns, mortgages, and marriageable daughters, you 'll have no room for vows or irregular verbs! It's lucky, however, that one can dispense both with the love and the learning, and indeed of the two, – with the last best, for of all the useless, unprofitable kinds of labor ever pursued out of a jail, acquiring a foreign language is the most. The few words required for daily necessities, such as schnaps and cigars, are easily learnt; all beyond that is downright rubbish.

For what can a man express his thoughts in so well as his mother tongue? with whom does he want to talk but his countrymen? Of course you come out with the old cant about "intelligent natives," "information derived at the fountain head," "knowledge obtained by social intimacy with people of the country." To which I briefly reply, "It's all gammon and stuff from beginning to end;" and what between *your* blunders in grammar and your informant's ignorance of fact, all such information is n't worth a "trauneen." Now, once for all, Tom, let me observe to you that ask what you will of a foreigner, be it an inquiry into the financial condition of his country, its military resources, prison discipline, law, or religion, he 'll never acknowledge his inability to answer, but give you a full and ready reply, with facts, figures, dates, and data, all in most admirable order. At first you are overjoyed with such ready resources of knowledge. You flatter yourself that even with the most moderate opportunities you cannot fail to learn much; by degrees, however, you discover errors in your statistics, and at

last, you come to find out that your accomplished friend, too polite to deny you a reasonable gratification, had gone to the pains of inventing a code, a church, and a coinage for your sole use and benefit, but without the slightest intention of misleading, for it never once entered his head that you could possibly believe him! I know it will sound badly. I am well aware of the shock it will give to many a nervous system; but for all that I will not blink the declaration – which I desire to record as formally and as flatly as I am capable of expressing it – which is, that of one hundred statements an Englishman accepts and relies upon abroad, as matter of fact, ninety-nine are untrue; full fifty being lies by premeditation, thirty by ignorance, ten by accident or inattention, and the remainder, if there be a balance, for I'm bad at figures, from any other cause you like.

It is no more disgrace for a foreigner not to tell the truth than to own that he does not sing, nor dance the mazurka; not so much, indeed, because these are marks of a polite education. And yet it is to hold conversation with these people we pore over dictionaries, and Ollendorfs, and Hamiltonian gospels. As for the enlargement and expansion of the intelligence that comes of acquiring languages, there never was a greater fallacy. Look abroad upon your acquaintances: who are the glib linguists, who are the faultless in French genders, and the immaculate in German declensions? the flippant boarding-school miss, or the brainless, unpaid attaché, that cannot, compose a note in his own language. Who are the bungling conversers that make drawing-

rooms blush and dinner-tables titter? Your first-rate debater in the Commons, your leader at the bar, your double first, or your great electro-magnetic fellow that knows the secret laws of water-spouts and whirlpools, and can make thunder and lightning just to amuse himself. Take my word for it, your linguist is as poor a creature as a dancing-master, and just as great a formalist.

If you ask me, then, why I devote myself to such unrewarding labor, I answer, "It is true I know it to be so, but my apology is, that I make no progress." No, Tom, I never advance a step. I can neither conjugate nor decline, and the auxiliary verbs will never aid me in anything. So far as my lingual incapacity goes, I might be one of the great geniuses of the age; and very probably I am, too, without knowing it!

I have little to tell you of the place itself. It is a quaint old town on the side of the lake; the most remarkable object being the minster, or cathedral. They show you the spot in the aisle where old Huss stood to receive his sentence of death. Even after a lapse of centuries, there was something affecting to stand where a man once stood to bear that he was to be burned alive. Of course I have little sympathy with a heretic, but still I venerate the martyr, the more since I am strongly disposed to think that it is one of those characters which are not the peculiar product of an age of railroads and submarine telegraphs. The expansion of the intelligence, Tom, seems to be in the inverse ratio of the expansion of the conscience, and the stubborn old spirit of right that was once the mode, would nowadays be construed into a

dogged, stupid bull-headedness, unworthy of the enlightenment of our glorious era. Take my word for it, there's a great many eloquent and indignant letter-writers in the newspapers would shrink from old Huss's test for their opinions, and a fossil elk is not a greater curiosity than would be a man ready to stake life on his belief. When a fellow tells you of "dying on the floor of the House," he simply means that he'll talk till there's a "count out;" and as for "registering vows in heaven," and "wasting out existence in the gloom of a dungeon," it's just balderdash, and nothing else.

The simple fact is this, Tom Purcell: we live in an age of universal cant, and I swallow all *your* shams on the easy condition that you swear to *mine*, and whenever I hear people praising the present age, and extolling its wonderful progress, and all that, I just think of all the quackery I see advertised in the newspapers, and sigh heartily to myself at our degradation! Why, man, the "Patent Pills for the Cure of Cancer," and the Agapemone, would disgrace the middle ages! And it is not a little remarkable that England, so prone to place herself at the head of civilization, is exactly the very metropolis of all this humbug!

To come back to ourselves, I have to report that James arrived here a couple of days ago. He followed that scoundrel "the Baron" for thirty hours, and only desisted from the pursuit when his horse could go no farther. The police authorities mainly contributed to the escape of the fugitive, by detaining James on every possible occasion, and upon any or no pretext. The poor fellow reached

Freyburg dead beat, and without a sou in his pocket; but good luck would have it that Lord George Tiverton had just arrived there, so that by his aid he came on here, where they both made their appearance at breakfast on Tuesday morning.

Lord George, I suspect, had not made a successful campaign of it lately; though in what he has failed – if it be failure – I have no means of guessing. He looks a little out at elbows, however, and travels without a servant. In spirits and bearing I see no change in him; but these fellows, I have remarked, never show depression, and india-rubber itself is not so elastic as a bad character! I don't half fancy his companionship for James; but I know well that this opinion would be treated by the rest of the family as downright heresy; and certainly he is an amusing dog, and it is impossible to resist liking him; but there lies the very peril I am afraid of. If your loose fish, as the slang phrase calls them, were disagreeable chaps, – prosy, selfish, sententious, – vulgar in their habits, and obtrusive in their manners, one would run little risk of contamination; but the reverse is the case, Tom, – the very reverse! Meet a fellow that speaks every tongue of the Continent, dresses to perfection, rides and drives admirably, a dead shot with the pistol, a sure cue at billiards, – if he be the delight of every circle he goes into, – look out sharp in the "Times," and the odds are that there's a handsome reward offered for him, and he's either a forger or a defaulter. The truth is, a man may be ill-mannered as a great lawyer or a great physician; he may make a great figure in the field or the cabinet; there may

be no end to his talents as a geometrician or a chemist; it's only your adventurer must be well-bred, and swindling is the soldiery profession to which a man must bring fascinating manners, a good address, personal advantages, and the power of pleasing. I own to you, Tom Purcell, I like these fellows, and I can't help it! I take to them as I do to twenty things that are agreeable at the time, but are sure to disagree with me – afterwards. They rally me out of my low spirits, they put me on better terms with myself, and they administer that very balmy flattery that says, "Don't distress yourself, Kenny Dodd. As the world goes, you're better than nine-tenths of it. You'd be hospitable if you could; you'd pay your debts if you could; and there would n't be an easier-tempered, more good-natured creature breathing than yourself, if it was only the will was wanting!" Now, these are very soothing doses when a man is scarified by duns, and flayed alive by lawsuits; and when a fellow comes to my time of life, he can no more bear the candid rudeness of what is called friendship than an ex-Lord Mayor could endure Penitentiary diet!

I must confess, however, that whenever we come to divide on any question, Lord George always votes with Mrs. D. He told me once that with respect to Parliament he always sided with the Government, whatever it was, when he could, and perhaps he follows the same rule in private life. Last night, after tea, we discussed our future movements, and I found him strongly in favor of getting us on to Italy for the winter. I did n't like to debate the matter exactly on financial grounds, but

I hazarded a half-conjecture that the expedition would be a costly one. He stopped me at once. "Up to this time," said he, "you have really not benefited by the cheapness of Continental living," – that was certainly true, – "and for this simple reason, you have always lived in the beaten track of the wandering cockney. You must go farther away from England. You must reach those places where people settle as residents, not ramble as tourists; you will then be rewarded, not only economically, but socially. The markets and the morals are both better; for our countrymen filter by distance, and the farther from home the purer they become." To Mrs. D. and Mary Anne he gave a glowing description of Trans-Alpine existence, and rapturously pictured forth the fascinations of Italian life. I can only give you the items, Tom; you must arrange them for yourself. So make what you can of starry skies, olives, ices, tenors, volcanoes, music, mountains, and macaroni. He appealed to *me* by the budget. Never was there such cheapness in the known world. The Italian nobility were actually crashed down with house-accommodation, and only entreated a stranger to accept of a palace or a villa. The climate produced everything without labor, and consequently without cost. Fruit had no price; wine was about twopence a bottle; a strong tap rose to two and a half! Clothes one scarcely needed; and, except for decency, "nothing and a cocked hat" would suffice. These were very seductive considerations, Tom; and I own to you that, even allowing a large margin for exaggeration, there was a great amount of solid

advantage remaining. Mrs. D. adduced an additional argument when we were alone, and in this wise: What was to be done with the wedding finery if we should return to Ireland; for all purposes of home life they would be totally inapplicable. You might as well order a service of plate to serve up potatoes as introduce Paris fashions and foreign elegance into our provincial circle. "We have the things now," said she; "let us have the good of them." I remember a cask of Madeira being left with my father once, by a mistake, and that was the very reason he gave for drinking it. She made a strong case of it, Tom; she argued the matter well, laying great stress upon the duty we owed our girls, and the necessity of "getting them married before we went back." Of course, I did n't give in. If I was to give her the notion that she could convince me of anything, we 'd never have a moment's peace again; so I said I 'd reflect on the subject, and turn it over in my mind. And now I want you to say what disposable cash can we lay our hands on for the winter. I am more than ever disinclined to have anything to say to these Drainage Commissioners. It's our pockets they drain, and not our farms. I 'd rather try and raise a trifle on mortgage; for you see, nowadays, they have got out of the habit of doing it, and there's many a one has money lying idle and does n't know what to do with it. Look out for one of these fellows, Tom, and see what you can do with him. Dear me, is n't it a strange thing the way one goes through life, and the contrivances one is put to to make two ends meet!

I remember the time, and so do you too, when an Irish

gentleman could raise what he liked; and there was n't an estate in my own county wasn't encumbered, as they call it, to more than double its value. There's fellows will tell you "that's the cause of all the present distress." Not a bit of it. They 're all wrong! It is because that system has come to an end that we are ruined; that's the root of the evil, Tom Purcell; and if I was in Parliament I'd tell them so. Where will you find any one willing to lend money now if the estate would n't pay it? We may thank the English Government for that; and, as poor Dan used to say, "They know as much about us as the Chinese!"

I can't answer your question about James. Vickars has not replied to my last two letters; and I really see no opening for the boy whatever. I mean to write, however, in a day or two to Lord Muddleton, to whom Lord George is nearly related, and ask for something in the Diplomatic way. Lord G. says it's the only career nowadays does n't require some kind of qualification, — since even in the army they've instituted a species of examination. "Get him made an Attaché somewhere," says Tiverton, "and he must be a 'Plenipo' at last." J. is good-looking, and a great deal of dash about him; and I 'm informed that's exactly what's wanting in the career. If nothing comes of this application, I 'll think seriously of Australia; but, of course, Mrs. D. must know nothing about it; for, according to *her* notions, the boy ought to be Chamberlain to the Queen, or Gold-stick at least.

I don't know whether I mentioned to you that Betty Cobb had entered the holy bonds with a semi-civilized creature she

picked up in the Black Forest. The orang-outang is now a part of our household, – at least so far as living at rack and manger at my cost, – though in what way to employ him I have not the slightest notion. Do you think, if I could manage to send him over to Ireland, that we could get him indicted for any transportable offence? Ask Curtis about it; for I know he did something of the kind once in the case of a natural son of Tony Barker's, and the lad is now a judge, I believe, in Sydney.

Cary is quite well. I heard from her yesterday, and when I write, I 'll be sure to send her your affectionate message. I don't mean to leave this till I hear from you. So write immediately and believe me,

Very sincerely your friend,
Kenny James.

LETTER II. JAMES DODD TO ROBERT DOOLAN, ESQ., TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

Bregenz

My dear Bob, – I had made up my mind not to write to you till we had quitted this place, where our life has been of the "slowest;" but this morning has brought a letter with a piece of good news which I cannot defer imparting to you. It is a communication from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the governor, to say that I have been appointed to something somewhere, and that I am to come over to London, and be examined by somebody. Very vague all this, but I suppose it's the style of Diplomacy, and one will get used to it. The real bore is the examination, for George told "dad" that there was none, and, in fact, that very circumstance it was which gave the peculiar value to the "service." Tiverton tells me, however, he can make it "all safe;" whether you "tip" the Secretary, or some of the underlings, I don't know. Of course there is a way in all these things, for half the fellows that pass are just as ignorant as your humble servant.

I am mainly indebted to Tiverton for the appointment, for he wrote to everybody he could think of, and made as much interest as if it was for himself. He tells me, in confidence, that the list of names down is about six feet long, and actually wonders at the good fortune of my success. From all I can learn, however, there is no salary at first, so that the governor must "stump out handsome," for an Attaché is expected to live in a certain style, keep horses, and, in fact, come it "rayther strongish." In some respects, I should have preferred the army; but then there are terrible drawbacks in colonial banishment, whereas in Diplomacy you are at least stationed in the vicinity of a Court, which is always something.

