

**LEVER
CHARLES
JAMES**

LUTTRELL OF ARRAN

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Charles James Lever

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CHAPTER I. A WILD LANDSCAPE

“One half the world knows not how the other half lives,” says the adage; and there is a peculiar force in the maxim when applied to certain remote and little-visited districts in these islands, where the people are about as unknown to us as though they inhabited some lonely rock in the South Pacific.

While the great world, not very far off, busies itself with all the appliances of state and science, amusing its leisure by problems which, once on a time, would have been reserved for the studies of philosophers and sages, these poor creatures drag on an existence rather beneath than above the habits of savage life. Their dwellings, their food, their clothes, such as generations of their fathers possessed; and neither in their culture, their aspirations, nor their ways, advanced beyond what centuries back had seen them.

Of that group of islands off the north-west coast of Ireland called the Arrans, Innishmore is a striking instance of this neglect and desolation. Probably within the wide sweep of the British islands there could not be found a spot more irretrievably given up to poverty and barbarism. Some circular mud hovels, shaped like beehives, and with a central aperture for the escape of the smoke, are the dwellings of an almost naked, famine-stricken people, whose looks, language, and gestures mark them out for foreigners if they chance to come over to the mainland. Deriving their scanty subsistence almost entirely from fishing and kelp-burning, they depend for life upon the chances of the seasons, in a spot where storms are all but perpetual, and where a day of comparative calm is a rare event.

Curious enough it is to mark that in this wild, ungenial spot civilisation had once set foot, and some Christian pilgrims found a resting-place. There is no certain record of whence or how they first came, but the Abbey of St. Finbar dates from an early century, and the strong walls yet attest the size and proportions of the ancient monastery. Something like forty years ago the islanders learned that the owner of the island, of whose existence they then heard for the first time, proposed to come over and live there, and soon afterwards a few workmen arrived, and, in some weeks, converted the old crypt of the Abbey into something habitable, adding two small chambers to it, and building a chimney – a work of art – which, whether meant for defence or some religious object, was, during its construction, a much-debated question by the people. The intention to resume a sovereignty which had lain so long in abeyance would have been a bold measure in such a spot if it had not been preceded by the assurance that the chief meant to disturb nothing, dispute nothing of vested interests. They were told that he who was coming was a man weary of the world and its ways, who desired simply a spot of earth where he might live in peace, and where, dying, he might leave his bones with the Luttrells, whose graves for generations back thronged the narrow aisle of the church. These facts, and that he had a sickly wife and one child, a boy of a few years old, were all that they knew of him. If the bare idea of a superior was distasteful in a community where common misery had taught brotherhood, the notion was dispelled at sight of the sad, sorrow-stricken man who landed on an evening of September, and walked from the boat through the surf beside his wife, as two sailors carried her to shore. He held his little boy's hand, refusing the many offers that were made to carry him, though the foaming water surged at times above the little fellow's waist, and made him plunge with childish glee and laughter; that infant courage and light-heartedness going farther into the hearts of the wild people than if the father had come to greet them with costly presents!

John Luttrell was not above six-and-thirty, but he looked fifty; his hair was perfectly white, his blue eyes dimmed and circled with dark wrinkles, his shoulders stooped, and his look downcast. Of his wife it could be seen that she had once been handsome, but her wasted figure and incessant

cough showed she was in the last stage of consumption. The child was a picture of infantile beauty, and that daring boldness which sits so gracefully on childhood. If he was dressed in the very cheapest and least costly fashion, to the islanders he seemed attired in very splendour, and his jacket of dark crimson cloth and a little feather that he wore in his cap sufficed to win for him the name of the Prince, which he never lost afterward.

It could not be supposed that such an advent would not create a great stir and commotion in the little colony; the ways, the looks, the demeanour, and the requirements of the new comers, furnishing for weeks, and even months, topics for conversation; but gradually this wore itself out. Molly Ryan, the one sole domestic servant who accompanied the Luttrells, being of an uncommunicative temper, contributed no anecdotic details of in-door life to stimulate interest and keep curiosity alive. All that they knew of Luttrell was to meet him in his walks, and receive the short, not over-courteous nod with which he acknowledged their salutations. Of his wife, they only saw the wasted form that half lay, half sat at a window; so that all their thoughts were centred in the child-the Prince – who came familiarly amongst them, uncared for and unheeded by his own, and free to pass his days with the other children as they heaped wood upon the kelp fires, or helped the fishermen to dry their nets upon the shore. In the innocence of their primitive life this familiarity did not trench upon the respect they felt they owed him. They did not regard his presence as anything like condescension, they could not think of it as derogation, but they felt throughout that he was not one of them, and his golden hair and his tiny hands and feet were as unmistakable marks of station as though he wore a coronet or carried a sceptre.

The unbroken melancholy that seemed to mark Luttrell's life, his un-communicativeness, his want of interest or sympathy in all that went on around him, would have inspired, by themselves, a sense of fear amongst the people; but to these traits were added others that seemed to augment this terror. His days were passed in search of relics and antiquarian objects, of which the Abbey possessed a rich store, and to their simple intelligence these things smacked of magic. To hear the clink of his spade within the walls of the old church by day, and to see the lone light in his chamber, where it was rumoured he sat sleepless throughout the night, were always enough to exact a paternoster and a benediction from the peasant, whose whole religious training began and ended with these offices.

Nor was the child destined to escape the influence of this popular impression. He was rarely at home, and, when there, scarcely noticed or spoken to. His poor sick mother would draw him to her heart, and as she pressed his golden locks close to her, her tears would fall fast upon them, but dreading lest her sorrow should throw a shade over his sunny happiness, she would try to engage him in some out-of-door pursuit again – send him off to ask if the fishermen had taken a full haul, or when some one's new boat would be ready for launching.

Of the room in which the recluse sat, and wherein he alone ever entered, a chance peep through the ivy-covered casement offered nothing very reassuring. It was a narrow, lofty chamber, with a groined roof and a flagged floor, formed of ancient gravestones, the sculptured sides downwards. Two large stuffed seals sat guardwise on either side of the fireplace, over which, on a bracket, was an enormous human skull, an inscription being attached to it, with the reasons for believing its size to be gigantic rather than the consequences of diseased growth. Strange-shaped bones, and arrow-heads, and stone spears and javelins decorated the walls, with amber ornaments and clasps of metal. A massive font served as a washstand, and a broken stone cross formed a coat-rack. In one corner, enclosed by two planks, stood an humble bed, and opposite the fire was the only chair in the chamber – a rude contrivance, fashioned from a root of bog-oak, black with centuries of interment.

It was late at night that Luttrell sat here, reading an old volume, whose parchment cover was stained and discoloured by time. The window was open, and offered a wide view over the sea, on which a faint moonlight shone out at times, and whose dull surging plash broke with a uniform measure on the shore beneath.

Twice had he laid down his book, and, opening the door, stood to listen for a moment, and then resumed his reading; but it was easy to see that the pages did not engage his attention, nor was he able, as he sought, to find occupation in their contents.

At last there came a gentle tap to the door; he arose and opened it. It was the woman-servant who formed his household, who stood tearful and trembling before him.

“Well?” said he, in some emotion.

“Father Lowrie is come,” said she, timidly.

He only nodded, as though to say, “Go on.”

“And he’ll give her the rights,” continued she; “but he says he hopes that you’ll come over to Belmullet on Sunday, and declare at the altar how it was.”

“Declare what?” cried he; and his voice rose to a key of passionate eagerness that was almost a shriek. “Declare what?”

“He means, that you’ll tell the people – ”

“Send him here to me,” broke in Luttrell, angrily. “I’m not going to discuss this with you.”

“Sure isn’t he giving her the blessed Sacrament!” said she, indignantly.

“Leave me, then – leave me in peace,” said he, as he turned away and leaned his head on the chimney-piece; and then, without raising it, added, “and tell the priest to come to me before he goes away.”

The woman had not gone many minutes, when a heavy step approached the door, and a strong knock was heard. “Come in!” cried Luttrell, and there entered a short, slightly-made man, middle-aged and active-looking, with bright black eyes, and a tall, straight forehead, to whom Luttrell motioned the only chair as he came forward.

“It’s all over, Sir. She’s in glory!” said he, reverently.

“Without pain?” asked Luttrell.

“A parting pang – no more. She was calm to the last. Indeed, her last words were to repeat what she had pressed so often upon me.”

“I know – I know!” broke in Luttrell, impatiently. “I never denied it.”

“True, Sir; but you never acknowledged it,” said the priest, hardily. “When you had the courage to make a peasant girl your wife, you ought to have had the courage to declare it also.”

“To have taken her to the Court, I hope – to have presented her to Royalty – to have paraded my shame and my folly before a world whose best kindness was that it forgot me! Look here, Sir; my wife was brought up a Catholic; I never interfered with her convictions. If I never spoke to her on the subject of her faith, it was no small concession from a man who felt on the matter as I did. I sent for you to administer to her the rights of her Church, but not to lecture me on my duties or my obligations. What I ought to do, and when, I have not to learn from a Roman Catholic priest.”

“And yet, Sir, it is a Catholic priest will force you to do it. There was no stain on your wife’s fame, and there shall be none upon her memory.”

“What is the amount of my debt to you, Father Lowrie?” asked Luttrell, calmly and even courteously.

“Nothing, Sir; not a farthing. Her father was a good friend to me and mine before ruin overtook him. It wasn’t for money I came here to-night.”

“Then you leave me your debtor, Sir, and against my will.”

“But you needn’t be, Mr. Luttrell,” said the priest, with eagerness. “She that has just gone, begged and prayed me with her last breath to look after her little boy, and to see and watch that he was not brought up in darkness.”

“I understand you. You were to bring him into your own fold. If you hope for success for such a scheme, take a likelier moment, father; this is not your time. Leave me now, I pray you. I have much to attend to.”

“May I hope to have an early opportunity to see and talk with you, Mr. Luttrell?”

“You shall hear from me, Sir, on the matter, and early,” said Luttrell. “Your own good feeling will show this is not the moment to press me.”

Abashed by the manner in which these last words were spoken, the father bowed low and withdrew.

“Well?” cried the servant-woman, as he passed out, “will he do it, your reverence?”

“Not to-day, anyhow, Molly,” said he, with a sigh.

How Luttrell sorrowed for the loss of his wife was not known. It was believed that he never passed the threshold of the door where she lay – never went to take one farewell look of her. He sat moodily in his room, going out at times to give certain orders about the funeral, which was to take place on the third day. A messenger had been despatched to his late wife’s relatives, who lived about seventy miles off, down the coast of Mayo, and to invite them to attend. Of her immediate family none remained. Her father was in banishment, the commutation of a sentence of death. Of her two brothers, one had died on the scaffold, and another had escaped to America, whither her three sisters had followed him; so that except her uncle, Peter Hogan, and his family, and a half-brother of her mother’s, a certain Joe Rafter, who kept a shop at Lahinch, there were few to follow her to the grave as mourners.

Peter had four sons and several daughters, three of them married. They were of the class of small farmers, very little above the condition of the cottier; but they were, as a family, a determined, resolute, hard-headed race, not a little dreaded in the neighbourhood where they lived, and well known to be knit together by ties that made an injury to any one of them a feud that the whole family would avenge.

For years and years Luttrell had not seen nor even heard of them. He had a vague recollection of having seen Peter Hogan at his marriage, and once or twice afterwards, but preserved no recollection of him. Nothing short of an absolute necessity – for as such he felt it – would have induced him to send for them now; but he knew well how rigid were popular prejudices, and how impossible it would have been for him to live amongst a people whose most cherished feelings he would have outraged, had he omitted the accustomed honours to the dead.

He told his servant Molly to do all that was needful on the occasion – to provide for those melancholy festivities which the lower Irish adhere to with a devotion that at once blends their religious ardour with their intensely strong imaginative power.

“There is but one thing I will not bear,” said he. “They must not come in upon me. I will see them when they come, and take leave of them when they go; but they are not to expect me to take any part in their proceedings. Into this room I will suffer none to enter.”

“And Master Harry,” said the woman, wiping her eyes with her apron – “what’s to be done with him? ‘Tis two days that he’s there, and he won’t leave the corpse.”