I wonder where I am to be gazetted for; I hope Naples, but even Vienna would do. In the midst of our universal joy at my good fortune, it's not a little provoking to see the governor pondering over all it will cost for outfit, and wondering if the post be worth the gold lace on the uniform. Happily for me, Bob, he never brought me up to any profession, as it is called, and it is too late now to make me anything either in law or physic. I say happily, because I see plainly enough that he 'd refuse the present opportunity if he knew of any other career for me. My mother does not improve matters by little jokes on his low tastes and vulgar ambitions; and, in fact, the announcement has brought a good deal of discussion and some discord amongst us.

I own to you, frankly, that once named to a Legation, I will do my utmost to persuade the governor to go back to Ireland. In the

first place, nothing but a very rigid economy at Dodsborough will enable him to make me a liberal allowance; and secondly, to have my family prowling about the Legation to which I was attached would be perfectly insufferable. I like to have my father and mother what theatrical folk call "practicable," that is, good for all efficient purposes of bill-paying, and such-like; but I shudder at the notion of being their pioneer into fashionable life; and, indeed, I am not aware of any one having carried his parent on his back since the days of Æneas.

I am obliged to send you a very brief despatch, for I 'm off to-morrow for London, to make my bow at "F. O.," and kiss hands on my appointment. I 'd have liked another week here, for the fishing has just come in, and we killed yesterday, with two rods, eleven large, and some thirty small trout. They are a short, thick-shouldered kind of fish, ready enough to rise, but sluggish to play afterwards. The place is pretty, too; the Swiss Alps at one side, and the Tyrol mountains at the other. Bregenz itself stands well, on the very verge of the lake, and although not ancient enough to be curious in architecture, has a picturesque air about it. The people are as primitive as anything one can well fancy, and wear a costume as ungracefully barbarous as any lover of nationality could desire. Their waists are close under their arms, and the longest petticoats I have yet seen finish at the knee! They affect, besides, a round, low-crowned cap, like a fur turban, or else a great piece of filigree sliver, shaped like a peacock's tail, and fastened to the back of the head. Nature, it must be owned,

has been somewhat ungenerous to them; and with the peculiar advantages conferred on them by costume, they are the ugliest creatures I've ever set eyes on.

It is only just to remark that Mary Anne dissents from me in all this, and has made various "studies" of them, which are, after all, not a whit more flattering than my own description. As to a good-looking peasantry, Bob, it's all humbug. It's only the well-to-do classes, in any country, have pretensions to beauty. The woman of rank numbers amongst her charms the unmistakable stamp of her condition. Even in her gait, like the Goddess in Virgil, she displays her divinity. The pretty "bourgeoise" has her peculiar fascination in the brilliant intelligence of her laughing eye, and the sly archness of her witty mouth; but your peasant beauty is essentially heavy and dull. It is of the earth, earthy; and there is a bucolic grossness about the lips the very antithesis to the pleasing. I'm led to these remarks by the question in your last as to the character of Continental physiognomy. Up to this, Bob, I have seen nothing to compare with our own people, and you will meet more pretty faces between Stephen's Green and the Rotunda than between Schaffhausen and the sea. I'm not going to deny that they "make up" better abroad, but our boast is the raw material of beauty. The manufactured article we cannot dispute with them. It would be, however, a great error to suppose that the artistic excellence I speak of is a small consideration; on the contrary, it is a most important one, and well deserving of deep thought and reflection, and, I must say, that all our

failures in the decorative arts are as nothing to our blunders when attempting to adorn beauty. A French woman, with a skin like an old drumhead, and the lower jaw of a baboon, will actually "get herself up" to look better than many a really pretty girl of our country, disfigured by unbecoming hairdressing, ill-assorted colors, ill-put-on clothes, and that confounded walk, which is a cross between the stride of a Grenadier and running in a sack!

With all our parade of Industrial Exhibitions and shows of National Productions lately, nobody has directed his attention to this subject, and, for *my* part, I 'd infinitely rather know that our female population had imbibed some notions of dress and self-adornment from their French neighbors, than that Glasgow could rival Genoa in velvet, or that we beat Bohemia out of the field in colored glass. If the proper study of mankind be man, – which, of course, includes woman, – we are throwing a precious deal of time away on centrifugal pumps, sewing-machines, and self-acting razors. If I ever get into Parliament, Bob, and I don't see why I should not, when once fairly launched in the Diplomatic line, I 'll move for a Special Commission, not to examine into foreign railroads, or mines, or schools, or smelting-houses, but to inquire into and report upon how the women abroad, with not a tenth of the natural advantages, contrive to look, – I won't say better, but more fascinating than our own, – and how it is that they convert something a shade below plainness into features of downright pleasing expression!

Since this appointment has come, I have been working away

to brush up my French and German, which you will be surprised to hear is pretty nearly where it was when we first came abroad. We English herd so much together, and continue to follow our home habits and use our own language wherever we happen to be, that it is not very easy to break out of the beaten track. This observation applies only to the men of the family, for our sisters make a most astonishing progress, under the guidance of those mustachioed and well-whiskered gents they meet at balls. The governor and my mother of course believe that I am as great a linguist as Mezzofanti, if that be the fellow's name, and I shall try and keep up the delusion to the last. It is not quite impossible I may have more time for my studies here than I fancy, for "dad" has come in, this moment, to say that he has n't got five shillings towards the expenses of my journey to London, nor has he any very immediate prospect of a remittance from Ireland. What a precious mess will it be if my whole career in life is to be sacrificed for a shabby hundred or two! The governor appears to have spent about three times as much as he speculated on, and our affairs at this moment present as pleasant a specimen of hopeless entanglement as a counsel in Bankruptcy could desire.

I wish I was out of the ship altogether, Bob, and would willingly adventure on the broad ocean of life in a punt, were it only my own. I trust that by the time this reaches you her Majesty's gracious pleasure will have numbered me amongst the servants of the Crown; but whether in high or humble estate, believe me ever

Unalterably yours,
James Dodd.

P. S. My sister Cary has written to say she will be here to-night or to-morrow; she is coming expressly to see me before I go; but from all that I can surmise she need not have used such haste. What a bore it will be if the governor should not be able to "stump out"! I'm in a perfect fever at the very thought.

LETTER III. CAROLINE DODD TO MISS COX AT MISS MINCING'S ACADEMY, BLACK ROCK, IRELAND

My dear Miss Cox, – It would appear, from your last, that a letter of mine to you must have miscarried; for I most distinctly remember having written to you on the topics you allude to, and, so far as I was able, answered all your kind inquiries about myself and my pursuits. Lest my former note should ever reach you, I do not dare to go over again the selfish narrative which would task even your friendship to peruse once.

I remained with my kind friend, Mrs. Morris, till three days ago, when I came here to see my brother James, who has been promised some Government employment, and is obliged to repair at once to London. Mamma terrified me greatly by saying that he was to go to China or to India, so that I hurried back to see and stay with him as much as I could before he left us. I rejoice, however, to tell you that his prospects are in the Diplomatic service, and he will be most probably named to a Legation in some European capital.

He is a dear, kind-hearted boy; and although not quite untainted by the corruptions which are more or less inseparable

from this rambling existence, is still as fresh in his affections, and as generous in nature, as when he left home. Captain Morris, whose knowledge of life is considerable, predicts most favorably of him, and has only one misgiving, – the close intimacy he maintains with Lord George Tiverton. Towards this young nobleman the Captain expresses the greatest distrust and dislike; feelings that I really own seem to me to be frequently tinged by a degree of prejudice rather than suggested by reason. It is true, no two beings can be less alike than they are. The one, rigid and unbending in all his ideas of right, listening to no compromise, submitting to no expediency, reserved towards strangers even to the verge of stiffness, and proud from a sense that his humble station might by possibility expose him to freedoms he could not reciprocate. The other, all openness and candor, pushed probably to an excess, and not unfrequently transgressing the barrier of an honorable self-esteem; without the slightest pretension to principle of any kind, and as ready to own his own indifference as to ridicule the profession of it by another. Yet, with all this, kind and generous in all his impulses, ever willing to do a good-natured thing; and, so far as I can judge, even prepared to bear a friendly part at the hazard of personal inconvenience.

Characters of this stamp are, as you have often observed to me, far more acceptable to very young men than those more swayed by rigid rules of right; and when they join to natural acuteness considerable practical knowledge of life, they soon obtain a great influence over the less gifted and less experienced.

I see this in James; for, though not by any means blind to the blemishes in Lord George's character, nor even indifferent to them, yet is he submissive to every dictate of his will, and an implicit believer in all his opinions. But why should I feel astonished at this? Is not his influence felt by every member of the family; and papa himself, with all his native shrewdness, strongly disposed to regard his judgments as wise and correct? I remark this the more because I have been away from home, and after an absence one returns with a mind open to every new impression; nor can I conceal from myself that many of the notions I now see adopted and approved of, are accepted as being those popular in high society, and not because of their intrinsic correctness. Had we remained in Ireland, my dear Miss Cox, this had never been the case. There is a corrective force in the vicinity of those who have known us long and intimately, who can measure our pretensions by our station, and pronounce upon our mode of life from the knowledge they have of our condition; and this discipline, if at times severe and even unpleasant, is, upon the whole, beneficial to us. Now, abroad, this wholesome – shall I call it – "surveillance" is wanting altogether, and people are induced by its very absence to give themselves airs, and assume a style quite above them. From that very moment they insensibly adopt a new standard of right and wrong, and substitute fashion and conventionality for purity and good conduct. I'm sure I wish we were back in Dodsborough with all my heart! It is not that there are not objects and scenes of intense interest around us

here on every hand. Even I can feel that the mind expands by the variety of impressions that continue to pour in upon it. Still, I would not say that these things may not be bought too dearly; and that if the price they cost is discontent at our lot in life, a craving ambition to be higher and richer, and a cold shrinking back from all of our own real condition, they are unquestionably not worth the sacrifice.

To really enjoy the Continent it is not necessary – at least, for people bred and brought up as we have been – to be very rich; on the contrary, many – ay, and the greatest – advantages of Continental travel are open to very small fortunes and very small ambitions. Scenery, climate, inexpensive acquaintanceship, galleries, works of art, public libraries, gardens, promenades, are all available. The Morrisses have certainly much less to live on than we have, and yet they have travelled over every part of Europe, know all its cities well, and never found the cost of living considerable. You will smile when I tell you that the single secret for this is, not to cultivate English society. Once make up your mind abroad to live with the people of the country, French, German, and Italian, – and there is no class of these above the reach of well-bred English, – and you need neither shine in equipage nor excel in a cook. There is no pecuniary test of respectability abroad; partly because this vulgarity is the offspring of a commercial spirit, which is, of course, not the general characteristic, and partly from the fact that many of the highest names have been brought down to

humble fortunes by the accidents of war and revolution, and poverty is, consequently, no evidence of deficient birth. Our gorgeous notions of hospitality are certainly very fine things, and well become great station and large fortune, but are ruinous when they are imitated by inferior means and humble incomes. Foreigners are quite above such vulgar mimicry; and nothing is more common to hear than the avowal, "I am too poor to do this; my fortune would not admit of that;" not uttered in a mock humility, or with the hope of a polite incredulity, but in all the unaffected simplicity with which one mentions a personal fact, to which no shame or disgrace attaches. You may imagine, then, how unimpressively fall upon the ear all those pompous announcements by which we travelling English herald our high and mighty notions; the palaces we are about to hire, the *fêtes* we are going to give, and the other splendors we mean to indulge in.

I have read and re-read that part of your letter wherein you speak of your wish to come and live abroad, so soon as the fruits of your life of labor will enable you. Oh, my dear kind governess, with what emotion the words filled me, – emotions very different from those you ever suspected they would call up; for I bethought me how often I and others must have added to that toilsome existence by our indolence, our carelessness, and our wilfulness. In a moment there rose before me the anxieties you must have suffered, the cares you must have endured, the hopes for those who threw all their burdens upon *you*, and left to *you* the blame of *their* shortcomings and the reproach of *their* insufficiency.

What rest, what repose would ever requite such labor! How delighted am I to say that there are places abroad where even the smallest fortunes will suffice. I profited by the permission you gave me to show your letter to Mrs. Morris, and she gave me in return a list of places for you to choose from, at any one of which you could live with comfort for less than you speak of. Some are in Belgium, some in Germany, and some in Italy. Think, for instance, of a small house on the "Meuse," in the midst of the most beauteous scenery, and with a country teeming in every abundance around you, for twelve pounds a year, and all the material of life equally cheap in proportion. Imagine the habits of a Grand-Ducal capital, where the Prime Minister receives three hundred per annum, and spends two; where the admission to the theatre is fourpence, and you go to a Court dinner on foot at four o'clock in the day, and sit out of an evening with your work in a public garden afterwards.

Now, I know that in Ireland or Scotland, and perhaps in Wales too, places might be discovered where all the ordinary wants of life would not be dearer than here, but then remember that to live with this economy at home, you subject yourself to all that pertains to a small estate; you endure the barbarizing influences of a solitary life, or, what is worse, the vulgarity of village society. The well-to-do classes, the educated and refined, will not associate with you. Not so here. Your small means are no barrier against your admission into the best circles; you will be received anywhere. Your black silk gown will be "toilet" for the

"Minister's reception," your white muslin will be good enough for a ball at Court! When the army numbers in its cavalry fifty hussars, and one battalion for its infantry, the simple resident need never blush for his humble retinue, nor feel ashamed that a maid-servant escorts him to a Court entertainment with a lantern, or that a latch-key and a lucifer-match do duty for a hall-porter and a chandelier!