“It’s a child’s sorrow, and will soon wear itself out.”

“Ay, but it’s killing him!” said she, tenderly – “it’s killing him in the mean while.”

“He belongs to a tough race,” said he, with a bitter smile, “that neither sorrow nor shame ever killed. Leave the boy alone, and he’ll come to himself the sooner.”

The peasant woman felt almost sick in her horror at such a sentiment, and she moved towards the door to pass out.

“Have you thought of everything, Molly?” asked he, more mildly.

“I think so, Sir. There’s to be twenty-eight at the wake – twenty-nine, if Mr. Rafter comes; but we don’t expect him – and Father Lowrie would make thirty; but we’ve plenty for them all.”

“And when will this – this feasting – take place?”

“The night before the funeral, by coorse,” said the woman.

“And they will all leave this the next morning, Molly?”

“Indeed I suppose they will, Sir,” said she, no less offended at the doubt than at the inhospitable meanness of the question.

“So be it, then!” said he, with a sigh. “I have nothing more to say.”

“You know, Sir,” said she, with a great effort at courage, “that they’ll expect your Honour will go in for a minute or two – to drink their healths, and say a few words to them?”

He shook his head in dissent, but said nothing.

“The Hogans is as proud a stock as any in Mayo, Sir,” said she, eagerly, “and if they thought it was any disrespect to her that was gone –”

“Hold your tongue, woman,” cried he, impatiently. “She was my wife, and *I* know better what becomes her memory than these ignorant peasants. Let there be no more of this;” and he closed the door after her as she went out, and turned the key in it, in token that he would not brook more disturbance.

CHAPTER II. A YACHTING PARTY

In a beautiful little bay on the north-east of Innishmore, land-locked on all sides but the entrance, a handsome schooner yacht dropped her anchor just as the sun was setting. Amidst the desolate grandeur of those wild cliffs, against which the sea surged and plashed till the very rocks were smooth worn, that graceful little craft, with her tall and taper spars, and all her trim adjuncts, seemed a strange vision. It was the contrast of civilisation with barbarism; they were the two poles of what are most separated in life – wealth and poverty.

The owner was a Baronet, a certain Sir Gervais Vyner – one of those spoiled children of fortune which England alone rears; for while in other lands high birth and large fortune confer their distinctive advantages, they do not tend, as they do with us, to great social eminence, and even political influence. Vyner had got almost every prize in this world's lottery; all, indeed, but one; his only child was a daughter, and this was the drop that sufficed to turn to bitterness much of that cupful of enjoyment Fate had offered to his lips. He had seen a good deal of life – done a little of everything – on the turf – in the hunting-field – on the floor of the House he had what was called “held his own.” He was, in fact, one of those accomplished, well-mannered, well-looking people, who, so long as not pushed by any inordinate ambition into a position of undue importance, invariably get full credit for all the abilities they possess, and, what is better still, attract no ill will for the possessing them. As well as having done everything, he had been everywhere: up the Mediterranean, up the Baltic, into the Black Sea, up the St. Lawrence – everywhere but to Ireland – and now, in a dull autumn, when too late for a distant tour, he had induced his friend Grenfell to accompany him in a short cruise, with the distinct pledge that they were not to visit Dublin, or any other of those cognate cities of which Irishmen are vain, but which to Mr. George Grenfell represented all that was an outrage on good taste, and an insult to civilisation. Mr. Grenfell, in one word, entertained for Ireland and the Irish sentiments that wouldn't have been thought very complimentary if applied to Fejee islanders, with certain hopeless forebodings as to the future than even Fejee itself might have resented as unfair.

Nobody knew why these two men were friends, but they were so. They seemed utterly unsuited in every way. Vyner loved travel, incident, adventure, strange lands, and strange people; he liked the very emergencies, the roughings of the road. Grenfell was a Londoner, who only tolerated, and not very patiently, whatever was beyond an easy drive of Hyde Park Corner. Vyner was a man of good birth, and had high connexions on every side – advantages of which he no more dreamed of being vain, than of the air he breathed. Mr. Grenfell was a nobody, with the additional disparagement of being a nobody that every one knew. Grenfell's Italian warehouse, Grenfell's potted meats, his pickled salmon, his caviare, his shrimps, his olives, and his patent macaroni, being European in celebrity, and, though the means by which his father made an enormous fortune, were miseries which poisoned life, rising spectre-like before him on every dinner-table, and staring at him in great capitals in every supplement of the *Times*. He would have changed his name, but he knew well that it would have availed him nothing. The disguise would only have invited discovery, and the very mention of him exacted the explanation, “No more a Seymour nor a Villiers than you are; the fellow is old Grenfell's son; ‘Grenfell's Game Sauce,’ and the rest of it.” A chance resemblance to a fashionable Earl suggested another expedient, and Mr. George Grenfell got it about – how, it is not easy to say – that the noble Lord had greatly admired his mother, and paid her marked attention at Scarborough. Whatever pleasure Mr. George Grenfell felt in this theory is not easy to explain; nor have we to explain what we simply narrate as a fact, without the slightest pretension to account for.

Such were the two men who travelled together, and the yacht also contained Vyner's daughter Ada, a little girl of eight, and her governess, Mademoiselle Heinzleman, a Hanoverian lady, who claimed a descent from the Hohenzollerns, and had pride enough for a Hapsburg. If Vyner and Grenfell were not very much alike in tastes, temperament, and condition, Grenfell and the German

governess were positively antipathies; nor was their war a secret or a smouldering fire, but a blaze, to which each brought fuel every day, aiding the combustion by every appliance of skill and ingenuity.

Vyner loved his daughter passionately – not even the disappointment that she had not been a boy threw any cloud over his affection – and he took her with him when and wherever he could; and, indeed, the pleasure of having her for a companion now made this little home tour one of the most charming of all his excursions, and in her childish delight at new scenes and new people he renewed all his own memories of early travel.

“Here you are, Sir,” said Mr. Crab, late a sailing-master in the Royal Navy, but now in command of *The Meteor*– “here you are;” and he pointed with his finger to a little bay on the outspread chart that covered the cabin table. “This is about it! It may be either of these two; each of them looks north – north by east – and each has this large mountain to the south’ard and west’ard.”

“‘The north islands of Arran,’ read out Vyner, slowly, from a little MS. note-book. ‘Innishmore, the largest of them, has several good anchorages, especially on the eastern side, few inhabitants, and all miserably poor. There is the ruin of an Abbey, and a holy well of great reputed antiquity, and a strange relic of ancient superstition called the Judgment-stone, on which he who lays his hand while denouncing a wrong done him by another, brings down divine vengeance on either his enemy or himself, according as his allegation is just or unjust. There is something similar to be found in the Breton laws – ”

“For mercy’s sake don’t give us more of that tiresome little book, which, from the day we sailed, has never contributed one single hint as to where we could find anything to eat, or even water fit to drink,” said Grenfell. “Do you mean to go on shore in this barbarous place?”

“Of course I do. Crab intends us to pass two days here; we have sprung our for’topmast, and must look to it.”

“Blessed invention a yacht! As a means of locomotion, there’s not a cripple but could beat it; and as a place to live in, to eat, sleep, wash, and exercise, there’s not a cell in Brixton is not a palace in comparison.”

“Mademoiselle wish to say good night, Sare Vyner,” said the governess, a tall, fair-haired lady, with very light eyes, thick lips, and an immense lower jaw, a type, but not a flattering type, of German physiognomy.

“Let her come by all means;” and in an instant the door burst open, and with the spring of a young fawn the little girl was fast locked in her father’s arms.

“Oh, is it not very soon to go to bed, papa dearest?” cried she; “and it would be so nice to wait a little and see the moon shining on these big rocks here.”

“What does Mademoiselle Heinzleman say?” asked Vyner, smiling at the eager face of the child.

The lady appealed to made no other reply than by the production of a great silver watch with an enormous dial.

“That is a real curiosity,” cried Grenfell. “Is it permissible to ask a nearer view of that remarkable clock, Miss Heinzleman?”

“Freilich!” said she, not suspecting the slightest trace of raillery in the request. “It was made at Wurtzburg, by Jacob Schmelling, year time 1736.”

“And intended, probably, for the Town-hall?”

“No, Saar,” replied she, detecting the covert sneer; “intended for him whose arms it bear, Gottfried von Heinzleman, Burgomeister of Wurtzburg, a German noble, who neither made sausages nor sold Swiss cheeses.”

“Good night! good night! my own darling!” said Vyner, kissing his child affectionately. “You shall have a late evening to-morrow, and a walk in the moonlight too;” and after a hearty embrace from the little girl, and a respectful curtsy from the governess, returned with a not less respectful deference on his own part, Vyner closed the door after them, and resumed his seat.

“What cursed tempers those Germans have,” said Grenfell, trying to seem careless and easy; “even that good-natured joke about her watch she must take amiss.”

“Don’t forget, George,” said Vyner, good humouredly, “that in any little passage of arms between you, you have the strong position, and hers is the weak one.”

“I wish *she* would have the kindness to remember that fact, but she is an aggressive old damsel, and never looks so satisfied as when she imagines she has said an impertinence.”

“She is an excellent governess, and Ada is very fond of her.”

“So much the worse for Ada.”

“What do you mean by that?” cried Vyner, with an energy that surprised the other.

“Simply this; that by a man who professes to believe that objects of beauty are almost as essential to be presented to the eyes of childhood as maxims of morality, such a choice in a companion for his daughter is inexplicable. The woman is ugly, her voice discordant and jarring, her carriage and bearing atrocious – and will you tell me that all these will fail to make their impression when associated with every tone and every incident of childhood?”

“You are not in your happiest mood to-night, George. Was the claret bad?”

“I drank none of it. I took some of that Moselle cup, and it was tolerably good. By the way, when and how are we to get some ice? Carter says we have very little left.”

“Perhaps there may be glaciers in the wild region beside us. Ireland and Iceland have only a consonant between them. What if we go ashore and have a look at the place?”

A careless shrug of assent was the answer, and soon afterwards the trim yawl, manned by four stout fellows, skimmed across the smooth bay, and landed Vyner and his friend on a little rocky promontory that formed a natural pier.

It was complete desolation on every side of them: the mountain which rose from the sea was brown and blue with moss and heather, but not a human habitation, not an animal, marked its side; a few sea-birds skimmed fearlessly across the water, or stood perched on peaks of rock close to the travellers, and a large seal heavily plunged into the depth as they landed; save these, not a sign of anything living could be seen.

“There is something very depressing in this solitude,” said Grenfell; “I detest these places where a man is thrown back upon himself.”

“Do you know, then, that at this very moment I was speculating on buying a patch of land here to build a cottage; a cabin of three or four rooms, where one might house himself if ever he came this way.”

“But why should he come this way? What on earth should turn any man’s steps twice in this direction?”

“Come, come, George! You’ll not deny that all this is very fine: that great mountain rising abruptly from the sea, with that narrow belt of yellow beach below it; those wild fantastic rocks, with their drooping seaweed; those solemn caves, wherein the rumbling sea rushes to issue forth again in some distant cleft, – are all objects of grandeur and beauty, and, for myself, I feel as if I could linger for days amongst them unwearied.”

“What was that?” cried Grenfell, as they now gained a crest of the ridge, and could see a wild irregular valley that lay beneath, the shades of evening deepening into very blackness the lower portions of the landscape. “Was that thunder, or the roar of the sea? There it is again!”

They listened for a few moments, and again there came, borne on the faint land-breeze, a sound that swelled from a feeble wail to a wild sustained cry, rising and falling till it died away just as it had begun. It was indescribably touching, and conveyed a sense of deep sorrow, almost of despair. It might have been the last cry of a sinking crew as the waves closed above them; and so indeed did it seem to Vyner, as he said, “If there had been a storm at sea, I’d have sworn that sound came from a shipwreck.”

“I suppose it is only some other pleasant adjunct of the charming spot you would select for a villa,” said Grenfell; “perhaps the seals or the grampuses are musical.”

“Listen to that!” cried Vyner, laying a hand on his arm; “and see! yonder – far away to the left – there is a light!”