One night – I was talking of these things – Captain Morris quoted a Latin author to the effect "that poverty had no such heavy infliction as in its power to make people ridiculous." The remark sounds at first an unfeeling one, but there is yet a true and deep philosophy in it, for it is in our own abortive and silly attempts to gloss over narrow fortune that the chief sting of poverty resides, and the ridicule alluded to is all of our making! The poverty of two thousand a year can be thus as glaringly absurd, as ridiculous, as that of two hundred, and even more so, since its failures are more conspicuous.

Now, had we been satisfied to live in this way, it is not alone that we should have avoided debt and embarrassment, but we should really have profited largely besides. I do not speak of the negative advantages of not mingling with those it had been better to have escaped; but that in the society of these smaller capitals there is, especially in Germany, a highly cultivated and most instructive class, slightly pedantic, it may be, but always agreeable and affable. The domesticity of Germany is little known to us, since even their writers afford few glimpses of it.

There are no Bulwers nor Bozes nor Thackerays to show the play of passion, nor the working of deep feeling around the family board and hearth. The cares of fathers, the hopes of sons, the budding anxieties of the girlish heart, have few chroniclers. How these people think and act and talk at home, and in the secret circle of their families, we know as little as we do of the Chinese. It may be that the inquiry would require long and deep and almost microscopic study. Life with them is not as with us, a stormy wave-tossed ocean; it is rather a calm and landlocked bay. They have no colonial empires, no vast territories for military ambition to revel in, nor great enterprise to speculate on. There are neither gigantic schemes of wealth, nor gold-fields to tempt them. Existence presents few prizes, and as few vicissitudes. The march of events is slow, even, and monotonous, and men conform themselves to the same measure! How, then, do they live, – what are their loves, their hates, their ambitions, their crosses, their troubles, and their joys? How are they moved to pity, – how stirred to revenge? I own to you I cannot even fancy this. The German heart seems to me a clasped volume; and even Goethe has but shown us a chance page or two, gloriously illustrated, I acknowledge, but closed as quickly as displayed.

Is Marguerite herself a type? I wish some one would tell me. Is that childlike gentleness, that trustful nature, that resistless, passionate devotion, warring with her piety, and yet heightened by it, – are these German traits? They seem so; and yet do these Fräuleins that I see, with yellow hair, appear capable of this

headlong and impetuous love. Faust, I'm convinced, is true to his nationality. He loves like a German, – and is mad, and mystical, fond, dreamy, and devoted by turns.

But all these are not what I look for. I want a family picture – a Teerburgh or a Mieris – painted by a German Dickens, or touched by a native Titmarsh. So far as I have read of it, too, the German Drama does not fill up this void; the comedies of the stage present nothing identical of the people, and yet it appears to me they are singularly good materials for portraiture. The stormy incidents of university life, its curious vicissitudes, and its strange, half-crazed modes of thought blend into the quiet realities of after-life, and make up men such as one sees nowhere else. The tinge of romance they have contracted in boyhood is never thoroughly washed out of their natures, and although statecraft may elevate them to be grave privy councillors, or good fortune select them for its revenue officers, they cherish the old memories of Halle and Heidelberg, and can grow valorous over the shape of a rapier, or pathetic about the color of Fräulein Lydchen's hair.

It is doubtless very presumptuous in *me* to speak thus of a people of whom I have seen so little; but bear in mind, my dear Miss Cox, that I'm rather giving Mrs. Morris's experiences than my own, and, in some cases, in her own very words. She has a very extensive acquaintance in Germany, and corresponds, besides, with many very distinguished persons of that country. Perhaps private letters give a better insight into the habits of a

people than most other things, and if so, one should pronounce very favorably of German character from the specimens I have seen. There are everywhere, great truthfulness, great fairness; a willingness to concede to others a standard different from their own; a hopeful tone in all things, and extreme gentleness towards women and children. Of rural life, and of scenery, too, they speak with true feeling-; and, as Sir Walter said of Goethe, "they understand trees."

You will wish to hear something of Bregenz, where we are staying at present, and I have little to say beyond its situation in a little bay on the Lake of Constance, begirt with high mountains, amidst which stretches a level flat, traversed by the Rhine. The town itself is scarcely old enough to be picturesque, though from a distance on the lake the effect is very pleasing. A part is built upon a considerable eminence, the ascent to which is by a very steep street, impassable save on foot; at the top of this is an old gateway, the centre of which is ornamented by a grotesque attempt at sculpture, representing a female figure seated on a horse, and, to all seeming, traversing the clouds. The phenomenon is explained by a legend, that tells how a Bregenzer maiden, some three and a half centuries ago, had gone to seek her fortune in Switzerland, and becoming domesticated there in a family, lived for years among the natural enemies of her people. Having learned by an accident one night, that an attack was meditated on her native town, she stole away unperceived, and, taking a horse, swam the current of the Rhine, and reached

Bregenz in time to give warning of the threatened assault, and thus rescued her kinsmen and her birthplace from sack and slaughter. This is the act commemorated by the sculpture, and the stormy waves of the river are doubtless typified in what seem to be clouds.

There is, however, a far more touching memory of the heroism preserved than this; for each night, as the watchman goes his round of the village, when he comes to announce midnight, he calls aloud the name of her who at the same dead hour, three centuries back, came to wake the sleeping town and tell them of their peril. I do not know of a monument so touching as this! No bust nor statue, no group of marble or bronze, can equal in association the simple memory transmitted from age to age, and preserved ever fresh and green in the hearts of a remote generation. As one thinks of this, the mind at once reverts to the traditions of the early Church, and insensibly one is led to feel the beauty of those transmitted words and acts, which, associated with place, and bound up with customs not yet obsolete, gave such impressive truthfulness to all the story of our faith. At the same time, it is apparent that the current of tradition cannot long run pure. Even now there are those who scoff at the grateful record of the Bregenzer maiden! Where will her memory be five years after the first railroad traverses the valley of the Vorarlberg? The shrill whistle of the "express" is the death-note to all the romance of life!

Some deplore this, and assert that, with this immense

advancement of scientific discovery, we are losing the homely virtues of our fathers. Others pretend that we grow better as we grow wiser, and that increased intelligence is but another form of enlarged goodness. To myself, the great change seems to be that every hour of this progress diminishes the influences of woman, and that, as men grow deeper and deeper engaged in the pursuits of wealth, the female voice is less listened to, and its counsels less heeded and cared for.

But why do I dare to hazard such conjectures to you, so far more capable of judging, so much more able to solve questions like this!

I am sorry not to be able to speak more confidently about my music; but although Germany is essentially the land of song, there is less domestic cultivation of the art than I had expected; or, rather, it is made less a matter of display. Your mere acquaintances seldom or never will sing for your amusement; your friends as rarely refuse you. To our notions, also, it seems strange that men are more given to the art here than women. The Frau is almost entirely devoted to household cares. Small fortunes and primitive habits seem to require this, and certainly no one who has ever witnessed the domestic peace of a German family could find fault with the system.

What has most struck me of all here, is the fact that while many of the old people retain a freshness of feeling, and a warm susceptibility that is quite remarkable, the children are uniformly grave, even to sadness. The bold, dashing, half-reckless boy; the

gay, laughing, high-spirited girl, – have no types here. The season of youth, as we understand it, in all its jocund merriment, its frolics, and its wildness, has no existence amongst them. The child of ten seems weighted with the responsibilities of manhood; the little sister carries her keys about, and scolds the maids with all the semblance of maternal rigor. Would that these liquid blue eyes had a more laughing look, and that pretty mouth could open to joyous laughter!

With all these drawbacks, it is still a country that I love to live in, and should leave with regret; besides that, I have as yet seen but little of it, and its least remarkable parts.

Whither we go hence, and when, are points that I cannot inform you on. I am not sure, indeed, if any determination on the subject has been come to. Mamma and Mary Anne seem most eager for Rome and Naples; but though I should anticipate a world of delight and interest in these cities, I am disposed to think that they would prove far too expensive, – at least with our present tastes and habits.

Wherever my destiny, however, I shall not cease to remember my dear governess, nor to convey to her, in all the frankness of my affection, every thought and feeling of her sincerely attached
Caroline Dodd.

LETTER IV. MRS. DODD TO MRS. MARY GALLAGHER, DODSBOROUGH

Bregenz

My dear Molly, – It 's well I ever got your last letter, for it seems there's four places called Freyburg, and they tried the three wrong ones first, and I believe they opened and read it everywhere it stopped. "Much good may it do them," says I, "if they did!" They know at least the price of wool in Kinnegad, and what boneens is bringing in Ballinasloe, not to mention the news you tell of Betty Walsh! I thought I cautioned you before not to write anything like a secret when the letter came through a foreign post, seeing that the police reads everything, and if there's a word against themselves, you're ordered over the frontier in six hours. That's liberty, my dear! But that is not the worst of it, for nobody wants the dirty spalpeens to read about their private affairs, nor to know the secrets of their families. I must say, you are very unguarded in this respect, and poor Betty's mishap is now known to the Emperor of Prussia and the King of Sweden, just as well as to Father Luke and the Coadjutor; and as they say

that these courts are always exchanging gossip with each other, it will be back in England by the time this reaches you. Let it be a caution to you in future, or, if you must allude to these events, do it in a way that can't be understood, as you may remark they do in the newspapers. I wish you would n't be tormenting me about coming home and living among my own people, as you call it. Let them pay up the arrears first Molly, before they think of establishing any claim of the kind on your humble servant. But the fact is, my dear, the longer you live abroad, the more you like it; and going back to the strict rules and habits of England, after it, is for all the world like putting on a strait-waistcoat. If you only heard foreigners the way they talk of us, and we all the while thinking ourselves the very pink of the creation!

But of all the things they're most severe upon is Sunday. The manner we pass the day, according to their notions, is downright barbarism. No diversion of any kind, no dancing, no theatres; shops shut up, and nothing legal but intoxication. I always tell them that the fault isn't ours, that it's the Protestants that do these things; for, as Father Maher says, "they 'd put a bit of crape over the blessed sun if they could." But between ourselves, Molly, even we Catholics are greatly behind the foreigners on all matters of civilization. It may be out of fear of the others, but really we don't enjoy ourselves at all like the French or the Germans. Even in the little place I'm writing now, there's more amusement than in a big city at home; and if there's anything I 'm convinced of at all, Molly, it's this: that there is no keeping people out of great

wickedness except by employing them in small sins; and, let me tell you, there's not a political economist that ever I heard of has hit upon the secret.

We are all in good health, and except that K. I. is in one of his habitual moods of discontent and grumbling, there's not anything particular the matter with us. Indeed, if it was n't for his natural perverseness of disposition, he ought n't to be cross and disagreeable, for dear James has just been appointed to an elegant situation, on what they call the "Diplomatic Service." When the letter first came, I was almost off in a faint. I did n't know where it might be they might be sending the poor child, – perhaps to Great Carey-o, or the Hy-menoal Mountains of India; but Lord George says that it's at one of the great Courts of Europe he's sure to be; and, indeed, with his figure and advantages, that's the very thing to suit him. He's a picture of a young man, and the very image of poor Tom McCarthy, that was shot at Bally-healey the year of the great frost. If he does n't make a great match, I'm surprised at it; and the young ladies must be mighty different in their notions from what I remember them, besides. Getting him ready and fitting him out has kept us here; for whenever there's a call upon K. I.'s right-hand pocket, he buttons up the left at once; so that, till James is fairly off, there 's no hope for us of getting away from this. That once done, however, I'm determined to pass the winter in Italy. As Lord George says, coming abroad and not crossing the Alps, is like going to a dinner-party and getting up after the "roast," – "you have all the solids of the

entertainment, but none of the light and elegant trifles that aid digestion, and engage the imagination." "It's a beautiful simile, Molly, and very true besides; for, after all, the heart requires more than mere material enjoyments! You 're maybe surprised to hear that Lord G. is back here; and so was I to see him. What his intentions are, I 'm unable to say; but it's surely Mary Anne at all events; and as she knows the world well, I 'm very easy in my mind about her. As I told K. I. last night, "Abuse the Continent as you like, K. I., waste all your bad words about the cookery and the morals and the light wines and women, but there 's one thing you can't deny to it, – there's no falling in love abroad, – that I maintain!" And when you come to think of it, I believe that's the real evil of Ireland. Everybody there falls in love, and the more surely when they haven't a sixpence to marry on! All the young lawyers without briefs, all the young doctors in dispensaries, every marching lieutenant living on his pay, every young curate with seventy pounds a year, – in fact, Molly, every case of hopeless poverty, – all what the newspapers call heartrending distress, – is sure to have a sweetheart! When you think of the misery that it brings on a single family, you may imagine the ruin that it entails on a whole country. And I don't speak in ignorance, Mrs. Gallagher; I 've lived to see the misery of even a tincture of love in my own unfortunate fate. Not that indeed I ever went far in my feelings towards K. I., but my youth and inexperience carried me away; and see where they 've left me! Now that's an error nobody commits abroad;

and as to any one being married according to their inclination, it's quite unheard of; and if they have less love, they have fewer disappointments, and that same is something!

Talking of marriage brings me to Betty, – I suppose I mustn't say Betty Cobb, now that she calls herself the Frau Taddy. Hasn't she made a nice business of it! "They're fighting," as K. I. says, "like man and wife, already!" The creature is only half human; and when he has gorged himself with meat and drink, he sometimes sleeps for twenty-four, or maybe thirty hours; and if there's not something ready for him when he wakes up, his passion is dreadful. I'm afraid of my life lest K. I. should see the bill for his food, and told the landlord only to put down his four regular meals, and that I'd pay the rest, which I have managed to do, up to this, by disposing of K. I.'s wearing-apparel. And would you believe it that the beast has already eaten a brown surtout, two waistcoats, and three pairs of kerseymere shorts and gaiters, not to say a spencer that he had for his lunch, and a mackintosh cape that he took the other night before going to bed! Betty is always crying from his bad usage, and consequently of no earthly use to any one; but if a word is said against him, she flies out in a rage, and there's no standing her tongue!

Maybe, however, it's all for the best; for without a little excitement to my nervous system, I'd have found this place very dull. Dr. Morgan Moore, that knew the M'Carthy constitution better than any one living, used to say, "Miss Jemima requires movement and animation;" and, indeed, I never knew any place

agree with me like the "Sheds" of Clontarf.

Mary Anne keeps telling me that this is now quite vulgar, and that your people of first fashion are never pleased with anybody or anything; and whenever a place or a party or even an individual is peculiarly tiresome, she says, "Be sure, then, that it's quite the mode." That is possibly the reason why Lord George recommends us passing a few weeks on the Lake of Comus; and if it's the right thing to do, I 'm ready and willing; but I own to you, Molly, I 'd like a little sociality, if it was only for a change. At any rate, Comus is in Italy; and if we once get there, it will go far with me if I don't see the Pope. I 'm obliged to be brief this time, for the post closes here whenever the postmaster goes to dinner; and to-day I 'm told he dines early. I 'll write you, however, a full and true account of us all next week, till when, believe me your ever affectionate and attached friend,

Jemima Dodd.

P. S. Mary Anne has just reconciled me to the notion of Comus. It is really the most aristocratic place in Europe, and she remarks that it is exactly the spot to make excellent acquaintances in for the ensuing winter; for you see, Molly, that is really what one requires in summer and autumn, and the English that live much abroad study this point greatly. But, indeed, there's a wonderful deal to be learned before one can say that they know life on the Continent; and the more I think of it, the less am I surprised at the mistakes and blunders of our travelling countrymen, – errors, I am proud to say, that we have escaped

up to this.

LETTER V. KENNY JAMES DODD TO THOMAS PURCELL, ESQ., OF THE GRANGE, BRUFF

Bregenz

My dear Tom, – Although it is improbable I shall be able to despatch this by the post of to-day, I take the opportunity of a few moments of domestic peace to answer your last – I wish I could say agreeable – letter. It is not that your intentions are not everything that consists with rectitude and honor, or that your sentiments are not always those of a right-minded man, but I beg to observe to you, Tom Pur-cell, in all the candor of a five-and-forty years' friendship, that you have about the same knowledge of life and the world that a toad has of Lord Rosse's telescope.

We have come abroad for an object, which, whether attainable or not, is not now the question; but if there be any prospect whatever of realizing it, – confound the phrase, but I have no other at hand, – it is surely by an ample and liberal style of living, such as shall place us on a footing of equality with the best society, and make the Dodds eligible anywhere.

I suppose you admit that much. I take it for granted that

even bucolic dulness is capable of going so far. Well, then, what do you mean by your incessant appeals to "retrenchment" and "economy"? Don't you see that you make yourself just as preposterous as Cobden, when he says, cut down the estimates, reduce the navy, and dismiss your soldiers, but still be a first-rate power. Tie your hands behind your back, but cry out, "Beware of me, for I'm dreadful when I'm angry."

You quote me against myself; you bring up my old letters, like Hansard, against me, and say that all our attempts have been failures; but without calling you to order for referring "to what passed in another place," I will reply to you on your own grounds. If we have failed, it has been because our resources did not admit of our maintaining to the end what we had begun in splendor, – that our means fell short of our requirements, – that, in fact, with a well-chosen position and picked troops, we lost the battle only for want of ammunition, having fired away all our powder in the beginning of the engagement. Whose fault was *that*, I beg to ask? Can the Commissary-General Purcell come clear out of *that* charge?

I know your hair-splitting habit; I at once anticipate your reply. An agent and a commissary are two very different things! And just as flatly I tell you, you are wrong, and that, rightly considered, the duties of both are precisely analogous, and that a general commanding an army, and an Irish landlord travelling on the Continent, present a vast number of points of similitude and resemblance. In the one case as in the other, supplies are

indispensable; come what will, the forces must be fed, and if it would be absurd for the general to halt in his march and inquire into all the difficulties of providing stores, it would be equally preposterous for the landlord to arrest his career by going into every petty grievance of his tenantry, and entering into a minute examination of the state of every cottier on his laud. Send the rations, Tom, and I 'll answer for the campaign. I don't mean to say that there are not some hardships attendant upon this. I know that to raise contributions an occasional severity must be employed; but is the fate of a great engagement to be jeopardized for the sake of such considerations? No, no, Tom. Even your spirit will recoil from such an admission as this!

It is only fair to mention that these are not merely my own sentiments. Lord George Tiverton, to whom I happened to show your letter, was really shocked at the contents. I don't wish to offend you, Tom, but the expression he used was, "It is fortunate for your friend Purcell that he is not *my* agent" I will not repeat what he said about the management of English landed property, but it is obvious that our system is not their system, and that such a thing as a landlord in *my* position is actually unheard of. "If Ireland were subject to earthquakes," said he, "if the arable land were now and then covered over ten feet deep with lava, I could understand your agent's arguments; but wanting these causes, they are downright riddles to me."

He was most anxious to obtain possession of your letter; and I learned from Mary Anne that he really meant to use it in the

House, and show you up bodily as one of the prominent causes of Irish misery. I have saved you from this exposure, but I really cannot spare you some of the strictures your conduct calls for.

I must also observe to you that there is what the Duke used to call "a terrible sameness" about your letters. The potatoes are always going to rot, the people always going to leave. It rains for ten weeks at a time, and if you have three fine days you cry out that the country is ruined by drought. Just for sake of a little variety, can't you take a prosperous tone for once, instead of "drawing my attention," as you superciliously phrase it, to the newspaper announcement about "George Davis and other petitioners, and the lands of Ballyclough, Kiltimaon, and Knocknaslat-tery, being part of the estates of James Kenny Dodd, Esq., of Dodsborough." I have already given you my opinion about that Encumbered Estates Court, and I see no reason for changing it. Confiscation is a mild name for its operation. What Ireland really wanted was a loan fund, – a good round sum, say three and a half or four millions, lent out on reasonable security, but free from all embarrassing conditions. Compel every proprietor to plant so many potatoes for the use of the poor, and get rid of those expensive absurdities called "Unions," with all the lazy, indolent officials; do that, and we might have a chance of prospering once more.

It makes me actually sick to hear you, an Irishman born and bred, repeating all that English balderdash about "a cheap and indisputable title." and so forth. Do you remember about four-

and-twenty years ago, Tom, when I wanted to breach a place for a window in part of the old house at Dodsborough, and Hackett warned me that if I touched a stone of it I 'd maybe have the whole edifice come tumbling about my ears. Don't you see the analogy between that and our condition as landlords, and that our real security lay in the fact that nobody could dare to breach us? Meddle with us once, and who could tell where the ruin would fall! So long as the system lasted we were safe, Tom. Now, your Encumbered Court, with its parliamentary title, has upset all that security; and that's the reason of all the distress and misfortune that have overtaken us.

I think, after the specimen of my opinions, I 'll hear no more of your reproaches about my "growing indifference to home topics," my "apparent apathy regarding Ireland," and other similar reflections in your last letter. Forget my country, indeed! Does a man ever forget the cantharides when he has a blister on his back? If I 'm warm, I 'm sorry for it; but it 's your own fault, Tom Purcell. You know me since I was a child, and understand my temper well; and whatever it was once, it hasn't improved by conjugal felicity.

And now for the Home Office. James started last night for London, to go through whatever formalities there may be before receiving his appointment. What it is to be, or where, I have not an idea; but I cling to the hope that when they see the lad, and discover his utter ignorance on all subjects, it will be something very humble, and not requiring a sixpence from me. All that I

have seen of the world shows me that the higher you look for your children the more they cost you; and for that reason, if I had my choice, I 'd rather have him a gauger than in the Grenadier Guards. Even as it is, the outfit for this journey has run away with no small share of your late remittance, and now that we have come to the end of the M'Carthy legacy, – the last fifty was "appropriated" by James before starting, – it will require all the financial skill you can command to furnish me with sufficient means for our new campaign.

Yes, Tom, we are going to Italy. I have discussed the matter so long, and so fully argued it in every shape, artistical, philosophical, economical, and moral, that I verily believe that our dialogues would furnish a very respectable manual to Trans-Alpine travellers; and if I am not a convert to the views of my opponents, I am so far vanquished in the controversy as to give in. Lord George put the matter, I must say, very strongly before me. "To turn your steps homeward from the Alps," said he, "is like the act of a man who, having dressed for an evening party and ascended the stairs, wheels round at the door of the drawing-room, and quits the house. All your previous knowledge of the Continent, so costly and so difficult to attain, is about at length to become profitable; that insight into foreign life and habits which you have arrived at by study and observation, is now about to be available. Italy is essentially the land of taste, elegance, and refinement; and there will all the varied gifts and acquirements of your accomplished family be appreciated." Besides this, Tom,

he showed me that the "Snobs," as he politely designated them, are all "Cis-Alpine;" strictly confining themselves to the Rhine and Switzerland, and never descending the southern slopes of the Alps. According to his account, therefore, the climate of Italy is not more marked by superiority than the tone of its society. There all is polished, elegant, and refined; and if the men be "not all brave, and the women all virtuous," it is because "their moral standard is one more in accordance with the ancient traditions, the temper, and the instincts of the people." I quote you his words here, because very possibly they may be more intelligible to you than to myself. At all events, one thing is quite clear, – we ought to go and judge for ourselves, and to this resolve have we come. Tiverton – without whom we should be actually helpless – has arranged the whole affair, and, really, with a regard to economy that, considering his habits and his station, can only be attributed to a downright feeling of friendship for us. By a mere accident he hit upon a villa at Como, for a mere trifle, – he won't tell me the sum, but he calls it a "nothing," – and now he has, with his habitual good luck, chanced upon a return carriage going to Milan, the driver of which horses our carriage, and takes the servants with him, for very little more than the keep of his beasts on the road. This piece of intelligence will tickle every stingy fibre in your economical old heart, and at last shall I know you to mutter, "K. I. is doing the prudent thing."

Tiverton himself says, "It's not exactly the most elegant mode of travelling; but as the season is early, and the Splugen a pass

seldom traversed, we shall slip down to Como unobserved, and save some forty or fifty 'Naps.' without any one being the wiser." Mrs. D. would, of course, object if she had the faintest suspicion that it was inexpensive; but "my Lord," who seems to read her like a book, has told her that it is the very mode in which all the aristocracy travel, and that by a happy piece of fortune we have secured the vetturino that took Prince Albert to Rome, and the Empress of Russia to Palermo!

He has, or he is to find, four horses for our coach, and three for his own; we are to take the charge of bridges, barriers, rafts, and "remounts," and give him, besides, five Napoleons *per diem*, and a "buona mano," or gratuity, of three more, if satisfied, at the end of the journey. Now, nothing could be more economical than this; for we are a large party, and with luggage enough to fill a ship's jolly-boat.

You see, therefore, what it is to have a shrewd and intelligent friend. You and I might have walked the main street of Bregenz till our shoes were thin, before we discovered that the word "Gelegenheit," chalked up on the back-leather of an old calèche, meant "A return conveniency to be had cheap." The word is a German one, and means "Opportunity: " and ah! my dear Tom, into what a strange channel does it entice one's thoughts! What curious reflections come across the mind as we think of all our real opportunities in this world, and how little we did of them! Not but there might be a debit side to the account, too, and that some two or three may have escaped us that it was just as well

we let pass!

We intended to have left this to-morrow, but Mrs. D. won't travel on a Friday. "It's an unlucky day," she says, and maybe she's right. If I don't mistake greatly, it was on a Friday I was married; but of course this is a reminiscence I keep to myself. This reminds me of the question in your postscript, and to which I reply: "Not a bit of it; nothing of the kind. So far as I see, Tiverton feels a strong attachment to James, but never even notices the girls. I ought to add that this is not Mrs. D.'s opinion; and she is always flouncing into my dressing-room, with a new discovery of a look that he gave Mary Anne, or a whisper that he dropped into Cary's ear. Mothers would be a grand element in a detective police, if they did n't now and then see more than was in sight; but that's their failing, Tom. The same generous zeal which they employ in magnifying their husbands' faults helps them to many another exaggeration. Now Mrs. D. is what she calls fully persuaded – in other words, she has some shadowy suspicions – that Lord George has formed a strong attachment to one or other of her daughters, the only doubtful point being which of them is to be my Lady."

Shall I confess to you that I rather cherish the notion than seek to disabuse her of it, and for this simple reason: whenever she is in full cry after grandeur, whether in the shape of an acquaintance, an invitation, or a match for the girls, she usually gives me a little peace and quietness. The peerage, "God bless our old nobility," acts like an anodyne on her.

I give you, therefore, both sides of the question, repeating once more my own conviction that Lord G. has no serious intentions, to use the phrase maternal, whatever. And now to your second query: If not, is it prudent to encourage his intimacy? Why, Tom Purcell, just bethink you for a moment, and see to what a strange condition would your theory, if acted on, resolve all the inhabitants of the globe. Into one or other category they must go infallibly. "Either they want to marry one of the Dodds, or they don't." Now, though the fact is palpable enough, it is for all purposes of action a most embarrassing one; and if I proceed to make use of it, I shall either be doomed to very tiresome acquaintances, or a life of utter solitude and desertion.