“Well, if there be inhabitants here, I’m not astonished that they cry over it.”

“Let us find out what it can mean, George.”

“Have you any arms about you? I have left my revolver behind, and have nothing but this sword-cane.”

“I have not as much, and feel pretty certain we shall not need it. Every traveller in Ireland, even in the remotest tracts, bear witness to the kindness which is extended to the stranger.”

“They who come back from the Rocky Mountains are invariably in love with the Sioux Indians. The testimony that one wants, is from the fellows who have been scalped.”

“What an intense prejudice you have against all that is Irish!”

“Say, if you like, that I have a prejudice against all mock cordiality, mock frankness, mock hospitality, and mock intrepidity.”

“Stay, George! you can’t impugn their courage.”

“I don’t want to impugn anything beyond the inordinate pretensions to be something better, braver, more amiable, and more gifted than all the rest of the world. I say, Vyner, I have had quite enough of this sort of walking; my feet are cut to pieces with these sharp stones, and every second step is into a puddle. Do you mean to go on?”

“Certainly; I am determined to see what that light means.” “Then I turn back. I’ll send the boat in again, and tell them to hoist a lantern, which, if the natives have not done for you in the mean while, you’ll see on the beach.”

“Come along; don’t be lazy.”

“It’s not laziness. I could walk a Parisian Boulevard for these three hours; what I object to is, the certainty of a cold, and the casualty of a sprained ankle. A pleasant journey to you;” and, as he spoke, he turned abruptly round, and began to retrace his steps.

Vyner looked after him; he called after him too, for a moment, but, as the other never heeded, he lighted a fresh cigar and continued his way.

The light, which seemed to tremble and flicker at first, shone steadily and brightly as he drew nearer, and at length he hit upon a sort of pathway which greatly assisted his advance. The way, too, led gradually downwards, showing that the glen or valley was far deeper than he at first supposed it. As he went on, the moon, a faint crescent, came out, and showed him the gable of an old ruin rising above some stunted trees, through whose foliage, at times, he fancied he saw the glitter of a light. These lay in a little cleft that opened to the sea, and on the shore, drawn up, were two boats, on whose sides the cold moonlight shone clearly.

“So, there are people who live here!” thought he; “perhaps Grenfell was right. It might have been as well to have come armed!” He hesitated to go on. Stories of wreckers, tales of wild and lawless men in remote untravelled lands, rose to his mind and he half doubted if it were prudent to proceed farther. Half ashamed of his fears, half dreading the bantering he was sure to meet from Grenfell, he went forward. The path led to a small river in which stepping-stones were placed, and crossing this, the foot track became broader and evidently had been more travelled. The night was now perfectly still and calm, the moonlight touched the mountain towards its peak, but all beneath was in sombre blackness, more especially near the old church, whose ruined gable his eyes, as they grew familiarised with the darkness, could clearly distinguish. Not a sound of that strange unearthly dirge that he first heard was audible; all was silent; so silent, indeed, that he was startled by the sharp crackling of the tall reeds which grew close to the path and which he occasionally broke as he pressed forward. His path stopped abruptly at a stone stile, over which he clambered, and found himself in a little enclosure planted with potatoes, beyond which was a dense copse of thorns and hazel, so tangled that the path

became very tortuous and winding. On issuing from this, he found himself in front of a strong glare of light, which issued from a circular window of the gable several feet above his head; at the same time that he heard a sort of low monotonous moaning sound, broken at intervals by a swell of chorus, which he at length detected was the response of people engaged in prayer. Creeping stealthily around through dockweeds and nettles, he at last found a narrow loop-holed window to which his hands could just reach, and to which, after a brief effort, he succeeded in lifting himself. The scene on which he now looked never faded from his memory. In the long narrow aisle of the old Abbey a company of men and women sat two deep round the walls, the space in the centre being occupied by a coffin placed on trestles; rude torches of bog-pine stuck in the walls threw a red and lurid glare over the faces, and lit up their expressions with a vivid distinctness. At the head of the coffin sat an old grey-headed man of stern and forbidding look, and an air of savage determination, which even grief had not softened; and close beside him, on a low stool, sat a child, who, overcome by sleep as it seemed, had laid his head on the old man's knee, and slept profoundly. From this old man proceeded the low muttering words which the others answered by a sort of chant, the only interruption to which was when any one of the surrounders would rise from his place to deposit some small piece of money on a plate which stood on the coffin, and was meant to contain the offerings for the priest.

If the language they spoke in was strange and unintelligible to Vyner's ears, it did not the less convey, as the sound of Irish unfailingly does to all unaccustomed ears, a something terribly energetic and passionate – every accent was striking, and every tone full of power – but far more still was he struck by the faces on every side. He had but seen the Irish of St. Giles's; the physiognomy he alone knew was that blended one of sycophancy and dissipation that a degraded and demoralised class wear. He had never before seen that fierce vigour and concentrated earnestness which mark the native face. Still less had he any idea what its expression could become when heightened by religious fervour. There were fine features, noble foreheads wide and spacious, calm brows, and deeply-set eyes, in many around, but in all were the lower jaw and the mouth coarse and depraved-looking. There was no lack of power, it is true, but it was a power that could easily adapt itself to violence and cruelty, and when they spoke, so overmastering seemed this impulse of their natures, that the eyes lost the gentleness they had worn, and flashed with an angry and vindictive brilliancy.

Drink was served round at intervals, and freely partaken of, and from the gestures and vehemence of the old man, Vyner conjectured that something like toasts were responded to. At moments, too, the prayers for the dead would seem to be forgotten, and brief snatches of conversation would occur, and even joke and laughter were heard; when suddenly, and as though to recal them to the solemn rites of the hour, a voice, always a woman's, would burst in with a cry, at first faint, but gradually rising till it became a wild yell, at one particular cadence of which – just as one has seen a spaniel howl at a certain note – the rest would seem unable to control themselves, and break in with a rush of sound that made the old walls ring again. Dreadful as it had seemed before, it was far more fearful now, as he stood close by, and could mark, besides, the highly-wrought expressions – the terribly passionate faces around.

So fascinated was he by the scene – so completely had its terrible reality impressed him – that Vyner could not leave the spot, and he gazed till he knew, and for many a long year after could remember, every face that was there. More than once was he disposed to venture in amongst them, and ask, as a stranger, the privilege of joining the solemnity, but fear withheld him; and as the first pinkish streak or dawn appeared, he crept cautiously down and alighted on the grass.

By the grey half-light he could now see objects around him, and perceive that the Abbey was a small structure with little architectural pretensions, though from the character of the masonry of very great age. At one end, where a square tower of evidently later date stood, something like an attempt at a dwelling-house existed – at least, two windows of unequal size appeared, and a low doorway, the timbers of which had once formed part of a ship. Passing round the angle of this humble home, he saw a faint streak of light issue from an open casement, over which a wild honeysuckle had grown,

attaching itself to the iron bars that guarded the window, and almost succeeding in shutting out the day. Curious for a glance within this strange dwelling-place, Vyner stole near and peeped in. A tiny oil-lamp on a table was the only light, but it threw its glare on the face of a man asleep in a deep armchair – a pale, careworn, melancholy face it was, with a mass of white hair unkempt hanging partly across it! Vyner passed his hands across his eyes as though to satisfy himself that he was awake. He looked again; he even parted the twigs of the honeysuckle to give him more space, and, as he gazed, the sleeper turned slightly, so that the full features came to view.

“Good God! It is Luttrell!” muttered Vyner, as he quietly stole away and set out for the beach.

Anxious at his long absence, two of his crew had come in search of him, and in their company he returned to the shore and went on board.

CHAPTER III. AN OLD STORY

It was late in the day when Vyner awoke, and got up. Late as it was, he found Grenfell at breakfast. Seated under an awning on the deck, before a table spread with every luxury, that much-to-be-pitied individual was, if not watering his bread with tears, sipping his chocolate with chagrin. "He had no newspaper!" – no broad sheet of gossip, with debates, divorces, bankruptcies, and defalcations – no moral lessons administered to foreign Kings and Kaisers, to show them how the Press of England had its eye on them, and would not fail to expose their short-comings to that great nation, which in the succeeding leader was the text for a grand pæan over increased revenue and augmented exports.

Grenfell had a very national taste for this sort of reading. It supplied to him, as to many others, a sort of patent patriotism, which, like his father's potted meats, could be carried to any climate, and be always fresh.

"Is not this a glorious day, George?" said Vyner, as he came on deck. "There is something positively exhilarating in the fresh and heath-scented air of that great mountain."

"I'd rather follow a watering-cart down Piccadilly, if I was on the look-out for a sensation. How long are we to be moored in this dreary spot?"

"Not very long. Don't be impatient, and listen while I recount to you my adventure of last night."

"Let me fill my pipe, then. Carter, fetch me my meerschaum. Now for it," said he, as he disposed his legs on an additional chair. "I only hope the story has no beautiful traits of Irish peasant life, for I own to no very generous dispositions with regard to these interesting people, when I see the place they live in."

Not in the slightest degree moved by the other's irritability, Vyner began a narrative of his ramble, told with all the power that a recent impression could impart of the scene of the wake, and pictured graphically enough the passion-wrought faces and wild looks of the mourners.

"I was coming away at last," said he, "when, on turning an angle of the old church, I found myself directly in front of a little window, from which a light issued. I crept close and peeped in, and there, asleep in a large arm-chair, was a man I once knew well – as well, or even better, than I know you – a man I had chummed with at Christ Church, and lived for years with, on terms of close affection. If it were not that his features were such as never can be forgotten, I might surely have failed to recognise him, for though my own contemporary, he looked fully fifty."

"Who was he?" abruptly broke in Grenfell.

"You shall hear. Luttrell!"

"Luttrell! Luttrell! You don't mean the fellow who was to have married your sister-in-law?"

"The same; the first man of his day at Christ Church, the great prizeman and medallist, 'the double first,' and, what many thought more of, the best-looking fellow in Oxford."

"I forget the story. He wanted to marry some one, and she wouldn't have him. What was it?"

"He wanted to marry my wife," said Vyner, rather nettled at the cool carelessness of the other. "She was, however, engaged to me, and she said, 'I have a sister so very like me, that we are constantly taken for each other; come here next week, and you'll meet her.' They met, liked each other, and were contracted to be married. I want to be very brief, so I shall skip over all but the principal points."

"Do so," said the other, dryly.

"Everything went well for a time. All inquiries as to his fortune, position, connexions, and so forth, were found satisfactory by the Courtenays, when some busybody whispered to Georgina that there was an ugly story about him in Ireland, and suggested that she should ask under what circumstances he had quitted the Irish University and come over to take his degree at Oxford. Luttrell was considerably agitated when the question was put to him, though they were alone at the time; and, after a brief struggle with himself, he said, 'I'd rather you had not asked me about this, but I meant to have told you of it myself, one day. The thing is very simple, and not very serious. The only thing,

however, I exact is, that the confession is to and for yourself alone. You have a right to know the fact; I have a right, that it be kept a secret.'

"She gave the pledge he required, and he went on to say that there existed in Ireland a secret society known by the name of United Irishmen, whose designs were, time and place suiting, to throw off their allegiance to England, and declare for Irish independence. This association was so far formidable, that it embraced men of all classes and conditions, and men of all religious professions, the majority being Presbyterians. He was one of these, and a very foremost one; drawn into the league, in reality, rather by the warm enthusiasm of a generous nature than by any mature consideration of the object or its consequences. In some contest for a prize at College – a gold medal in science, I believe – Luttrell's closest competitor was the son of the Provost of the University; but, after a three days' conflict, Luttrell was victorious. When the day of awarding the honours came, Luttrell presented himself at the Hall to receive his laurels, but what was his astonishment to hear, as he entered, that he would be first required to subscribe a declaration that he was not a member of any secret or treasonable society.

"'If you mean,' cried he to the Proctor, who recited the terms of the declaration – 'if you mean me to say that I am not an United Irishman, I will not do so. Give your gold medal to that gentleman yonder,' added he, pointing to the son of the Provost; 'his father's loyalty deserves every testimony you can confer on it.' He left the Hall, took his name off the books, and quitted Ireland the next day. It was gravely debated whether an expulsion should not be passed upon him; but, in consideration of his great collegiate distinction and his youth, the extreme rigour was spared him, and he was suffered to leave uncensured.

"Either the confession was not what she expected, or that she fancied it might cover something far more serious beneath it, but Georgina was not satisfied with the story. She again and again reverted to it. Not a day that they walked out alone that she would not turn the conversation on this theme, which, by frequent discussion, Luttrell came at length to talk of, without any of the reserve he at first maintained. Indeed, some of this was, in a measure, forced upon him, for she questioned him closely as to the details of the association, how far it involved him, and to what extent he was yet bound by its obligations.

"It was in a sort of defence of himself, one day, that he so far forgot prudence as to declare that the society numbered amongst its members many men not only high in station, but actually regarded as strong adherents of the English party. He told how this, that, and the other, who were seen at every levee of the Castle, and not unfrequently quoted as guests of the Viceroy's table, were brothers of this league; and he indeed mentioned names of distinction and eminence.

"In her eagerness to confute all her father's opinions on this matter – for she had told him the whole story from the first – Georgina hastened off to enumerate the great men who were engaged in this treason. Two were in Parliament, one was a Law Adviser of the Crown, another was a Commissioner of Customs, and generally regarded as an active partisan of the Government. I remember these, but there were many others of equal note. Mr. Courtenay, who, besides being a ministerial supporter, had once been private secretary to Lord Castlereagh, divulged the whole to the Home Secretary. Investigations were instituted, and, although United Irishism had lost its sting after Emmett's failure, all who had once belonged to it were marked men, and black-listed in consequence.

"I have been told that the consternation which the disclosure created in Ireland was terrific. Men resigned their commissions of the peace, pretended ill health, went abroad; lawyers and physicians of eminence were ashamed to show their faces; and a well-known editor of a violently 'English' newspaper disposed of his journal and went to America.

"'Who is the traitor?' was now the universal demand; and, indeed, in the patriotic papers the question stood forth every morning in great capitals.

“Who was the traitor?” none could positively assert; but the controversy was carried on without any squeamish delicacy, and if the papers did not fix on the man, they very freely discussed the probability or improbability of this or that one.

“Why not Luttrell?” said one writer in a famous print. ‘His father betrayed us before.’ This was an allusion to his having voted for the Union. ‘Why not Luttrell?’ They entered thereupon into some curious family details, to show how these Luttrells had never been ‘true blue’ to any cause. That, with good abilities and fair prospects, they were not successful men, just because they couldn’t be honest to their party, or even to themselves. They were always half way between two opinions, ‘and,’ as the writer said, ‘far more eager to have two roads open to them than to travel either of them.’ Whether excited by a theme which had engrossed much of public attention, or incited by some personal animosity, this editor devoted a portion of each day’s paper to Luttrell. The result was a hostile message. They met and exchanged shots, when the newspaper writer at once declared, ‘If Mr. Luttrell will now disown any connexion with this act of betrayal, I am ready to beg his pardon for all that I have said of him.’ Luttrell for a moment made no reply, and then said, ‘Take your pistol, Sir; I have no explanations to make you.’ At the next fire, Luttrell fell wounded. He was upwards of two months laid in his bed. I saw him frequently during that time; and though we talked every day of the Courtenays, I had not the courage to tell him that they were determined the match should be broken off. Georgina herself – how, I cannot well say, nor ever clearly understood – being brought to believe that Luttrell had done what would for ever exclude him from the society of his equals. I cannot dwell on a period so full of miserable recollections. I never passed so many hours of torture as when sitting by that poor fellow’s bedside. I listened to all his bright projects for a future which in my heart I knew was closed to him for ever. As his convalescence advanced, my task grew more difficult. He used to ask every day when he would be permitted to write to her; he wondered, too, why she had not sent him a few lines, or some token – as a book, or a flower. He questioned and cross-questioned me about her daily life; how she felt his misfortune; had she received a correct account of the incident of the duel; what her family thought and said; and, last of all, why Mr. Courtenay himself had only called once or twice, and never asked to come up and see him?

“My own marriage was to take place early in May. It was now April; and at one time there had been some talk of the two sisters being married on the same day. It was late in the month; I am not clear about the date, but I remember it was on a Sunday morning. I was sitting with him, and he lay propped up on a sofa, to enable him to take his breakfast with me. ‘I was thinking all last night, Vyner,’ said he – ‘and nothing but a sick man’s selfishness could have prevented my thinking it long ago – how you must hate me.’

“Hate *you*, and why?”

“Because but for me and my misfortune you’d have been married by the sixth or seventh, and now, who knows how long you must wait?”

“I saw at once that the double marriage was running in his mind, and though my own was fixed for the following Thursday or Friday, I had not nerve to say so; nor was my embarrassment the less that Mr. Courtenay had charged me with the task of telling Luttrell that all should be considered as at an end, and every day used to question me if I had yet done so.

“Now or never,” thought I, as Luttrell said this; but when I turned and saw his wasted cheek, still pink with hectic, and his glassy, feverish eye, I shrunk again from the attempt.

“Why did you look at me so pitifully, Vyner?” said he, eagerly; ‘has the doctor told you that I shall not rub through?’

“Nothing of the kind, man; he says he’ll have you down at Hastings before a fortnight is over.”

“What was it, then? Do I look very fearfully?”

“Not even that. You are pulled down, of course. No man looks the better for eight or ten weeks on a sick-bed.”

“Then it is something else,” said he, thoughtfully; and I made no answer.

“Well,’ said he, with a deep sigh, ‘I have had my forebodings of – I don’t know what – but of something that was over me all this time back; and when I lay awake at night, wondering in what shape this disaster would come, I have ever consoled myself by saying, “Well, Vyner certainly does not know it; Vyner has no suspicion of it.” If now, however, I were to be wrong in this; if, in reality, Vyner *did* know that a calamity impended me; and if – here he fixed his bright staring eyes with their wide pupils full upon me – ‘if Vyner knew something, and only forbore to break it to me because he saw me a poor sickly wasted creature, whose courage he doubted, all I can say is, he does not know the stuff the Luttrells are made of.’

“I tried to answer this, but all I could do was to take his hand and press it between my own. ‘Out with it, like a good fellow,’ cried he, with an effort to seem gay – ‘out with it, and you’ll see whether I am too vain of my pluck!’

“I turned partly away – at least so far that I could not see his face nor he mine – and I told him everything. I cannot remember how I began or ended. I cannot tell what miserable attempts I made to excuse or to palliate, nor what poor ingenuity I practised to make him believe that all was for the best. I only know that I would have given worlds that he should have interrupted me or questioned me; but he never spoke a word, and when I had concluded he sat there still in silence.

“‘You are a man of honour, Vyner,’ said he, in a low but unshaken voice that thrilled through my heart. ‘Tell me one thing. On your word as a gentleman, has – has – she – ’ I saw that he was going to say the name, but stopped himself. ‘Has she been coerced in this affair?’

“‘I believe not. I sincerely believe not. In discussing the matter before her, she has gradually come to see, or at least to suppose – ’

“‘There, there; that will do!’ cried he aloud, and with a full tone that resembled his voice in health. ‘Let us talk of it no more. I take it you’ll go abroad after your wedding?’

“I muttered out some stupid common-place, I talked away at random for some minutes, and at last I said good-by. When I came back the next morning he was gone. He had been carried on board of a steam-vessel for some port in the south of Ireland, and left not a line nor a message behind him. From that hour until last night I never set eyes on him.”

“‘You have heard of him, I suppose?’” asked Grenfell.

“Vaguely and at long intervals. He would seem to have mixed himself up with the lowest political party in Ireland – men who represent, in a certain shape, the revolutionary section in France – and though the very haughtiest aristocrat I think I ever knew, and at one time the most fastidious ‘fine gentleman,’ there were stories of his having uttered the most violent denunciations of rank, and inveighed in all the set terms of the old French Convention against the distinctions of class. Last of all, I heard that he had married a peasant girl, the daughter of one of his cottier tenants, and that, lost to all sense of his former condition, had become a confirmed drunkard.”

“The moral of all which is, that your accomplished sister-in-law had a most fortunate escape.”

“I’m not so sure of that. I think Luttrell was a man to have made a great figure in the world. He swept college of its prizes, he could do anything he tried, and, unlike many other clever men, he had great powers of application. He had, too, high ability as a public speaker, and in an age like ours, where oratory does so much, he might have had a most brilliant career in Parliament.”

“There is nothing more delusive than arguing from a fellow’s school or collegiate successes to his triumphs in after life. The first are purely intellectual struggles; but the real battle of life is fought out by tact, and temper, and courage, and readiness, and fifty other things, that have no distinct bearing on mind. Your man there would have failed just as egregiously amongst gentlemen as he has done amongst the ‘canaille’ that he descended to. He had failure written on his passport when he started in life.”

“I don’t believe it; I can’t believe it.”

“Your sister-in-law, I think, never married?”

“No. She has refused some excellent offers, and has declared she never will marry.”

“How like a woman all that! She first mars a man’s fortune, and, by way of a reparation, she destroys her own. That is such feminine logic!”

“Is that a dog they have got in the bow of the launch, yonder?” said Vyner, directing the captain’s attention to one of the boats of the yacht that was now pulling briskly out from the land.

“Well, Sir, as well as I can make out, it’s a child,” said he, as he drew the telescope from the slings, and began to adjust it. “Yes, Sir, it’s a native they have caught, and a wild-looking specimen too;” and he handed the glass to Vyner.

“Poor little fellow! He seems dressed in rabbit-skins. Where is Ada? She must see him.”

CHAPTER IV. ON BOARD

“It was not an easy matter to get him to come, Sir,” said the sailor in a whisper to Vyner, as he assisted the boy to get on the deck.

“Where did you find him?”

“Sitting all alone on that rocky point yonder, Sir; he seemed to have been crying, and we suspect he has run away from home.”

Vyner now turned to look at the child, who all this while stood calm and composed, amazed, it is true, by all he saw around him, yet never suffering his curiosity to surprise him into a word of astonishment. In age from ten to twelve, he was slightly though strongly built, and carried himself erect as a soldier. The dress which Vyner at first thought was entirely made of skins was only in reality trimmed with these, being an attempt to make the clothes he had long worn sufficiently large for him. His cap alone was of true island make, and was a conical contrivance of undressed seal-skin, which really had as savage a look as need be.

“Do you live on this island, my little fellow?” asked Vyner, with a kindly accent.

“Yes,” said he, calmly, as he looked up full into his face.

“And have you always lived here?”

“So long as I remember.”

“Where do you live?”

“On the other side of the mountain – at St. Finbar’s Abbey.”

“May I ask your name?”

“My name,” said the boy, proudly, “is Harry Grenville Luttrell.”

“Are you a Luttrell?” cried Vyner, as he laid his hand affectionately on the boy’s shoulders; but the little fellow seemed not to like the familiarity, and stepped back to escape it.

“Are you the son of John Hamilton Luttrell?”

“Yes. What is your name?”

“Mine,” said the other, repressing a smile – “mine is Gervais Vyner.”

“And do you own this ship?”

“Yes.”

“And why have you come here?”

“Partly by chance – partly through curiosity.”

“And when will you go away?”

“Something will depend on the weather – something on whether we like the place and find it agreeable to us; but why do you ask? Do you wish we should go away?”

“The people do! I do not care!”

It is not easy to give an idea of the haughty dignity with which he spoke the last words. They were like the declaration of one who felt himself so secure in station, that he could treat the accidents of the day as mere trifles.

“But why should the people wish it? We are not very likely to molest or injure them.”

“That much you may leave to themselves,” said the boy, insolently. “They’ll not let you do it.”

“You seem very proud of your island, my little man! Have you any brothers or sisters?”

“No – none.”

“None belonging to you but father and mother?”

“I have no mother now,” said he, with an effort to utter the words unmoved; but the struggle was too much, and he had to turn away his head as he tried to suppress the sobbing that overcame him.

“I am very, very sorry to have pained you, my boy,” said Vyner, with kindness. “Come down with me here, and see a little daughter of mine, who is nearly your own age.”