Can't a man like your society, your dinners, your port, your jokes, and your cigars, but he must perforce marry one of your daughters? Is your house to be like a rat-trap, and if a fellow puts his head in must he be caught? I don't like the notion at all; and not the less that it rather throws a slight over certain convivial gifts and agreeable qualities for which, once upon a time at least, I used to have some reputation. As to Tiverton, I like *him*, and I have a notion that he likes *me*, We suit each other as well as it is possible for two men bred, born, and brought up so perfectly unlike. We both have seen a great deal of the world, or rather of two worlds, for *his* is not *mine*. At the same time, every remark he makes – and all his observations show me that mankind is precisely the same thing everywhere, and that it is exactly with the same interests, the same impulses, and the same passions my

Lord bets his thousands at "Crocky's" that Billy Healey or Father Tom ventures his half-crown at the Pig and Pincers, in Bruff. I used to think that what with races, elections, horse-fairs, and the like, I had seen my share of rascality or roguery; but, compared to my Lord's experiences, I might be a babe in the nursery. There is n't a dodge – not a piece of knavery that was ever invented – he doesn't know. Trickery and deception of every kind are all familiar to him, and, as he says himself, he only wants a few weeks in a convict settlement to put the finish on his education.

You 'd fancy, from what I say, that he must be a cold, misanthropic, suspicious fellow, with an ill-natured temper, and a gloomy view of everybody and everything. Far from it, his whole theory of life is benevolent; and his maxim, to believe every one honorable, trustworthy, and amiable. I see the half-cynical smile with which you listen to this, and I already know the remark that trembles on your lip. You would say that such a code cuts both ways, and that a man who pronounces so favorably of his fellows almost secures thereby a merciful verdict on himself. In fact, that he who passes base money can scarcely refuse, now and then, to accept a bad halfpenny in change. Well, Tom, I 'll not argue the case with you, for if not myself a disciple of this creed, I have learned to think that there are very few, indeed, who are privileged to play censor upon their acquaintances, and that there is always the chance that when you are occupied looking at your neighbor drifting on a lee shore, you may bump on a rock yourself.

You said in your last that you thought me more lax than I used to be about right and wrong, – "less strait-laced," you were polite enough to call it; and with an equal urbanity you ascribed this change in me to the habits of the Continent. I am proud to say "Guilty" to the charge, and I believe you are right as to the cause. Yes, Tom, the tone of society abroad is eminently merciful, and it must needs be a bad case where there are no attenuating circumstances. So much the worse, say you; where vice is leniently looked on, it will be sure to flourish. To which I answer, Show me where it does not! Is it in the modern Babylon, is it in moral Scotland, or drab-colored Washington? On my conscience, I don't believe there is more of wickedness in a foreign city than a home one; the essential difference being that we do wrong with a consciousness of our immorality; whereas the foreigner has a strong impression that after all it's only a passing frailty, and that human nature was not ever intended to be perfect. Which system tends most to corrupt a people, and which creates more hopeless sinners, I leave to you, and others as fond of such speculations, to ponder over.

Another charge – for your letter has as many counts as an indictment – another you make against me is that I seem as if I was beginning to like – or, as you modestly phrase it – as if I was getting more reconciled to the Continent. Maybe I am, now that I have learned how to qualify the light wines with a little brandy, and to make my dinner of the eight or nine, instead of the two-and-thirty dishes they serve up to you; and since I have

trained myself to walk the length of a street, in rain or sunshine, without my hat, and have attained to the names of the cards at whist in a foreign tongue, I believe I do feel more at home here than at first; but still I am far, very far, in arrear of the knowledge that a man bred and born abroad would possess at my age. To begin, Tom: He would be a perfect cook; you couldn't put a clove of garlic too little, or an olive too much, without his detecting it in the dish. Secondly, he would be curious in snuffs, and a dead hand at dominos; then he would be deep in the private histories of the ballet, and tell you the various qualities of short-drapiered damsels that had figured on the boards for the last thirty years. These, and such-like, would be the consolations of his declining years; and of these I know absolutely next to nothing. Who knows, however, but I may improve? The world is a wonderful schoolmaster, and if Mrs. D. is to be believed, I am an apt scholar whenever the study is of an equivocal kind.

We hope to spend the late autumn at Como, and then step down into some of the cities of the South for the winter months. The approved plan is Florence till about the middle of January, Rome till the beginning of Lent, then Naples till the Holy Week, whence back again for the ceremonies. After that, northward wherever you please. All this sounds like a good deal of locomotion, and, consequently, of expense; but Lord G. says, "Just leave it to *me*, I'll be your courier;" and as he not only performs that function, but unites with it that of banker, – he can get anything discounted at any moment, – I am little disposed

to depose him from his office. Now no more complaints that I have not replied to you about this, that, and t' other, not informed you about our future movements, nor given you any hint as to our plans: you know everything about us, at least so far as it is known to your

Very sincere friend,

Kenny I. Dodd.

As I mentioned in the beginning, I am too late for the post, so I 'll keep this open if anything should occur to me before the next mail.

The Inn, Splugen, Monday.

I thought this was already far on its way to you; but, to my great surprise, on opening my writing-desk this morning, I discovered it there still. The truth is, I grow more absent, and what the French call "distracted," every day; and it frequently happens that I forget some infernal bill or other, till the fellow knocks at the door with "the notice." Here we are, at a little inn on the very top of the Alps. We arrived yesterday, and, to our utter astonishment, found ourselves suddenly in a land of snow and icebergs. The whole way from Bregenz the season was a mellow autumn: some of the corn was still standing, but most was cut, and the cattle turned out over the stubble; the trees were in full leaf, and the mountain rivulets were clear and sparkling, for no rain had fallen for some time back. It was a picturesque road and full of interest in many ways. From Coire we made a little excursion across the Rhine to a place called Ragatz, – a kind of summer resort

for visitors who come to bathe and drink the waters of Pfeffers, one of the most extraordinary sights I ever beheld. These baths are built in a cleft of the mountain, about a thousand feet in depth, and scarcely thirty wide in many parts; the sides of the precipices are straight as a wall, and only admit of a gleam of the sun when perfectly vertical. The gloom and solemnity of the spot, its death-like stillness and shade, even at noonday, are terribly oppressive. Nor is the sadness dispelled by the living objects of the picture, – Swiss, Germans, French, and Italians, swathed in flannel dressing-gowns and white dimity cerements, with nightcaps and slippers, steal along the gloomy corridors and the gloomier alleys, pale, careworn, and cadaverous. They come here for health, and their whole conversation is sickness. Now, however consoling it may be to an invalid to find a recipient of his sorrows, the price of listening in turn is a tremendous infliction. Nor is the character of the scene such as would probably suggest agreeable reflections; had it been the portico to the nameless locality itself, it could not possibly be more dreary and sorrow-stricken. Now, whatever virtues the waters possess, is surely antagonized by all this agency of gloom and depression; and except it be as a preparation for leaving the world without regret, this place seems to be marvellously ill adapted for its object. It appears to me, however, that foreigners run into the greatest extremes in these matters; a sick man must either live in a perpetual Vauxhall of fireworks, music, dancing, dining, and gambling, as at Baden, or be condemned to the worse

than penitentiary diet and prison discipline of Pfeffers! Surely there must be some halting-place between the ball-room and the cloister, or some compromise of costume between silk stockings and bare feet! But really, to a thinking, reasonable being, it appears very distressing that you must either dance out of the world to Strauss's music, or hobble miserably out of life to the sound of the falling waters of Pfeffers.

Does it not sound, also, very oddly to our free-trade notions of malady, that the doctor of these places is appointed by the State; that without his sanction and opinion of your case, you must neither bathe nor drink; that no matter how satisfied you may be with your own physician, nor how little to your liking the Government medico, he has the last word on the subject of your disorder, and without his wand the pool is never to be stirred in your behalf. You don't quite approve of this, Tom, – neither do I. The State has no more a right to choose my doctor than to select a wife for me. If there be anything essentially a man's own prerogative, it is his – what shall I call it? – his caprice about his medical adviser. One man likes a grave, sententious, silently disposed fellow, who feels his pulse, shakes his head, takes his fee, and departs, with scarcely more than a muttered monosyllable; another prefers the sympathetic doctor, that goes half-and-half in all his sufferings, lies awake at night thinking of his case, and seems to rest his own hopes of future bliss in life on curing him. As for myself, I lean to the fellow that, no matter what ails me, is sure to make me pass a pleasant half-

hour; that has a lively way of laughing down all my unpleasant symptoms, and is certain to have a droll story about a patient that he has just come from. That's the man for my money; and I wish you could tell me where a man gets as good value as for the guinea he gives to one of these. Now, from what I have seen of the Continent, this is an order of which they have no representative. All the professional classes, but more essentially the medical, are taken from an inferior grade in society, neither brought up in intercourse with the polite world, nor ever admitted to it afterwards. The consequence is, that your doctor comes to visit you as your shoemaker to measure you for shoes, and it would be deemed as great a liberty were he to talk of anything but your complaint, as for Crispin to impart his sentiments about Russia or the policy of Louis Napoleon. I don't like the system, and I am convinced it does n't work well. If I know anything of human nature, too, it is this, – that nobody tells the whole truth to his physician *till he can't help it*. No, Tom, it only comes out after a long cross-examination, great patience, and a deal of dodging; and for these you must have no vulgarly minded, commonplace, underbred fellow, but a consummate man of the world, who knows when you are bamboozling him and when fencing him off with a sham. He must be able to use all the arts of a priest in the confessional, and an advocate in a trial, with a few more of his own not known to either, to extort your secret from you; and I am sure that a man of vulgar habits and low associations is not the best adapted for this.

I wanted to stop and dine with this lugubrious company. I was curious to see what they ate, and whether their natures attained any social expansion under the genial influences of food and drink; but Mrs. D. would n't hear of it. She had detected, she said, an "impudent hussy with black eyes" bestowing suspicious glances at your humble servant. I thought that she was getting out of these fancies, – I fondly hoped that a little peace on these subjects would in a degree reconcile me to many of the discomforts of old age; but, alas! the gray hairs and the stiff ankles have come, and no writ of ease against conjugal jealousies. Away we came, fresh and fasting, and as there was nothing to be had at Ragatz, we were obliged to go on to Coire before we got supper; and if you only knew what it is to arrive at one of these foreign inns after the hour of the ordinary meals, you 'd confess there was little risk of our committing an excess.

I own to you, Tom, that the excursion scarcely deserved to be called a pleasant one. Fatigue, disappointment, and hunger are but ill antagonized by an outbreak of temper; and Mrs. D. lightened the way homeward by a homily on fidelity that would have made Don Juan appear deserving of being canonized as a saint! I must also observe that Tiverton's conduct on this occasion was the very reverse of what I expected from him. A shrewd, keen fellow like him could not but know in his heart that Mrs. D.'s suspicions were only nonsense and absurdity; and yet what did he do but play shocked and horrified, agreed completely with every ridiculous notion of my wife, and actually went so

far as to appeal to me as a father against myself as a profligate. I almost choked with passion; and if it was not that we were under obligations to him about James's business, I'm not certain I should not have thrown him out of the coach. I wish to the saints that the women would take to any other line of suspicion, even for the sake of variety, – fancy me an incurable drunkard, a gambler, an uncertificated bankrupt, or a forger. I'm not certain if I would not accept the charge of a transportable felony rather than be regarded as the sworn enemy of youth and virtue, and the snake in the grass to all unprotected females.

From Coire we travelled on to Reichenau, a pretty village at the foot of the Alps, watered by the Rhine, which is there a very inconsiderable stream, and with as little promise of future greatness as any barrister of six years' standing you please to mention. There is a neat-looking chateau, which stands on a small terrace above the river here, not without a certain interest attached to it. It was here that Louis Philippe, then Duke of Orleans, taught mathematics in the humble capacity of usher to a school. Just fancy that deep politician – the wiliest head in all Europe, with the largest views of statecraft, and the most consummate knowledge of men – instilling angles and triangles into impracticable numskulls, and crossing the Asses' bridge ten times a day with lame and crippled intellects.

It would be curious to know what views of mankind, what studies of life, he made during this period. Such a man was not made to suffer any opportunity, no matter how inconsiderable

in itself, to escape him without profiting; and it may be easily believed that in the monarchy of a school he might have meditated over the rule of large masses.

History can scarcely present greater changes of fortune than those that have befallen that family, which is the more singular, since they have been brought about neither by great talents nor great crimes. The Orleans family was more remarkable for the qualities which shine in the middle ranks of life than either for any towering genius or any unscrupulous ambition. Their strength was essentially in this mediocrity, and it was a momentary forgetfulness of that same stronghold – by the Spanish marriage – that cost the King his throne. The truth was, Tom, that the nation never liked us, – they hated England just as they hated it at Cressy, at Blenheim, and at Waterloo, and will hate it, notwithstanding your great Industrial gatherings, to the end of time. They were much dissatisfied with Louis Philippe's policy of an English alliance; they deemed it disadvantageous, costly, and humiliating; but that it should be broken up and destroyed for an object of mere family, for a piece of dynastic ambition, was a gross outrage and affront to the spirit of national pride. It was the sentiment of insulted honor that leagued the followers of the Orleans branch with the Legitimists and the Republicans, and formed that terrible alliance that extended from St. Antoine to the Faubourg St. Germain, and included every one from the peer to the common laborer.

All this prosing about politics will never take us over the Alps;

and, indeed, so far as I can see, there is small prospect of that event just now; for it has been snowing smartly all night, with a strong southerly wind, which they say always leaves heavy drifts in different parts of the mountain.

We are cooped up here in a curious, straggling kind of an inn, that gradually dwindles away into a barn, a stable, and a great shed, filled with disabled diligences and smashed old sledges, – an incurable asylum for diseased conveyances. The house stands in a cleft of the hills; but from the windows you can see the zigzag road that ascends for miles in front, and which now is only marked by long poles, already some ten or twelve feet deep in snow. It is snow on every side, – on the mountains, on the roofs, on the horses that stand shaking their bells at the door, on the conducteur that drinks his schnaps, on the postilion as he lights his pipe. The thin flakes are actually plating his whiskers and moustaches, till he looks like one of the "Old Guard," as we see them in a melodrama.