“I don’t want to see her. I want to go ashore.”

“So you shall, my boy; but you will eat something with us first, and see the strange place we live in. Come along;” and he took his hand to lead him forward.

“I could swim to the land if I liked,” said the boy, as he gazed down at the blue water.

“But you’ll not have to swim, Harry.”

“Why do you call me Harry? I never knew *you*.”

“I have a better claim than you suspect. At least, I used to call your father John long ago.”

“Don’t do it any more, then,” said he, defiantly.

“And why?”

“He wouldn’t bear it – that is the why! Stand clear, there!” cried he to one of the sailors on the gangway. “I’m off!” and he prepared himself for a run ere he jumped overboard, but just at this moment Ada tripped up the cabin ladder and stood before him. The long yellow ringlets fell on her shoulders and her neck, and her lustrous blue eyes were wide in astonishment at the figure in front of her. As for the boy, he gazed at her as at something of unearthly beauty. It was to his eyes that Queen of the Fairies who might have soared on a light cloud, or tripped daintily on the crest of the wide sea waves.

“Here is a playfellow for you, Ada,” said her father, as he led her towards him.

“It is Robinson Crusoe, papa,” said she, in a whisper.

The boy’s quick ear had, however, caught the words, and he said quickly, “I wish I was Robinson!” The speech seemed to strike some chord in the little girl’s heart, for she went freely towards him at once, and said, “Oh, wasn’t it nice to live in that pretty island, and have everything one’s own?”

“This island here is mine!” said the boy, proudly.

“Yes, Ada,” said Vyner, “what he, says is quite correct; his father owns the whole of these islands. But come along into the cabin, Harry; I want you to see our home, though it is a very narrow one.”

With the gravity of a North American Indian, and with a self-possession that never broke down under every trial to which curiosity exposed it, the boy looked at all around him. If Aladdin himself Was not more wonder-struck at the splendours of the cave, he never for a moment betrayed his amazement. He ate and drank, too, with the same air of composure, and bore himself throughout with a quiet dignity that was remarkable. Ada displayed before him her prettiest toys, her games, and her picture-books, and was half piqued at the little evidences of astonishment they created. No suspicion crossed her mind how the colour that came and went and came again, how the hurried breathing, how the clammy fingers that trembled as they touched an object, were signs of emotion far deeper and more intense than all that a cry of wonderment could evidence.

“I suppose,” said she, at last, when impatience mastered her, “you have got such masses of these yourself, that you don’t care for them?”

“I – I have nothing – nothing but a crossbow to shoot the seagulls, and a hatchet, and the hatchet is too heavy for me.”

“But what can you do with a hatchet?” asked she, smiling.

“Split logs, and cut a way through the thicket like fellows on an uninhabited island; or sometimes I think I’m fighting a bear. I’d like to fight a young bear! – wouldn’t you?”

“I suspect not. Girls do not fight bears.”

“Ah, I forgot!” said he, blushing deeply; and, ashamed of his blunder, he bent his head over a picture.

Meanwhile, Vyner and Grenfell were walking the deck and conversing in a low tone.

“It would be a mistake, Vyner, a great mistake, take my word for it,” said the other. “To the man who assumes the incognito, all attempt at recognition is offensive. Besides, what is it to lead to? You can’t imagine he’ll want to talk over the past, and for such a man there is no speculation in the future.”

“But the idea of being on the very island with him, knowing that he was within a mile of me, and that I never went to see him! It sounds very heartless, and I feel it would be so.”

“I have nothing to say when you put the question on the ground of a sentiment. I can only discuss it as a matter of expediency, or the reverse. You don’t charge a man with the opinions you find in an anonymous book, because, even supposing they are his, he has not thought proper to avow them; well, you owe exactly the same deference to him who lives under an incognito, or retires to some secluded, unfrequented spot. His object is to escape notice; under what plea do you drag him forth into the broad noonday?”

“I am certain my wife wouldn’t forgive me if I left without even an effort to see him.”

“As to that, I can say nothing. I never was married, and I do not pretend to know what are the ‘cases of conscience’ discussed connubially.”

“You see, Grenfell,” said the other, confidentially, “we all feel, as we have a right to feel, that we have done this man a great wrong. There has not been one single calamity of his life, from the day we broke with him, that is not traceable to us. His unfortunate line in politics, his low political associates, the depraved life some assert that he lived, and, worse than all, his wretched marriage with a poor uneducated peasant girl.”

“And do you fancy that a morning call from you is the reparation for all this?”

“Come, come, that is not the fair way to put it. Luttrell and I were once great friends. I was, I well know, very much his inferior in knowledge and power, but in worldliness and tact I was more than his match, and he gave way to me on every question of this sort. It may be – I’d like to think it might prove the case – that this old sentiment has not died out of his heart, that, as he used to say long ago, and people laughed when he said it, ‘Let us hear what Vyner says.’ Now, if this were so, I might even yet do something, if not for him, for that fine boy there.”

“Leave that fine boy alone, Vyner, that’s my advice to you. I never saw a fellow of his years with such an overweening self-confidence. There is, I don’t deny it, a certain ‘gentleman’ element in him, but it is dashed with something which I neither understand, nor could venture to say what it may lead to; but I repeat, leave him alone.”

Vyner shook his head dissentingly, but did not speak.

“Besides, let us be practical. What could you do for him? You’d not adopt him, I take it?” Vyner was silent, and he continued: “Well, then, you’d cut off the one tie he has in life, and not substitute another. Besides, don’t you remember what old Scott said at the Huxleigh steeple-chase: ‘I never back the half-bred ‘uns, no matter how well they look in training.’”

“What a stickler for blood you have become,” said Vyner, laughing; and it was only as he saw the crimson flush in the other’s cheek that he bethought him how the remark might have offended.

“Take your own line, then,” said Grenfell, angrily; “it doesn’t signify to me personally a brass farthing. Our dinner company with old Crab and the German Fran can scarcely but be improved, even though it be by the admixture of a little rebellion through it.”

“For all that, you’d like Luttrell immensely if you met him.”

“I like none but men of the world – men who know the people, the places and the things one is daily connected with – who can take up the game of society where it left off last night, and have not to read themselves up in daily life the way fellows read their history out of the *Annual Register*.”

“Well, I’ll write him a note,” said Vyner, following out his own thoughts; “I’ll tell him, in a few words, how I chanced to come here, and I’ll ask if he will receive me, or, better still, – if he’ll come and dine with us to-morrow.”

“I know the answer you’ll get as well as if I had written it.”

“Well, what will it be?”

“See you hanged first!”

“What is all this going on below? Are you quarrelling, children?” cried Vyner, as a great uproar burst forth from the cabin.

“Oh no, papa; but Robinson is so droll; he put baby-doll into a boat and had her shipwrecked, and saved by the little negro; and now they are going to be married. Just come and see it all.”

“Tell me, Harry,” said Vyner, “what would papa say if I were to write him a note and say that I have detained you here to dinner, and wouldn’t let you go?”

“He’d say I could have jumped overboard,” said the boy, reddening at what he thought was an imputation on his personal prowess.

“I don’t exactly mean by force, my dear boy; I intended to say, by persuasion.”

Either the view now submitted to him was not very clear, or that it was combined with other element, but he made no reply.

“I will put it this wise: I’ll say I have made Harry’s acquaintance this morning-by a lucky accident, and I hope you will not be displeased if he should stay and dine with us. I have a little girl of his own age who is delighted to have his company, and I feel certain you will not deprive her of so agreeable a playfellow.”

“Papa will not know,” said the boy, moodily.

“Not know what, my little man?”

“Papa will not care,” said he; and a slight tremor shook his voice.

“Not care for what?”

“I mean,” said he, resolutely, “that I often go away at daybreak and never come back till late at night, and papa does not mind it – he never asks for me.”

As he spoke, Ada drew nigh her father, and clasped his hand in her own, while her tearful eyes turned alternately from her father to the child, the sense of her own happy lot, loved and cherished as she was, blending with a deep pity for one so desolate and friendless.

“That’s the way boys are made independent and bold-hearted,” said Vyner, hastily. “Men like their sons to be trained up in the free habits they enjoyed themselves. So, then, my note is not necessary – you can remain without it?”

“Would you like it?” said he, turning to Ada.

“Oh, how much!” cried she, eagerly.

“Then I’ll stay!” As he spoke, he leaned back in his chair, and, who knows with what thoughts, sighed faintly, while two heavy tears rolled slowly down his cheeks. Vyner saw it, but turned away and went on deck.

“I can gather from what that boy has just said,” said he to Gren-fell, “that his father is almost indifferent about him; he never knows of his coming or going, nor ever looks for him at meal-times.”

“I should be surprised if it were otherwise,” said Grenfell. “Demoralisation never works by halves. When a man begins to go down hill, he never takes any other road. What could remain of your great scholar and double first man after years of association with brutal companionship and a peasant for a wife! How could it be possible for him to retain any one of the habits of his own class amidst the daily frictions of that vulgar existence!”

“I begin to fear as much myself,” said Vyner, sorrowfully. As he spoke, he felt Ada’s hand in his own; she drew him to one side, and whispered, “Harry is crying, papa. He says he must go home, but he won’t tell me why.”

“Perhaps I can guess, darling. Let me speak with him alone. Vyner went down into the cabin by himself, but whatever passed between him and the boy, the result, so far as persuading him to stay, was not successful, and young Luttrell came on deck along with him.

“Man a boat, there,” said Vyner, “and take this young gentleman on shore. I will write one line to your father, Harry.”

The two children stood hand in hand while Vyner wrote. They wore each of them a look of sorrow at parting; but the boy’s face had a flush of shame as well as sorrow. They never uttered a word, however.

Vyner’s note was in these words:

“My dear Luttrell, – Will you allow an old friend to see you, when he calls himself?”

“Affectionately yours,

“Gervais Vyner.”

He did not show this note to Grenfell, but handed it to the boy at once.

“He won’t take the books, papa,” whispered Ada, “nor anything else I offered him.”

“He’ll know us all better later on, dearest. Do not embarrass him now by attention; he is ashamed to refuse, and does not care to accept. If papa will let you come out to breakfast with us to-morrow, Harry, we shall be glad to see you; and remember, I look to you to show me where we are to catch the lobsters.”

“I’ll tell you that now,” said the boy. “You see that great rock yonder. Well, a little more inland, where the water is about four fathoms, and perfectly clear, that’s the spot.”

When the boat was announced as ready, the boy took his leave of each in turn, shaking hands with Vyner, and Ada, and the governess; and then, advancing towards Grenfell, he stopped, and simply said good-by.

“Good day, Sir,” said Grenfell, stiffly, for he was one of those men whose egotism even a child could wound. “Is that boy like his father?” asked he, as Harry passed over the side.

“Wonderfully like, since his face took that expression of seriousness.”

“Then it is not a good face.”

“Not a good face?”

“Mind, I didn’t say not a handsome face, for it is strikingly regular and well proportioned, but the expression is furtive and secret.”

“Nothing of the kind. Luttrell was as frank a fellow as ever breathed. I think, after what I told you, you can see that it was trustfulness proved his ruin.”

“Isn’t he what your countrymen would call a ‘Wunderkind,’ Mademoiselle?” asked Grenfell of the governess.

“No, Saar, he is a much-to-be-pitied, and not the less-for-that-very dignified youth.”

“How Homeric it makes language to think in German. There he is, Ada, waving a rag of some sort, in farewell to you.”

Ada kissed her hand several times to him, and then hastened below into the cabin.

“I have asked Luttrell’s leave to call on him,” said Vyner.

“I thought you would,” was the dry reply.

“I only wrote one line, and made my request in the name of our old friendship.”

“Well, of course, you are the best judge of your own duties; only, for my own part, I beg, if I ever should turn hermit, that you’ll not think yourself bound to have me shaved and trimmed for the honour of dining some one day at your table.”

“Upon my word, I think it would be a pity to take you out of your cave, or whatever you call it,” said the governess, with a spiteful laugh.

“There, don’t fight any more till tea-time,” said Vyner, laughingly.