Tiverton, who conducts all our arrangements, has had a row with our vetturino, who says that he never contracted to take us over the mountain in sledges; and as the carriages cannot run on wheels, here we are discussing the question. There have been three stormy debates already, and another is to come off this afternoon; meanwhile, the snow is falling heavily, and whatever chance there was of getting forward yesterday is now ten times less practicable. The landlord of our inn is to be arbiter, I understand; and as he is the proprietor of the sledges

we shall have to hire, if defeated, without impugning in any way the character of Alpine justice, you can possibly anticipate the verdict.

A word upon this vetturino system ere I leave it, – I hope forever. It is a perfect nuisance from beginning to end. From the moment you set off with one of these rascals, till the hour you arrive at your journey's end, it is plague, squabble, insolence, and torment. They start at what hour of the morning they please; they halt where they like, and for as long as they like, invariably, too, at the worst wayside inns, – away from a town and from all chance of accommodation, – since rye-bread and sour wine, with a mess of stewed garlic, will always satisfy *them*. They rarely drive at full five miles the hour, and walk every inch with an ascent of a foot in a hundred yards. If expostulated with by the wretched traveller, they halt in some public place, and appeal to the bystanders in some dialect unknown to you. The result of which is that a ferocious mob surrounds you, and with invectives, insults, and provocative gestures assail and outrage you, till it please your tormentor to drive on; which you do at length amidst hooting and uproar that even convicted felons would feel ashamed of.

On reaching your inn at night, they either give such a representation of you as gets you denied admittance at all, or obtain for you the enviable privilege of paying for everything "en Milor." Between being a swindler and an idiot the chance alone lies for you. Then they refuse to unstrap your luggage; or

if they do so, tie it on again so insecurely that it is sure to drop off next day. I speak not of a running fire of petty annoyances; such as fumigating you with pestilent tobacco, nor the blessed enjoyment of that infernal Spitz dog which stands all day on the roof, and barks every mile of the road from Berne to Naples. As to any redress against their insolence, misconduct, or extortion, it is utterly hopeless, – and for this reason: they are sure to have a hundred petty occasions of rendering small services to the smaller authorities of every village they frequent. They carry the judge's mother for nothing to a watering-place; or they fetch his aunt to the market town; or they smuggle for him – or thief for him – something that is only to be had over the frontier. Very probably, too, on the very morning of your appeal, you have kicked the same judge's brother, he being the waiter of your inn, and having given you bad money in change, – at all events, *you* are not likely ever to be met with again; the vetturino is certain to come back within the year; and, finally, you are sure to have money, and be able to pay, – so that, as the Irish foreman said, as the reason for awarding heavy damages against an Englishman, "It is a fine thing to bring so much money into the country."

Take my word for it, Tom, the system is a perfect disgust from beginning to end, and even its cheapness only a sham; for your economy is more than counterbalanced by police fees, fines, and impositions, delays, remounts, bulls, and starved donkeys, paid for at a price they would not bring if sold at a market. Post, if you can afford it; take the public conveyances, if you must; but for

the sake of all that is decent and respectable, – all that consists with comfort and self-respect, – avoid the vetturino! I know that a contrary opinion has a certain prevalence in the world, – I am quite aware that these rascals have their advocates, – and no bad ones either, – since they are women.

I have witnessed more than one Giuseppe, or Antonio, with a beard, whiskers, and general "get up," that would have passed muster in a comic opera; and on looking at the fellow's book of certificates (for such as these always have a bound volume, smartly enclosed in a neat case), I have found that "Mrs. Miles Dalrymple and daughters made the journey from Milan to Aix-les-Bains with Francesco Birbante, and found him excessively attentive, civil, and obliging; full of varied information about the road, and quite a treasure to ladies travelling alone." Another of these villains is styled "quite an agreeable companion;" one was called "charming;" and I found that Miss Matilda Somers, of Queen's Road, Old Brompton, pronounces Luigi Balderdasci, although in the humble rank of a vetturino, "an accomplished gentleman." I know, therefore, how ineffectual would it be for Kenny Dodd to enter the lists against such odds, and it is only under the seal of secrecy that I dare to mutter them. The widows and the fatherless form a strong category in foreign travel; dark dresses and demure looks are very vagrant in their habits, and I am not going to oppose myself single-handed to such a united force. But to you, Tom Purceli, I may tell the truth in all confidence and security. If I was in authority, I 'd shave these

scoundrels to-morrow. I 'd not suffer a moustache, a red sash, nor a hat with a feather amongst them; and take my word for it, the panegyrics would be toned down, and we'd read much more about the horses than the drivers, and learn how many miles a day they could travel, and not how many sonnets of Petrarch the rascal could repeat.

I have lost my "John Murray." I forgot it in our retreat from Pfeffers; so that I don't remember whether he lauds these fellows or the reverse, but the chances are it is the former. It is one of the endless delusions travellers fall into, and many's the time I have had to endure a tiresome description of their delightful vetturino, that "charming Beppo, who, 'however he got them,' had a bouquet for each of us every morning at breakfast." If I ever could accomplish the writing of that book I once spoke to you about upon the Continent and foreign travels, I 'd devote a whole chapter to these fellows; and more than that, Tom, I'd have an Appendix – a book of travels is nothing without an Appendix in small print – wherein I'd give a list of all these scoundrels who have been convicted as bandits, thieves, and petty larceners; of all their misdeeds against old gentlemen with palsy, and old ladies with "nerves." I 'd show them up, not as heroes but highwaymen; and take my word for it, I 'd be doing good service to the writers of those sharply formed little paragraphs now so enthusiastic about Giovanni, and so full of "grateful recollections" of "poor Giuseppe."

I am positively ashamed to say how many of the observations,

ay, and of the printed observations of travellers, I have discovered to have their origin in this same class; and that what the tourist jotted down as his own remark on men and manners, was the stereotyped opinion of these illiterate vagabonds. But as for books of travel, Tom, of all the humbugs of a humbugging age, there is nothing can approach them. I have heard many men talk admirably about foreign life and customs. I have never chanced upon one who could write about them. It is not only that your really smart fellows do not write; but that, to pronounce authoritatively on a people, one must have a long and intimate acquaintance with them. Now, this very fact alone to a great degree invalidates the freshness of observation; for what we are accustomed to see every day ceases to strike us as worthy of remark. To the raw tourist, all is strange, novel, and surprising; and if he only record what he sees, he will tell much that everybody knows, but also some things that are not quite so familiar to the multitude. Now, your old resident abroad knows the Continent too well and too thoroughly to find any one incident or circumstance peculiar. To take an illustration: A man who had never been at a play in his life would form a far better conception of what a theatre was like from hearing the description of one from an intelligent child, who had been there once, than from the most labored criticism on the acting from an old frequenter of the pit. Hence the majority of these tours have a certain success at home; but for the man who comes abroad, and wishes to know something that may aid to guide his steps,

form his opinions, and direct his judgment, believe me they are not worth a brass farthing. There is this also to be taken into account, – that every observer is, more or less, recounting some trait of his own nature, of his habits, his tastes, and his prejudices; so that before you can receive his statement, you have to study his disposition. Take all these adverse and difficult conditions into consideration, – give a large margin for credulity, and a larger for exaggeration, – bethink you of the embarrassments of a foreign tongue, and then I ask you how much real information you have a right to expect from Journals of the Long Vacation, or Winters in Italy, or Tyrol Rambles in Autumn? I say it in no boastfulness, Tom, nor in any mood of vanity, but if I was some twenty years younger, with a good income and no encumbrances, well versed in languages, and fairly placed as regards social advantages, I myself could make a very readable volume about foreign life and foreign manners. You laugh at the notion of Kenny Dodd on a titlepage; but have n't we one or two of our acquaintances that cut just as ridiculous a figure?

Tiverton has come in to tell me that the judgment of the Court has been given against him, and consequently against us, "*in re Vetturino*;" and the award of the judge is, "That we pay all the expenses for the journey to Milan, the gratuity, – that was only to be given as an evidence of our perfect satisfaction, – and anything more that our sense of honor and justice may suggest, as compensation for the loss of time he has sustained in litigating with us." On these conditions he is to be free to follow his road,

and we are to remain here till – I wish I could say the time – but, according to present appearances, it may be spring before we get away. When I tell you that the decision has been given by the landlord of the inn, where we must stop, – as no other exists within twenty miles of us, – you may guess the animus of the judgment-seat. It requires a great degree of self-restraint not to be carried into what the law calls an overt act, by a piece of iniquity like this. I have abstained by a great effort; but the struggle has almost given me a fit of apoplexy. Imagine the effrontery of the rascal, Tom: scarcely had he counted over his Napoleons, and made his grin of farewell, than he mounted his box and drove away over the mountain, which had just been declared impassable, – a feat witnessed by all of us, – in company with the landlord who had pronounced the verdict against us. I stormed – I swore – in short, I worked myself into a sharp fit of the gout, which flew from my ankle to my stomach, and very nigh carried me off. A day of extreme suffering has been succeeded by one of great depression; and here I am now, with the snow still falling fast; the last courier who went by saying "that all the inns at Chiavenna were full of people, none of whom would venture to cross the mountain." It appears that there are just two peculiarly unpropitious seasons for the passage, – when the snow falls first, and when it begins to melt in spring. It is needless to say that we have hit upon one of these, with our habitual good fortune!

Thursday. The Inn, Splügen.

Here we are still in this blessed place, this being now our

seventh day in a hole you would n't condemn a dog to live in. How long we might have continued our sojourn it is hard to say, when a mere accident has afforded us the prospect of liberation. It turns out that two families arrived and went forward last night, having only halted to sup and change horses. On inquiry why we could n't be supposed capable of the same exertion, you 'll not believe me when I tell you the answer we got. No, Tom! The enormous power of lying abroad is clear and clean beyond your conception. It was this, then. We could go when we pleased, – it was entirely a caprice of our own that we had not gone before. "How so, may I ask?" said I, in the meekest of inquiring voices. "You would n't go like others," was the answer. "In what respect, – how?" asked I again. "Oh, your English notions rejected the idea of a sledge. You insisted upon going on wheels, and as no wheeled carriage could run – " Grant me patience, or I'll explode like a shell. My hand shakes, and my temples are throbbing so that I can scarcely write the lines. I made a great effort at a calm and discretionary tone, but it would n't do; a certain fulness about the throat, a general dizziness, and a noise like the sea in my ears, told me that I'd have been behaving basely to the "Guardian" and the "Equitable Fire and Life" were I to continue the debate. I sat down, and with a sponge and water and loose cravat, I got better. There was considerable confusion in my faculties on my coming to myself; I had a vague notion of having conducted myself in some most ridiculous and extravagant fashion, – having insisted upon the horses being harnessed in some impossible mode, or

made some demand or other totally impracticable. Cary, like a dear kind girl as she is, laughed and quizzed me out of my delusion, and showed me that it was the cursed imputation of that scoundrel of a landlord had given this erratic turn to my thoughts. The gout has settled in my left foot, and I now, with the exception of an occasional shoot of pain that I relieve by a shout, feel much better, and hope soon to be fit for the road. Poor Cary made me laugh by a story she picked up somewhere of a Scotch gentleman who had contracted with his vetturino to be carried from Genoa to Rome and fed on the road, – a very common arrangement. The journey was to occupy nine days; but wishing to secure a splendid "buona mano," the vetturino drove at a tremendous pace, and actually arrived in Rome on the eighth day, having almost killed his horses and exhausted himself. When he appeared before his traveller, expecting compliments on his speed, and a handsome recognition for his zeal, guess his astonishment to hear his self-panegyrics cut short by the pithy remark: "You drove very well, my friend; but we are not going to part just yet, – you have still another day to *feed* me."

Tiverton has at length patched up an arrangement with our landlord for twelve sledges, – each only carries one and the driver, – so that if nothing adverse intervene we are to set forth to-morrow. He says that we may reasonably hope to reach Chiavenna before evening. I 'll therefore not detain this longer, but in the prospect that our hour of liberation has at length drawn nigh, conclude my long despatch.

Our villa at Como will be our next address, and I hope to find a letter there from you soon after our arrival. Remember, Tom, all that I have said about the supplies, for though they tell me Italy be cheap, I have not yet discovered a land where the population believes gold to be dross. Adieu!

LETTER VI. MARY ANNE DODD TO MISS DOOLAN, OF BALLYDOOLAN

On the Splügen Alps

Dearest Kitty, – I write these few lines from the Refuge-house on the Splügen Pass. We are seven thousand feet above the level of something, with fifty feet of snow around us, and the deafening roar of avalanches thundering on the ear. We set out yesterday from the village of Splügen, contrary to the advice of the guides, but papa insisted on going. He declared that if no other means offered, he 'd go on foot, so that opposition was really out of the question. Our departure was quite a picture. First came a long, low sledge, with stones and rocks to explore the way, and show where the footing was secure. Then came three others with our luggage; after that mamma, under the guidance of a most careful person, a certain Bernardt something, brother of the man who acted as guide to Napoleon; Cary followed her in another sledge, and I came third, papa bringing up the rear, for Betty and the other servants were tastefully grouped about the luggage. Several additional sledges followed with spade and

shovel-folk, ropes, drags, and other implements most suggestive of peril and adventure. We were perfect frights to look at; for, in addition to fur boots and capes, tarpaulins and hoods, we had to wear snow goggles as a precaution against the fine drifting snow, so that really for very shame' sake I was glad that each sledge only held one, and the driver, who is fortunately, also, at your back.