“Who’ll come on shore with me? I’m for a ramble over that purple mountain yonder.”

“I have the music-lesson.”

“And I have the remainder of that article in the *Quarterly*,” said Grenfell, “which proves incontestably the utter hopelessness of Ireland. The writer knows the people well, and describes their faults of character perfectly.”

A low faint sob caught Vyner’s ear, and, on hurrying below, he found Ada seated at the table, with her head leaning on her arms.

“What’s the matter, Ada darling?” asked he, gently.

“Oh, papa, it was for his mother he was crying, for though she seldom spoke to him or noticed him, he used to see her at the window, and now he’ll never see her more.”

“We must try and comfort him, Ada; the poor boy has a very dreary lot in life.”

“He says he is happy, papa! and that he only hopes he’ll never have to leave this lonely island all his life.”

“Did he speak of his father at all?”

“No, papa; only to say that he’d never remember whether he was at home or abroad, and that it was so pleasant not to have any one who cared what became of one.”

“And you – did you agree with him?”

“Oh no, no!” cried she, as her eyes swam in tears. “I could have told him how much better it was to be loved.”

Vyner turned away to hide his own emotion, and then, with an affected carelessness, said, “Get over this music-lesson now, and whenever you are free tell Mr. Crab to hoist a bit of white bunting to the peak, and I’ll come back to fetch you for a walk with me.”

“Is Mr. Grenfell going, papa?”

“No, darling; but why do you ask?”

“Because – because – I’d rather go with you alone. It is always so much nicer and happier.”

“How is it that Grenfell, with all his smartness, can never hit it off with any one, young or old, rich or poor?” thought Vyner, as he walked the deck, deep in thought. “He reads everything, has a smattering of all subjects, with a good memory and a glib tongue, and yet I believe I am the only man about town who could tolerate him.” If this were a reflection that had more than once occurred to his mind, it usually ended by impressing the conviction that he, Vyner, must have rare qualities of head and heart, not merely to endure, but actually to almost like, a companionship for which none other would have had taste or temper but himself. Now, however – not easy is it to say why – a doubt flashed across him that his doubting, distrustful, scoffing nature might prove in the end an evil, just as a certain malaria, not strong enough to give fever, will ultimately impregnate the blood and undermine the constitution.

“I don’t think he has done me any mischief as yet,” said he to himself, with a smile; “but shall I always be able to say as much?”

“You must read this paper – positively you must,” cried Grenfell from the sofa, where he lay under a luxurious awning. “This fellow writes well; he shows that the Irish never had any civilisation, nor, except where it crept in through English influence, has there ever been a vestige of such in the island.”

“I don’t see I shall be anything the better for believing him!”

“It may save you from that blessed purchase of an Irish property that brought you down to all this savagery. It may rescue you from the regret of having a gentleman shot because he was intrepid enough to collect your rents. That surely is something.”

“But I have determined on the purchase of Derryvaragh,” said Vyner, “if it only be what descriptions make it.”

“To live here, I hope – to turn Carib – cross yourself when you meet a priest, and wear a landlord’s scalp at your waist-belt.”

“Nay, nay! I hope for better things, and that the English influences you spoke of so feelingly will not entirely desert me in my banishment.”

“Don’t imagine that any one will come over here to see you, Vyner, if you mean that.”

“Not even the trusty Grenfell?” said he, with a half smile.

“Not if you were to give me the fee-simple of the barbarous tract you covet.”

“I’ll not believe it, George. I’ll back your friendship against all the bogs that ever engulfed an oak forest. But what is that yonder? Is it a boat? It seems only a few feet long.”

“It is one of those naval constructions of your charming islanders; and coming this way, too.”

“The fellow has got a letter, Sir; he has stuck it in his hatband,” said Mr. Crab.

“An answer from Luttrell,” muttered Vyner. “I wonder will he receive me?”

CHAPTER V. HOW THE SPOIL WAS DIVIDED

The letter, which was handed on board by a very wild-looking native, was written on coarse paper, and sealed with the commonest wax. It was brief, and ran thus:

“Dear Sir, – I cannot imagine that such a meeting as you propose would be agreeable to either of us; certainly the impression my memory retains of you, forbids me to believe that you would like to see me as I am, and where I am. If your desire be, however, prompted by any kind thought of serving me, let me frankly tell you that I am as much beyond the reach of such kindness as any man can be who lives and breathes in this weary world. Leave me, therefore, to myself, and forget me.

“I am grateful for your attentions to my boy, but you will understand why I cannot permit him to revisit you. I am, faithfully yours,

“John H. Luttrell.”

“Well, did I guess aright?” cried Grenfell, as Vyner stood reading the letter over for the third time; “is his answer what I predicted?”

“Very nearly so,” said the other, as he handed him the letter to read.

“It is even stronger than I looked for; and he begins ‘Dear Sir.’”

“Yes, and I addressed him ‘My dear Luttrell!’”

“Well; all the good sense of the correspondence is on his side; he sees naturally enough the worse than uselessness of a meeting. How could it be other than painful?”

“Still, I am very sorry that he should refuse me.”

“Of course you are; it is just the way a fellow in all the vigour of health walks down the ward of an hospital, and, as he glances at the hollow cheeks and sunken eyes on either side, fancies how philanthropic and good he is to come there and look at them. You wanted to go and stare at this poor devil out of that sentimental egotism. I’m certain you never suspected it, but there is the secret of your motive, stripped of all its fine illusions.”

“How ill you think of every one, and with what pleasure you think it!”

“Not a bit. I never suffer myself to be cheated; but it does not amuse me in the least to unmask the knavery.”

“Now, having read me so truthfully, will you interpret Luttrell a little?”

“His note does not want a comment. The man has no wish to have his poverty and degraded condition spied out. He feels something too low for friendship, and too high for pity; and he shrinks, and very naturally shrinks, from a scene in which every look he gave, every word he uttered, every sigh that he could but half smother, would be recalled to amuse your wife and your sister-in-law when you reached home again.”

“He never imputed anything of the kind to me,” said Vyner, angrily.

“And why not? Are we in our gossiping moments intent upon anything but being agreeable, not very mindful of private confidences or indiscreet avowals? We are only bent upon being good recounters, sensation novelists, always flattering ourselves the while as to the purity of our motives and the generosity of our judgments, when we throw into the narrative such words as the ‘poor fellow,’ the ‘dear creature.’ We forget the while that the description of the prisoner never affects the body of the indictment.”

“I declare you are downright intolerable, Grenfell, and if the world were only half as bad as you’d make it, I’d say Luttrell was the wisest fellow going to have taken his leave of it.”

“I’d rather sit the comedy out than go home and fret over its vapidness.” “Well, Mr. Crab,” said Vyner, turning suddenly to where his captain was waiting to speak with him, “what news of our spar?”

“Nothing very good, Sir. There’s not a bit of timber on the island would serve our purpose.”

“I suppose we must shift as well as we can till we make the mainland!”

“This fellow here in the boat, Sir,” said a sailor, touching his cap as he came aft, “says that his master has three or four larch-trees about the length we want.”

“No, no, Crab,” whispered Vyner; “I don’t think we can do anything in that quarter.”

“Would he sell us one of them, my man?” cried Crab to the peasant.

“He’d give it to you,” said the man, half doggedly.

“Yes, but we’d rather make a deal for it. Look here, my good fellow; do you go back and fetch us the longest and stoutest of those poles, and here’s a guinea for your own trouble. Do you understand me?”

The man eyed the coin curiously, but made no motion to touch it. It was a metal he had never seen before, nor had he the faintest clue to its value.

“Would you rather have these, then?” said Crab, taking a handful of silver from his pocket and offering it to him.

The man drew the back of his hand across his eyes, as if the sight had dazzled him, and muttered something in Irish.

“Come, say you’ll do it,” said Crab, encouragingly.

“Is there any answer for my master, to his letter, I mean?” said the man, looking at Vyner.

“No, I think not; wait a moment. No, none,” said Vyner, after a moment of straggle; and the words were not well uttered, when the fellow pushed off his boat, and struck out with all his vigour for the shore.

“What a suspicious creature your savage is; that man evidently believed you meant to bribe him to some deep treachery against his master,” said Grenfell.

“Do let the poor peasant escape,” cried Vyner, laughingly, while he hastened below to avoid any further display of the other’s malevolence, calling out to Mr. Crab to follow him. “Let us get under weigh with the land breeze this evening,” said he.

“There’s a strong current sets in here, Sir. I’d as soon have daylight for it, if it’s the same to you.”

“Be it so. To-morrow morning, then, Crab;” and, so saying, he took up a book, and tried to interest himself with it.

The peasant meanwhile gained the land, and made the best of his way homeward.

“Tell the master there’s no answer, Molly,” said he, as she stood wiping the perspiration from her face with her apron at the door of a long, low-roofed building, into which all the assembled guests were congregated.

“Indeed, and I won’t, Tim Hennesy,” said she, tartly. “‘Tis enough is on my own bones to-day, not to be thinking of letters and writings. Go in and help Dan Neven with that long trunk there, and then bring a hatchet and a hammer.”

The man obeyed without a word; and, having assisted to deposit a heavy deal box like a sea-chest in the place assigned it, perceived that several others of various sizes and shapes lay around; all of which formed objects of intense curiosity to the visitors, if one were to judge from the close scrutiny they underwent, as well as the frequent tapping by knuckles and sticks, to assist the explorer to a guess at what was contained within.

A word or two will explain the scene. When Molly Ryan came to inform her master that the relatives of his late wife intended to sail by the evening’s tide, and wished to pay their respects to him personally, before departure, he excused himself on some pretext of illness; but to cover his want of courtesy, he directed her to tell them that they were free to take, each of them, some memorial of her that was gone, and ordered Molly to have all the boxes that contained her effects conveyed into the long storehouse.

“Let them take what they like, Molly,” said he, abruptly, as though not wishing to discuss the matter at more length.

“And as much as they like?” asked she.

“Yes, as much as they like,” said he, motioning that he would be left in peace and undisturbed.

Loud and full were the utterances of praise that this munificence evoked. "Wasn't he the real gentleman?" "Wasn't it the heart's blood of a good stock?" "Wasn't it like one of the 'ould race,' that could think of an act at once so graceful and so liberal?" "After all, it wasn't proud he was. It was just a way he had; and 'poor Shusy, that was gone,' was the lucky woman to have been his wife." "To be sure, it was a solitary kind of life she led, and without friends or companions; but she had the best of everything." Such were the first commentaries. Later on, gratitude cooled down to a quiet rationalism, and they agreed that he was only giving away what was no use to him. "He'll surely not marry again, and what could he do with cloaks, and shawls, and gowns, that would only be motheaten if he kept them?"

"These two here is linen," said Molly, with an air of decision, "and I suppose you don't want to see them."

A murmur of disapproval ran through the meeting. They wanted to see everything. His Honour's munificence was not limited. It included all that was once hers; and a very animated discussion ensued as to what constituted personal properties.

"Maybe you'd like the crockery too," said Molly, indignantly, for she began to feel ashamed of the covetousness.

"Well see everything," said old Peter Hogan, "and we'll begin with this." So saying, he inserted a chisel beneath one of the pine planks, and soon displayed to the company a large chest full of house linen. The articles were neither costly nor remarkable, but they seemed both to the beholders; and sheets, and napkins, and pillow-cases, and tablecloths were all scrutinised closely, and unanimously declared to be perfection.

The crockery and glass were next examined, and even more enthusiastically approved of. Some curious china and some specimens of old Venetian glass, family relics, that ven connoisseurship might have valued, really amazed them, and many an epithet in Irish went round as a cup or a goblet was passed from hand to hand to be admired.

The clothes were the last to be examined, and with all their heightened expectations the reality surpassed what they looked for. Hats, and shawls, and silk gowns, scarfs, and bonnets, and ribbons, soon covered every box and bench around, and covetous eyes sparkled as each longed for some special prize in this vast lottery. "I remember the day she wore that brown silk at chapel," said one. "That's the blue tabinet she had on at the christening." "There's the elegant, shawl she had on at the fair at Ennis." "But look at this – isn't this a real beauty?" cried one, who drew forth a bright dress of yellow satin, which seemed never to have been worn.

"Don't you think you could pick and choose something to plaze ye, now?" said Molly, who was in reality not a little frightened by all this enthusiasm.

"It is true for you, Molly Ryan," said Peter. "There's something for everybody, and since the company trusts it to me to make the division, this is what I do. The crockery and glass for Mr. Rafter, the linen for myself, and the clothes to be divided among the women when we get home.

"So that you'll take everything," cried Molly.

"With the blessin' of Providence 'tis what I mean," said he; and a full chorus of approving voices closed the speech.

"The master said you were to choose what plazed you – "

"And it's what we're doing. We are plazed with everything, 'and why wouldn't we?' Wasn't she that's gone our own blood, and didn't she own them? The pillow she lay on and the cup she dhrunk out of is more to us than their weight in goold."

Another and fuller murmur approved these sentiments.

"And who is to have this?" cried one of the women, as she drew forth from a small pasteboard box an amber necklace and cross, the one solitary trinket that belonged to her that was gone. If not in itself an object of much value, it was priceless to the eyes that now gazed on it, and each would gladly have relinquished her share to possess it.

“Maybe you’d have the dacency to leave that for his Honour,” said Molly, reprovingly.

Less, perhaps, in accordance with the sentiment than in jealous dread lest another should obtain it, each seemed to concur with this recommendation.

“There’s something in what Molly says,” said old Peter, with the air of a judge delivering a charge. “If his Honour houlds to a thing of the kind, it would be hard to refuse it to him; but if he doesn’t, or if it would only be more grief to be reminding him of what’s gone – Let me finish what I have to say, Molly,” added he, with some irritation, as a sneering laugh from her interrupted his speech.

“There’s an old pair of shoes of hers in the room within. I’ll go for them, and then you’ll have everything,” said she; and she darted an angry glance around, and left the spot.

“I’ll wear this – this is for me!” cried a little girl, taking the amber necklace from the case and putting it on. And, a buzz of Astonishment at the audacity ran around. She was about eleven years of age, but her dark blue eyes and long lashes made her seem older. It was one of those beautiful faces which appear to suggest that with years the delicate loveliness must be lost, so perfect the accordance between the expression and the feature. She had a mass of golden-brown hair, which fell in long curls over a neck of perfect whiteness; but even these traits were less striking than the air of gracefulness that really implied a condition far above that of her rank in life; and, as she stood in the midst to be admired, there was a haughty consciousness of her claim for admiration that was as triumphant in that assembly as ever was the proud assertion of beauty in a court.

“It becomes you well, Kitty O’Hara, and you shall have it, too,” cried old Hogan, who was her grandfather, and whose pride in her took the shape of the boldest aspirations for her future. “Ain’t I right?” cried he, appealing to, those around him. “Look at her, and say if she isn’t a picture!”

With a full burst of assent all broke in at this appeal, and still she stood there unabashed, almost unmoved, indeed, by the admiring looks and enthusiastic words around her.

“Isn’t that the making of a lady, ay, and as elegant a lady as ever stepped?” cried the old man, as his eyes ran over with proud notion. “And as sure as my name is Peter Hogan, it’s diamonds will be round the same neck yet! Yes, my darling, yer ould grandfather won’t be to the fore to see it, but there’s some here that will. Mark the words I’m saying now; lay them up in your hearts, and see if I’m not telling the truth. There she stands before you that’ll raise her family, and make a name for them far and wide.”

While he delivered this boastful speech, the girl turned her eyes from him, a slight flush deepened the colour of her cheek, and a scarcely perceptible eagerness showed itself on the parted lips, but her attitude was unchanged, and a slight nod of the head, in token of assent, was the only notice she took of his words.

“Yes, come in, my dear,” cried Hogan at this moment – “come in, Master Harry; there’s none here but your own kith and kin, and here’s a nice little wife, or a sweetheart, for you.” As he said this, he drew from the doorway, where he lingered, the boy, who now came forward with a shamefaced and reluctant look. “There they stand,” said the old man, as he placed them side by side, “and I defy the world to show me a purtier couple.”

The boy turned a long and steady look at the girl – something for the beauty, and something, too, doubtless, there was for the ornaments that heightened it – and she bore the scrutiny without a shadow of constraint; but there was even more, for, as he continued to stare at her, she smiled half superciliously, and said at last, with a faint smile, “I hope I’m not so ugly that I frighten you!”

There was just that pertness in the speech that stood for wit with the company, and they laughed loud and heartily at what they fancied to be a repartee.

“Did ye ever see a purtier – did ye ever see as purty?” cried old Hogan.

“Yes I did, this very evening, on board of that schooner there. There’s one ten times as handsome, and she is a lady, too.”

Insolent as were the words, the look and manner with which he gave them were far more so. It was like the speech of a proud noble to his vassals, who actually derived a sense of pleasure in the measure of outrage he could dare to mete out to them. The boy turned his haughty stare around at each in turn, as though to say, “Who is there to gainsay me?” and then left the place.

“Isn’t that a worthy twig of the ould tree?” cried old Hogan, passionately. “The world hasn’t done with the Luttrells yet! But I know well who puts these thoughts in the child’s head. It’s Molly Ryan, and no other. Taching him, as she calls it, to remember he’s a gentleman.”

The company endorsed all the indignation of the speaker, but, soon recalled to more practical thoughts, proceeded to nail down the trunks and boxes, and prepared to carry them down to the seaboard.

CHAPTER VI. ON THE SEA-SHORE AT NIGHT

Towards the evening of the same day a light breeze from the westward sprang up, and Mr. Crab argued that there was little use in waiting any longer to refit, and proposed to sail with the tide. By keeping along close to shore he learned that the ebb would take him well out to sea before midnight. Vyner, therefore, gave orders that the yacht should lie-to after she rounded the extreme promontory of the island, and send in a boat there to take him off, thus giving him one last ramble over a spot it was scarcely possible he would ever revisit.

He landed early in the evening, and amused himself strolling at will along the desolate shore. There were objects enough on every hand to excite interest, whether the visitor had been man of science or man of taste. Strange sea-plants and shells abounded; lichens of colour the most novel and varied; rocks, whose layers defied all theories of stratification, and were convoluted and enclosed one within another inextricably. Caves, whose stalactites glittered with the gorgeous tints of Bohemian glass. The very cries of the sea-fowl had a wild unearthly shriek in them that seemed to suit the solitude, and their fearlessness showed how little they knew of molestation.

“How peaceful at first, how dreary at last, must be life in such a spot!” thought Vyner; who, like all men, would pronounce upon the problem as it addressed itself to *him*. He could understand the repose of coming suddenly there out of the din and turmoil of the world, and he could picture to his mind how the soft teaching of that first sentiment would darken into the impenetrable blackness of unbroken gloom. As he thus mused, he was sorry that he had written that note to Luttrell. He had no right to obtrude himself upon one, who, in withdrawing from the world, declared that he deserved to be unknown. He was half angry with himself for a step which now appeared so unjustifiable. “After all,” thought he, “the man who makes this his home should not fear to have his door forced; he ought to be able to sleep with his latch ajar, and never dread an intruder.” Again and again he wished that he had gone his way without even letting Luttrell know that he had been his neighbour.

As he mused he rambled onward, now, from some rocky point obtaining a view of the jagged coast line, broken into innumerable bays, some small enough to be mere fissures, now turning his glance inward, where a succession of valleys, brown and purple in the evening light, darkened and deepened beneath him. He could, besides, in the far distance make out the copse of trees that sheltered the Abbey, and at last detect the twinkle of a light through the foliage, and then turning seaward, he could descry the light and airy spars of his little vessel as she slowly crept along, a light from a stern window showing where he, too, for the nonce, owned a home on the blue waters of the Atlantic. What a difference between these two homes! what blissful thoughts, and budding hopes, and present enjoyments in the one, what unbroken gloom in the other! “I was wrong to have written, but I wish he had not repulsed me,” said he; and still there lingered in his heart a half hope that, if he were to present himself boldly before Luttrell, he would not reject him. The dread of Grenfell was too great to make him risk defeat; that scoffing, sneering spirit, who on the mere fact of thinking ill of every one, took credit for detecting all individual short-coming, would be so unforgiving if he had to come and own that he had been twice repulsed!

“No,” thought he, “I’ll accept my defeat as it is, and try to think no more of it;” and then he endeavoured to think of the scene and the objects around him. From the spur of the mountain, a long, low, shingly promontory stretched into the sea, at the extremity of which were some rocks, forming an arm of a large bay that swept boldly inwards, and this was the spot which, on the map, he had pointed out as a suitable place for the yacht to lie-to, and wait for him. He now saw, however, that in following out the spit of land, he had diverged largely from the way, and must retrace his steps for above a mile ere he could reach the strand, and at the same time, in the half-fading twilight, he could make out the schooner, under easy sail, heading still farther to the southward.

Crab had evidently mistaken the headland, and was making for one still more distant. What was to be done? In coming down to the coast line he had subjected himself to following out all the jagged and irregular course of the shore, and yet to venture inland without a guide would have been the extreme of rashness. There was nothing for it but to make a signal, if perchance it could be seen; the *Meteor* was not more than a mile off, and the project seemed not hopeless. He tied his handkerchief to his cane, and hastened on towards one of the rocks before him; as he drew nigher, he saw something which at last he made out to be the figure of a man, seated with his head supported between his hands, and gazing steadfastly seaward. Vyner mounted the rock and waved his signal several times, but in vain; the dark background of the mountain probably obscured the flag, and prevented its being observed.

“I want to signal the schooner yonder, my good man,” cried he to a poor-looking creature who sat crouched down close to the water’s edge; “could you get me some dry leaves or chips together to make a fire?” The other looked up with a startled air, for he had thought himself alone, and then rising to his feet, they stood face to face. “My dear old friend!” cried Vyner, “have we met at last? How glad I am to see you again.”

“Not this way, surely, not this way,” muttered Luttrell, in a faint and broken voice.

“To be sure I am, Luttrell. I’ll call the chance that led me here one of the happiest of my life, if it brings you back to any of your old feeling for me.”

“You got my note?” asked the other, in a hoarse voice.

“Yes; and it was no part of my intention to molest you, Luttrell. This meeting is, I assure you, the merest accident.”

“Let me go, then, Vyner; the shame is killing me; I wouldn’t that you had seen me thus – in these rags, in all this misery. These are not the memories I wanted you to carry away with you; but what would you have? I came here to live like the others.”

“My dear old friend, I wanted to talk of long ago with you; it is not to reproach you I’ve come. Take my word for it, I feel too acutely all the wrong you have suffered from mine. I know too well at whose door your heaviest injuries lie.”

“If I had attempted to be more or better than my neighbours, I couldn’t have lived here,” cried he, eagerly reverting to his self-defence.

“But why live here, Luttrell? It is not at your age, or with your abilities, a man retires from the game of life.”

“I have played all my cards, Gervais,” said he, with a wild laugh, “and never scored a point with them.”

“How many a fellow has had a long run of ill-luck, to be repaid by as great a share of fortune after.”

“Ay, but I’ll not try it! I don’t ask, I don’t wish it. If I were to win now, I have nothing to do with my winnings.”

“Think of your boy – your fine boy, Luttrell!”

“Ah, Robinson!” cried he, laughing; and Vyner blushed deeply as he fancied how the child had repeated the nickname. “There’s only one way he could want such assistance, and if he but live here, he’ll never need it.”

“Live here! but you cannot mean that he should?”

“Why not? What need is there that he should know of all those fine prizes that his father strove for and never won, any more than of fine food, or fine clothes, or fine equipages?”

Vyner shook his head in dissent, and the other went on with increase of energy.

“My own mistake was, to have borne the thing so long; I might have come here before my health was broken, my hand unsteady, my foot weak, and my nerves shattered. I’d have gone out to see you, Vyner,” said he, suddenly; “but Harry told me you were not alone; you had a friend. Who is he?”

“Grenfell; you remember a Grenfell at Christ Church?”

“Only Cox and Grenfell’s son, the potted-shrimp man; of course it’s not he?”

“Yes it is, and a very clever fellow too.”