The first few miles of ascent were really pleasurable, for the snow was hard, and the pace occasionally reached a trot, or at least such a resemblance to one as shook the conveniency, and made the bells jingle agreeably on the harness. The road, too, followed a zigzag course on the steep side of the mountain, so that you saw at moments some of those above and some beneath you, winding along exactly like the elephant procession in Bluebeard. The voices sounded cheerily in the sharp morning air, itself exhilarating to a degree, and this, with the bright snow-peaks, rising one behind the other in the distance, and the little village of Splügen in the valley, made up a scene strikingly picturesque and interesting. There was a kind of adventure, too, about it all, dearest Kitty, that never loses its charm for the soul deeply imbued with a sense of the beautiful and imaginative. I fancied myself at moments carried away by force into the Steppes of Tartary, or that I was Elizabeth crossing the Volga, and I believe I even shed tears at my fancied distress. To another than you, dearest, I might hesitate even if I confessed as much; but you, who know every weakness of a too feeling heart, will forgive me for being what I am.

My guide, a really fine-looking mountaineer, with a magnificent beard, fancied that it was the danger that had appalled me. He hastened to offer his rude but honest consolations; he protested that there was nothing whatever like peril, and that if there were – But why do I go on? even to my dearest friend may not this seem childish? and is it not a silly vanity that owns it can derive pleasure from every homage, even the very humblest?

We gradually lost sight of the little smoke-wreathed village, and reached a wild but grandly desolate region, with snow on every side. The pathway, too, was now lost to us, and the direction only indicated by long poles at great intervals. That all was not perfectly safe in front might be apprehended, for we came frequently to a dead halt, and then the guides and the shovel-men would pass rapidly to and fro, but, muffled as we were, all inquiry was impossible, so that we were left to the horrors of doubt and dread without a chance of relief. At length we grew accustomed to these interruptions, and felt in a measure tranquil. Not so the guides, however; they frequently talked together in knots, and I could see from their upward glances, too, that they apprehended some change in the weather. Papa had contrived to cut some of the cords with which they had fastened his muffles, and by great patience and exertion succeeded in getting his head out of three horsecloths, with which they had swathed him.

"Are we near the summit?" cried he, in English, – "how far are we from the top?"

His question was of course unintelligible, but his action not; and the consequence was that three of our followers rushed over to him, and after a brief struggle, in which two of them were tumbled over in the snow, his head was again enclosed within its woolly cenotaph; and, indeed, but for a violent jerking motion of it, it might have been feared that even all access to external air was denied him. This little incident was the only break to the monotony of the way, till nigh noon, when a cold, biting wind, with great masses of misty vapor, swept past and around us, and my guide told me that we were somewhere, with a hard name, and that he wished we were somewhere else, with a harder.

I asked why, but my question died away in the folds of my head-gear, and I was left to my own thoughts, when suddenly a loud shout rang through the air. It was a party about to turn back, and the sledges stopped up the road. The halt led to a consultation between the guides, which I could see turned on the question of the weather. The discussion was evidently a warm one, a party being for, and another against it. Hearing what they said was of course out of the question, muffled as I was; but their gestures clearly defined who were in favor of proceeding, and who wished to retrace their steps. One of the former particularly struck me; for, though encumbered with fur boots and an enormous mantle, his action plainly indicated that he was something out of the common. He showed that air of command, too, Kitty, that at once proclaims superiority. His arguments prevailed, and after a considerable time spent, on we

went again. I followed the interesting stranger till he was lost to me; but guess my feelings, Kitty, when I heard a voice whisper in my ear, "Don't be afraid, dearest, I watch over *your* safety." Oh! fancy the perturbation of my poor heart, for it was Lord George who spoke. He it was whose urgent persuasions had determined the guides to proceed, and he now had taken the place behind my own sledge, and actually drove instead of the postilion. Can you picture to yourself heroism and devotion like this? And while I imagined that he was borne along with all the appliances of ease and comfort, the poor dear fellow was braving the storm *for me*, and *for me* enduring the perils of the raging tempest. From that instant, my beloved Kitty, I took little note of the dangers around me. I thought but of him who stood so near to me, – so near, and yet so far off; so close, and yet so severed! I bethought me, too, how unjust the prejudice of the vulgar mind that attributes to our youthful nobility habits of selfish indolence and effeminate ease. Here was one reared in all the voluptuous enjoyment of a splendid household, trained from his cradle to be waited on and served, and yet was he there wilfully encountering perils and hardships from which the very bravest might recoil. Ah, Kitty! it is impossible to deny it, – the highly born have a native superiority in everything. Their nobility is not a thing of crosses and ribbons, but of blood. They feel that they are of earth's purest clay, and they assert the claim to pre-eminence by their own proud and lofty gifts. I told you, too, that he said "dearest." I might have been deceived; the noise was deafening at

the moment; but I feel as if my ears could not have betrayed me. At all events, Kitty, his hand sought mine while he spoke, and though in his confusion it was my elbow he caught, he pressed it tenderly. In what a delicious dream did I revel as we slid along over the snow! What cared I for the swooping wind, the thundering avalanche, the drifting snow-wreath, – was he not there, my protector and my guide? Had he not sworn to be my succor and my safety? We had just arrived at a lofty tableland, – some few peaks appeared still above us, but none very near, – when the wind, with a violence beyond all description, bore great masses of drift against us, and effectually barred all farther progress. The stone sledge, too, had partly become embedded in the soft snow, and the horse was standing powerless, when suddenly mamma's horse stumbled and fell. In his efforts to rise he smashed one of the rope traces, so that when he began to pull again, the unequal draught carried the sledge to one side, and upset it. A loud shriek told me something had happened, and at the instant Lord G. whispered in my ear, "It's nothing, – she has only taken a 'header' in the soft snow, and won't be a bit the worse."

Further questioning was vain; for Cary's sledge-horse shied at the confusion in front, and plunged off the road into the deep snow, where he disappeared all but the head, fortunately flinging her out into the guide's arms. My turn was now to come; for Lord G., with his mad impetuosity, tried to pass on and gain the front, but the animal, by a furious jerk, smashed all the tackle, and

set off at a wild, half-swimming pace through the snow, leaving our sledge firmly wedged between two dense walls of drift. Papa sprang out to our rescue; but so helpless was he, from the quantity of his integuments, that he rolled over, and lay there on his back, shouting fearfully.

It appeared as if the violence of the storm had only waited for this moment of general disaster; for now the wind tore along great masses of snow, that rose around us to the height of several feet, covering up the horses to their backs, and embedding the men to their armpits. Loud booming masses announced the fall of avalanches near, and the sky became darkened, like as if night was approaching. Words cannot convey the faintest conception of that scene of terror, dismay, and confusion. Guides shouting and swearing; cries of distress and screams of anguish mingled with the rattling thunder and the whistling wind. Some were for trying to go back; others proclaimed it impossible; each instant a new disaster occurred. The baggage had disappeared altogether, Betty Cobb being saved, as it sank, by almost superhuman efforts of the guide. Paddy Byrne, who had mistaken the kick of a horse on the back of his head for a blow, had pitched into one of the guides, and they were now fighting in four feet of snow, and likely to carry their quarrel out of the world with them. Taddy was "nowhere." To add to this uproar, papa had, in mistake for brandy, drunk two-thirds of a bottle of complexion wash, and screamed out that he was poisoned. Of mamma I could see nothing; but a dense group surrounded her sledge, and showed

me she was in trouble.

I could not give you an idea of what followed, for incidents of peril were every moment interrupted by something ludicrous. The very efforts we made to disengage ourselves were constantly attended by some absurd catastrophe, and no one could stir a step without either a fall, or a plunge up to the waist in soft snow. The horses, too, would make no efforts to rise, but lay to be snowed over as if perfectly indifferent to their fate. By good fortune our britschka, from which the wheels had been taken off, was in a sledge to the rear, and mamma, Cary, and myself were crammed into this, to which all the horses, and men also, were speedily harnessed, and by astonishing efforts we were enabled to get on. Papa and Betty were wedged fast into one sledge, and attached to us by a tow-rope, and thus we at length proceeded.

When mamma found herself in comparative safety, she went off into a slight attack of her nerves; but, fortunately, Lord G. found out the bottle papa had been in vain in search of, and she got soon better. Poor fellow, no persuasion could prevail on him to come inside along with us. How he travelled, or how he contrived to brave that fearful day, I never learned! From this moment our journey was at the rate of about a mile in three hours, the shovel and spade men having to clear the way as we went; and what between horses that had to be dug out of holes, harness repaired, men rescued, and frequent accident to papa's sledge, which, on an average, was upset every half-hour, our halts were incessant. It was after midnight that we reached a

dreary-looking stone edifice in the midst of the snow. Anything so dismal I never beheld, as it stood there surrounded with drift-snow, its narrow windows strongly barred with iron, and its roof covered with heavy masses of stone to prevent it being earned away by the hurricane. This, we were told, was the Refuge-house on the summit, and here, we were informed, we should stay till a change of weather might enable us to proceed.

But does not the very name "Refuge-house" fill you with thoughts of appalling danger? Do you not instinctively shudder at the perils to which this is the haven of succor?

"I see we are not the first here," cried Caroline; "don't you see lights moving yonder?"

She was right, for as we drew up we perceived a group of guides and drivers in the doorway, and saw various conveyances and sledges within the shed at the side of the building.

A dialogue in the wildest shouts was now conducted between our party and the others, by which we came to learn that the travellers were some of those who had left Splugen the night before ourselves, and whose disasters had been even worse than our own. Indeed, as far as I could ascertain, they had gone through much more than we had.

Our first meeting with papa – in the kitchen, as I suppose I must call the lower room of this fearful place – was quite affecting, for he had taken so much of the guide's brandy as an antidote to the supposed poison, that he was really overcome, and, under the delusion that he was at home in

his own house, ran about shaking hands with every one, and welcoming them to Dodsborough. Mamma was so convinced that he had lost his reason permanently, that she was taken with violent hysterics. The scene baffles all description, occurring, as it did, in presence of some twenty guides and spade-folk, who drank their "schnaps," ate their sausages, smoked, and dried their wet garments all the while, with a most well-bred inattention to our sufferings. Though Cary and I were obliged to do everything ourselves, – for Betty was insensible, owing to her having travelled in the vicinity of the same little cordial flask, and my maid was sulky in not being put under the care of a certain good-looking guide, – we really succeeded wonderfully, and contrived to have papa put to bed in a little chamber with a good mattress, and where a cheerful fire was soon lighted. Mamma also rallied, and Lord George made her a cup of tea in a kettle, and poured her out a cup of it into the shaving-dish of his dressing-box, and we all became as happy as possible.

It appeared that the other arrivals, who occupied a separate quarter, were not ill provided for the emergency, for a servant used to pass and repass to their chamber with a very savory odor from the dish he carried, and Lord G. swore that he heard the pop of a champagne cork. We made great efforts to ascertain who they were, but without success. All we could learn was that it was a gentleman and a lady, with their two servants, travelling in their own carriage, which was unmistakably English.

"I 'm determined to run them to earth," exclaimed Lord G. at

last. "I'll just mistake my way, and blunder into their apartment."

We endeavored to dissuade him, but he was determined; and when he is so, Kitty, nothing can swerve him. Off he went, and after a pause of a few seconds we heard a heavy door slammed, then another. After that, both Cary and myself were fully persuaded that we heard a hearty burst of laughter; but though we listened long and painfully, we could detect no more. Unhappily, too, at this time mamma fell asleep, and her deep respirations effectually masked everything but the din of the avalanches. After a while Cary followed ma's example, leaving me alone to sit by the "watch-fire's light," and here, in the regions of eternal snow, to commune with her who holds my heart's dearest affections.

It is now nigh three o'clock. The night is of the very blackest, neither moon nor stars to be seen; fearful squalls of wind – gusts strong enough to shake this stronghold to its foundation – tear wildly past, and from the distance comes the booming sound of thundering avalanches. One might fancy, easily, that escape from this was impossible, and that to be cast away here implied a lingering but inevitable fate. No great strain of fancy is needed for such a consummation. We are miles from all human habitation, and three yards beyond the doorway the boldest would not dare to venture! And you, Kitty, at this hour are calmly sleeping to the hum of "the spreading sycamore;" or, perchance, awake, and thinking of her who now pours out her heart before you; and oh, blame me not if it be a tangled web that I present to you, for such

will human hopes and emotions ever make it My poor heart is, indeed, a battleground for warring hopes and fears, high-soaring ambitions, and depressing terrors. Would that you were here to guide, console, and direct me!

Lord George has not returned. What can his absence mean? All is silent, too, in the dreary building. My anxieties are fearful, – I dread I know not what. I fancy a thousand ills that even possibility would have rejected. The courier is to pass this at five o'clock, so that I must, perchance, close my letter in the same agony of doubt and uncertainty.

Oh, dearest, only fancy the *mal à propos*. Who do you think our neighbors are? Mr. and Mrs. Gore Hampton, on their way to Italy! Can you imagine anything so unfortunate and so distressing? You may remember all our former intimacy, – I may call it friendship, – and by what an unpropitious incident it was broken up. Lord George has just come to tell me the tidings, but, instead of participating in my distress, he seems to think the affair an admirable joke. I need not tell you that he knows nothing of mamma's temper, nor her manner of acting. What may come of this there is no saying. It seems that there is scarcely a chance of our being able to get on to-day; and here we are all beneath one roof, our mutual passions of jealousy, hatred, revenge, and malice, all snowed up on the top of the Splügen Alps!

I have asked of Lord George, almost with tears, what is to be done? but to all seeming he sees no difficulty in the matter, for his reply is always, "Nothing whatever." When pressed closely,

he says, "Oh, the Gore Hamptons are such thoroughly well-bred folk, there is never any awkwardness to be apprehended from *them*. Be quite easy in your mind; *they* have tact enough for any emergency." What this may mean, Kitty, I cannot even guess; for the "situation," as the French would call it, is peculiar. And as to tact, it is, after all, like skill in a game which, however available against a clever adversary, is of little value when opposed to those who neither recognize the rules, nor appreciate the nice points of the encounter.

But I cannot venture to inquire further; it would at once convict me of ignorance, so that I appear to be satisfied with an explanation that explains nothing. And now, Kitty, to conclude; for, though dying to tell you that this knotty question has been fairly solved, I must seal my letter and despatch it by Lord George, who is this moment about to set out for the Toll-house, three miles away. It appears that two of our guides have refused to go farther, and that we must have recourse to the authorities to compel them. This is the object of Lord George's mission; but the dear fellow braves every hardship and every peril for us, and says that he would willingly encounter far more hazardous dangers for one "kind word, or one kind look," from your distracted, but ever devoted

Mary Anne.

They begin to fear now that some accident must have befallen the courier with the mails; he should have passed through here at midnight. It is now daybreak, and no sign of him! Our anxieties

are terrible, and what fate may yet be ours there is no knowing.

LETTER VII. MRS. DODD TO MRS. MARY GALLAGHER, PRIEST'S HOUSE, BRUFF

Colico, Italy

My dear Molly, – After fatigues and distresses that would have worn out the strength of a rhinoceras, here we are, at length, in Italy. If you only saw the places we came through, the mountains upon mountains of snow, the great masses that tumbled down on every side of us, and we lost, as one might call it, in the very midst of eternal dissolution, you 'd naturally exclaim that you had got the last lines ever to be traced by your friend Jemima. Two days of this, no less, my dear, with fifteen degrees below "Nero," wherever he is, that's what I call suffering and misery. We were twice given up for lost, and but for Providence and a guide called – I am afraid to write it, but it answers to Barney with us – we 'd have soon gone to our long account; and, oh, Molly! what a reckoning will that be for K. I.! If ever there was a heart jet black with iniquity and baseness, it is his; and he knows it; and he knows I knows it; and more than that, the whole world shall know it I 'll publish him through what the poet calls the "infamy

of space;" and, so long as I 'm spared, I 'll be a sting in his flesh, and a thorn in his side.

I can't go over our journey – the very thought of it goes far with me – but if you can imagine three females along with the Arctic voyagers, you may form some vague idea of our perils. Bitter winds, piercing snow-drift, pelting showers of powdered ice, starvation, and danger, – dreadful danger, – them was the enjoyments that cost us something over eighteen pounds! Why? – you naturally say, – why? And well may you ask, Mrs. Gallagher. It is nothing remarkable in your saying that this is singular and almost unintelligible. The answer, however, is easy, and the thing itself no mystery. It's as old as Adam, my dear, and will last as long as his family. The natural baseness and depravity of the human heart! Oh, Molly, what a subject that is! I'm never weary thinking of it; and, strange to say, the more you reflect the more difficult does it become. Father Shea had an elegant remark that I often think over: "Our bad qualities," says he, "are like noxious reptiles. There 's no good trying to destroy them, for they 're too numerous; nor to reclaim them, for they 're too savage; the best thing is to get out of their way." There's a deal of fine philosophy in the observation, Molly; and if, instead of irritating and vexing and worrying our infirmities, we just treated them the way we should a shark or a rattlesnake, depend upon it we 'd preserve our unanimity undisturbed, and be happier as well as better. Maybe you 'll ask why I don't try this plan with K. I.? But I did, Molly. I did so for fifteen years. I went on never minding

his perfidious behavior; I winked at his frailties, and shut my eyes, as you know yourself, to Shusy Connor; but my leniency only made him bolder in wickedness, till at last we came to that elegant business, last summer, in Germany, that got into all the newspapers, and made us the talk of the whole world.

I thought the lesson he got at that time taught him something. I fondly dreamed that the shame and disgrace would be of service to him; at all events, that it would take the conceit out of him. Vain hopes, Molly dear, – vain and foolish hopes! He isn't a bit better; the bad dross is in him; and my silent tears does no more good than my gentle remonstrances.

It was only the other day we went to see a place called Pfeffers, a dirty, dismal hole as ever you looked at I thought we were going to see a beautiful something like Ems or Baden, with a band and a pump-room, and fine company, and the rest of it Nothing of the kind, – but a gloomy old building in a cleft between two mountains, that looked as if they were going to swallow it up. The people, too, were just fit for the place, – a miserable set of sickly creatures in flannel dresses, either sitting up to their necks in water, or drying themselves on the rocks. To any one else the scene would be full of serious reflections about the uncertainty of human life, and the certainty of what was to come after it. Them was n't K. I.'s sentiments, my dear, for he begins at once what naval men call "exchanging signals" with one of the patients. "This is the Bad-house, my dear," says he. "I think so, Mr. D.," said I, with a look that made him tremble. He had just

ordered dinner, but I did n't care for that; I told them to bring out the horses at once. "Come, girls," said I, "this is no place for you; your father's proceedings are neither very edifying nor exemplary."

"What's the matter now?" says he. "Where are we going before dinner?"

"Out of this, Mr. Dodd," said I. "Out of this at any rate."

"Where to, – what for?" cried he.

"I think you might guess," said I, with a sneer; "but if not, perhaps that hussy with the spotted gingham could aid you to the explanation."

He was so overwhelmed at my discovering this, Molly, that he was speechless; not a word, – not a syllable could he utter. He sat down on a stone, and wiped his head with a handkerchief.

"Don't make me ill, Mrs. D.," said he, at last. "I 've a notion that the gout is threatening me."

"If that's all, K. I.," said I, "it's well for you, – it's well if it is not worse than the gout. Ay, get red in the face, – be as passionate as you please, but you shall hear the truth from me, at least; I mayn't be long here to tell it. Sufferings such as I 've gone through will do their work at last; but I 'll fulfil my duty to my family till I 'm released – " With that I gave it to him, till we arrived at Coire, eighteen miles, and a good part of it up hill, and you may think what that was. At all events, Molly, he did n't come off with flying colors, for when we reached a place called Splügen he was seized with the gout in earnest I only wish you saw the hole he pitched

upon to be laid up in; but it's like everything else the man does. Every trait of his character shows that he has n't a thought, nor a notion, but about his own comforts and his own enjoyments. And I told him so. I said to him, "Don't think that your self-indulgence and indolence go down with *me* for easiness of temper: that's an imposture may do very well for the *world*, but your wife can't be taken in by it." In a word, Molly, I didn't spare him; and as his attack was a sharp one, I think it's likely he does n't look back to the Splügen with any very grateful reminiscences.

Little I thought, all the time, what good cause I had for my complaints, nor what was in store for me in the very middle of the snow! You must know that we had to take the wheels off the carriage and put it on something like a pair of big skates, for the snow was mountains high, and as soft as an egg-pudding. You may think what floundering we had through it for twelve hours, sometimes sinking up to the chin, now swimming, now digging, and now again being dragged out of it by ropes, till we came to what they call the "Refuge-house;" a pretty refuge, indeed, with no door, and scarcely a window, and everybody – guides, postboys, diggers, and travellers – all hickledy-pickledy inside! There we were, my dear, without a bed, or even a mattress, and nothing to eat but a bottle of Sir Robert Peel's sauce, that K. I. had in his trunk, with a case of eau-de-Cologne to wash it down. Fortunately for me my feelings got the better of me, and I sobbed and screeched myself to rest. When I awoke in the morning, I heard from Mary Anne that another family, and English too,

were in the refuge with us, and, to all appearance, not ill-supplied with the necessaries of life. This much I perceived myself, for the courier lit a big fire on the hearth, and laid a little table beside it, as neat and comfortable as could be. After that he brought out a coffee-pot and boiled the coffee, and made a plate of toast, and fried a dish of ham-rashers and eggs. The very fizzing of them on the fire, Molly, nearly overcame me! But that wasn't all; but he put down on the table a case of sardines and a glass bowl of beautiful honey, just as if he wanted to make my suffering unbearable. It was all I could do to stand it. At last, when he had everything ready, he went to a door at the end of the room and knocked. Something was said inside that I didn't catch, but he answered quickly, "Oui, Madame," and a minute after out they walked. Oh, Molly, there 's not words in the language to express even half of my feelings at that moment. Indeed, for a minute or two I would n't credit my senses, but thought it was an optical confusion. In she flounced, my dear, just as if she was walking into the Court of St. James's, with one arm within his, and the other hand gracefully holding up her dress, and *he*, with a glass stuck in his eye, gave us a look as he passed just as if we were the people of the place.

Down they sat in all state, smiling at each other, and settling their napkins as coolly as if they were at the Clarendon. "Will you try a rasher, my dear?" "Thanks, love; I'll trouble you." It was "love" and "dear" every word with them; and such looks as passed, Molly, I am ashamed even to think of it! Heaven

knows I never looked that way at K. I. There I sat watching them; for worlds I could n't take my eyes away; and though Mary Anne whispered and implored, and even tried to force me, I was chained to the spot. To be sure, it's little they minded me! They talked away about Lady Sarah This and Sir Joseph That; wondered if the Marquis had gone down to Scotland, and whether the Duchess would meet them at Milan. As I told you before, Molly, I was n't quite sure my eyes did n't betray me, and while I was thus struggling with my doubts, in came K. I. "I was over the whole place, Jemi," said he, "and there 's not a scrap of victuals to be had for love or money. They say, however, that there 's an English family – " When he got that far, he stopped short, for his eyes just fell on the pair at breakfast.

"May I never, Mrs. D.," said he, "but that's our friend Mrs. G. H. As sure as I'm here, that's herself and no other."

"And of course quite a surprise to you," said I, with a look, Molly, that went through him.

"Faith, I suppose so," said he, trying to laugh. "I wasn't exactly thinking of her at this moment. At all events, the meeting is fortunate; for one might die of hunger here."

I need n't tell you, Molly, that I 'd rather endure the trials of Tartary than I 'd touch a morsel belonging to her; but before I could say so, up he goes to the table, bowing, and smiling, and smirking in a way that I 'm sure he thought quite irresistible. She, however, never looked up from her teacup, but her companion stuck his glass in his eye, and stared impudently

without speaking.

"If I 'm not greatly mistaken," said K. I., "I have the honor and the happiness to see before me – "

"Mistake, – quite a mistake, my good man. Au! au!" said the other, cutting him short. "Never saw you before in my life!"

"Nor are *you*, sir, the object of my recognition. It is this lady, – Mrs. Gore Hampton."

She lifted her head at this, and stared at K. I. as coldly as if he was a wax image in a hairdresser's window.

"Don't you remember me, ma'am?" says he, in a soft voice; "or must I tell you my name?"

"I'm afraid even that, sir, would not suffice," said she, with a most insulting smile of compassion.

"Ain't you Mrs. Gore Hampton, ma'am?" asked he, trembling all over between passion and astonishment.

"Pray, do send him away, Augustus," said she, sipping her tea.

"Don't you perceive, sir – eh, au – don't you see – that it's a au – au, eh – a misconception – a kind of a demned blunder?"

"I tell you what I see, sir," said K. I., – "I see a lady that travelled day and night in my company, and with no other companion too, for two hundred and seventy miles; that lived in the same hotel, dined at the same table, and, what's more – "

But I could n't bear it any longer, Molly. Human nature is not strong enough for trials like this, – to hear him boasting before my face of his base behavior, and to see her sitting coolly by listening to it. I gave a screech that made the house ring, and

went off in the strongest fit of screaming ever I took in my life. I tore my cap to tatters, and pulled down my hair, – and, indeed, if what they say be true, my sufferings must have been dreadful; for I didn't leave a bit of whisker on one of the guides, and held another by the cheek till he was nigh insensible. I was four hours coming to myself; but many of the others were n't in a much better state when it was all over. The girls were completely overcome, and K. I. taken with spasms, that drew him up like a football. Meanwhile *she* and her friend were off; never till the last minute as much as saying one word to any of us, but going away, as I may say, with colors flying, and all the "horrors of war."

Oh, Molly, was n't that more than mere human fragility is required to bear, not to speak of the starvation and misery in my weak state? Black bread and onions, that was our dinner, washed down with the sourest vinegar, called wine forsooth, I ever tasted. And that's the way we crossed the Alps, my dear, and them the pleasures that accompanied us into the beautiful South.

If I wanted a proof of K. I.'s misconduct, Molly, was n't this scene decisive? Where would be the motive of her behavior, if it was n't conscious guilt? That was the ground I took in discussing the subject as we came along; and a more lamentable spectacle of confounded iniquity than he exhibited I never beheld. To be sure, I did n't spare him much, and jibed him on the ingratitude his devotion met with, till he grew nearly purple with passion. "Mrs. D.," said he, at last, "when we lived at home, in Ireland, we had our quarrels like other people, about the expense of the

house, and waste in the kitchen, the time the horses was kept out under the rain, and such-like, – but it never occurred to you to fancy me a gay Lutheran. What the – has put that in your head now? Is it coming abroad? for, if so, that's another grudge I owe this infernal excursion!"

"You've just guessed it, Mr. Dodd, then," said I. "When you were at home in your own place, you were content like the other old fools of your own time of life, with a knowing glance of the eye, a sly look, and maybe a passing word or two, to a pretty girl; but no sooner did you put foot on foreign ground than you fancied yourself a lady-killer! You never saw how absurd you were, though I was telling it to you day and night. You would n't believe how the whole world was laughing at you, though I said so to the girls."

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