“There’s what I couldn’t do, Vyner; there you beat me,” cried he, aloud; “with the peasant, with the mountaineer, with the fisherman, yes, I can live in daily, hourly companionship. I can eat as coarse food, wear as coarse clothes, lie down on as mean a bed, talk as penuriously, and think as humbly, but I couldn’t endure the continual refinement of your fellow of new-made wealth, nor the pretensions of one who feels that by money he is to be any one’s equal.”

“How your old pride of family stirs you still, Luttrell.”

“Not so; it is not for myself I am pleading. I am not come of a stock so distinguished that I can arrogate to myself the defence of my order. The first of my name who came over here was a Dutch pedlar; some generations of thrift and industry made us gentlemen. For time does for family what it does for wine, and just merely by age your poor light Medoc mellows into very drinkable claret. But how have you made me rattle on in my old guise! See, they are signalling to you, yonder; that lantern at the peak has been run up now.”

“I must manage to let them know I’m here; how to make a fire is the question.”

“There’s abundance of broken wood along here. The fishermen’s boats fare ill along this coast; we’ll soon gather enough for your purpose.”

As they strayed about collecting the fragments of broken timber, Vyner pondered over the absence of all move on Luttrell’s part to invite him to his home. Indeed, in his alacrity to make the signal, he only showed his eagerness to aid his departure. He wondered, too, how much external change, and how little real alteration, had taken place in Luttrell. His old conversational turn was there, though he seemed half ashamed when he found he had fallen into it.

“I told you we should not be long making a respectable pile,” said Luttrell. “The wreck furnishing the bonfire is the law of nature. If my eyes do not deceive me, they have lowered a boat;” as he spoke, he knelt down to kindle the wood, by using his hat to fan the flame, which, after smouldering for a moment, sprang up into a clear tongue of fire. “There, Vyner, they see it; they have thrice lowered the light from the peak.”

“The boat can come in here safely?”

“There’s water for a large ship in this bay. Great facilities exist in these Islands of Arran, and if trade were ever to turn its steps hither, I’d direct my attention to wrecking to-morrow. The man who has so successfully achieved his own ruin, ought to be able to assist others.”

A shout from the beach was now replied to by Vyner, and the stout rowers pulled in vigorously to the shore.

“I have not shocked you, Vyner,” said Luttrell, “by asking you to see what would have shocked you – the place I live in. If you were one of those men to whom mere curiosity affords some pleasure, I’d have shelved my pride, or my shame, or whatever be the name of it, and said, ‘Come and look at my den; see to what poor conclusions a life of blunders leads;’ but you are made of other stuff, and would find no happiness in my humiliation.”

“Will you not come on board with me, Luttrell, and let us have one long summer’s night gossip together?”

“I’d scarce refuse if you had been alone; I can’t face your distinguished friend.”

“You are unjust, quite unjust to him; besides, knowing our old ties, he’ll leave us to ourselves, and we shall have our talk unmolested. Is there not in the past something to build on for the future – Well, for Harry?”

“I think not. It is not necessary to plot out the life of one bred and trained as he is. Let the world treat him as it may, he’ll scarcely meet any hardships he has not had a foretaste of.”

“But what do you intend by him?”

“If he likes idleness, the elegant leisure of my own life, for instance,” said he, with a mocking laugh, “he’ll have about the amount of fortune such a mode of living requires. If he be ambitious, or

prefer a course of activity, he can go on board some of these American traders, or sail with a fishing lugger. Frankly, Vyner, it's a matter I have not given much thought to. There is but one part of it, indeed, on which I can declare I have made up my mind. He is to have no protectors, no patrons. We are a hard race to deal with, and we often seem ungrateful when we are merely self-willed."

"How I wish you'd let me talk all these things over with you," said Vyner, in a friendly tone, "not to say that I want your advice on my own account."

"Advice, and from me!"

"Even so, Luttrell. I have a project about purchasing some property on the coast here. Not a very profitable investment, perhaps, but certainly cheap, and at some long future to become possibly remunerative."

"Derryvaragh, I suppose?" "Yes, that's the name."

"The most picturesque spot in the island; finer than the boasted Killarney itself, and far and away beyond Windermere and the Scotch Lakes. I know it well. I have walked the mountains grouse-shooting, and fished every mile of the river; but what would you do with it when you called it yours? You dare not assert one single right of property; the people who live there, and whose fathers have lived there for centuries, have never acknowledged lord or master. You'll stock it with sheep, and send an agent. They'll eat your mutton, and shoot your agent. You'll appeal to the law, and you might as well threaten a New Zealander with a bill in Chancery. Leave such speculations alone; there are no fortunes to be made here, nor even fame for having reformed us. All the privilege your purchase will confer, will be to feed us in times of famine, and be shot at when prices rise and the nights grow longer."

"Why, you are more discouraging than Grenfell!"

"I don't know about Grenfell, but I know that Ireland is not to be bettered by men like you. It is out of our own rough energies must come the cure for our own coarse maladies. Go back and build model cottages in Norfolk, give prizes to your oldest farm labourer, or the mother of the largest family. Here's your yawl; good-by."

"Do step in and come on board with me, Luttrell, if only for an hour or two."

"No, I cannot. I'd not stand your friend's impertinences about Ireland, besides, and I'd be led into rudenesses, which I'd not forgive myself. Lady Vyner is not with you?"

"No, she's in Wales, at Llantlannoch, where I wish you'd let me tell her you were coming to see her."

"Who knows!"

"My dear Luttrell, is this a promise?"

"No, not exactly."

"Will you write to me?"

"I think not."

"May I write to you?"

"I'd rather you would not. You cannot suspect, Vyner, how painful even these few minutes we have passed together will render the life I go back to; do not add to that bitterness by what would become a ceaseless sorrow."

"But Harry. Let Harry come to us; there is an excellent school at Wrexham."

"There's a school on that promontory yonder, where the master, besides reading and writing, instructs in net-mending, sail-making, caulking, and fish salting. Your Wrexham fellow couldn't compete with that. Good-by."

With a hurried shake of the hand, and as though nervously irritable at being stared at by the sailors, Luttrell moved away, and Vyner gazed after him for a moment, and stepped into the boat.

"Mr. Crab says, Sir, that the weather looks dirty outside," said the coxswain; but Vyner did not heed the remark, and sat deeply buried in his own thoughts.

CHAPTER VII. A COTTAGE IN WALES

If we wanted a contrast to the wild desolation of Arran, it would be in the lovely valley of North Wales, where Vyner's cottage stood. It was a purchase he had made purely from its picturesque beauty; a spot chanced upon in a summer's ramble, and bought at once with that zest which leads a rich man to secure the gem that has captivated his fancy. It stood on a little rocky platform that projected from a mountain, and looked downwards and upwards, through one of those charming valleys which now widen into luxuriance, and now contract again till they resume the features of a deep ravine. A river of some size foamed and tumbled over a rocky bed beneath, and occasionally deepened into some waveless pool, over which the red-berried ash-trees drooped gracefully, and the dark copper beeches threw their bronzed shadows. Deep woods clothed the mountain in front, and over them all rose the rugged summit of Cader Idris, with its amphitheatre of rock half lost in the clouds.

If as regards loveliness of position, tranquillity, and beauty in all its details, the cottage of Dinasllyn could scarcely be surpassed. There was one detracting element which certainly impaired its charm, the "Quid amarum," amidst all its excellence. It was a show place. It had been the scene of some romantic attachment, some half-remembered Abelard and Heloise, whose pictures yet survived, and of whom there were traditions of rustic benches where they used to sit; of trees whereon their initials were carved; of cedars that they had planted. Vyner and his wife did not at first know, nor estimate, to what a heritage they had succeeded, nor in the least suspect what an infliction mere purposeless curiosity, united to plenty of leisure, may become.

The old gardener whom they had taken on with the cottage was not at all disposed to surrender that perquisite of black mail he had for years long levied from visitors, nor perhaps did he fancy to abdicate those functions of "Cicerone" which elevated him in the eyes of his fellows. If his love-story was not as affecting as Paul and Virginia, it had its realisms that compensated for some pathos. He could show the dairy where Chloe made the butter, and the kitchen-garden where Daphnis hoed his cabbages. There, were the steps cut in the solid rock that led down to her bath in the river; here the bower she loved so well; here the tree she planted.

To be obliged to devote a day of every week, or even certain hours of a day, to the invasion of a set of strangers, induced by ennui, by curiosity, or, as it may be, by mere imitation, to wander about your house and stroll through your garden, free to lounge in your easy-chair, or dispose themselves on your sofas, criticising your pictures, your prints, your books, and your music, hazarding speculations as to your tastes and dispositions from the titles of the volumes on your table, and the names of your newspapers – to feel that, as the clock strikes a certain hour on a certain morning, all the cherished privacy which constitutes what we call home, is fled, and that your hall is a public street, and your drawing-room a piazza, so that you are driven to hide yourself in your own house, at the peril of being classified among the curiosities, and perhaps sent off to press with the other details, satisfactory or the reverse, of the visitors' experience. These are no slight evils. They are a heavy tax on all the benefits of possession, and we have our doubts if even Naboth's vineyard would be enviable, if linked with the condition of showing the grounds and displaying the grapes to vulgar visitors.

When the Vyners purchased the cottage they had been told of the custom, just as you are told of a certain pathway across the lawn, which was a mere usurpation, a thing "without a shadow of legality," "that you have only to close to-morrow," but of whose actual torments when you do come to suppress, no one has ever given the measure. They heard that the former owner usually set an hour or two apart on a Wednesday or a Thursday to gratify tourist curiosity; in fact, the celebrity of the spot had been ingeniously introduced as an element of value – just as the shade of Pope might be catalogued amongst the merits of Twickenham, and the memory of Rousseau figure in the inventory of a certain cottage near Geneva!

Vyner was himself one of those easy, happy natures, which submit without sacrifice to what affords pleasure to others. His wife saw no hardship in yielding to a moderate amount of this infliction; the more, since they only came to the cottage for about six or eight weeks of every year. It was Georgina Courtenay who resisted the custom as a most “unwarrantable intrusion, a practical impertinence,” as she called it, which “reduced a family either to the condition of the cracked china on the mantelpiece, or the fussy housekeeper who exhibited it.” Georgina was not a very tolerant nature; with what she disagreed, she made no compromise, and, like most such people, she found that life gave her sufficient occasion for conflict.

Vyner’s absence from home, suggested an admirable opportunity “to suppress this nuisance,” as she phrased it, and she accordingly had a notice appended to the gate – a copy of which was also duly forwarded to the village inn – stating that, during the sojourn of the family at Dinasllyn, the cottage and grounds were not open for the inspection of strangers. The morning of the famous ordinance was not more anxious to the household of Charles the Tenth, than was that of the edict to the family at the cottage. What was to follow the great *coup d’etat* was the question. Would each of the vested interests – gardener, gatekeeper, housekeeper, and butler – submit to see their long-established perquisites suddenly effaced and extinguished? Would the village folk be content to lose the profits of strangers, who each year flocked down in increasing hordes? Would the tourists themselves, who had carried their romantic sympathies hundreds of miles by land or sea, agree to put up with a glance at the cottage chimneys by telescope, or a peep through the iron gate at the trim avenue, whose abrupt turning shut out all further inspection? If no splashed and booted aides-de-camps rode in to tell with trembling accents that popular sentiment had taken the menacing form of a silent and brooding anger, at least there were voices to declare that at “The Goat” the visitors were highly indignant, and that one of the strangers at the “Watkin’s Arms” had despatched a copy of the manifesto, with a commentary, to the *Times*. Indeed, it was in the public room of this latter establishment that public indignation found its chief exponent. Visitors from far-off lands, a traveller from Ireland, a gentleman from the United States, a German naturalist, with a green tin box and a pair of brown spectacles, were loud in declaring their sentiments, which amounted to this: that the possessors of any spot remarkable for its historic associations, of a much-prized marble, or world-famed picture, were mere trustees for the public, who had an unimpeachable right to see, gaze on, and admire to their hearts’ content; these being privileges which in no wise detracted from the positive value of the object so worshipped, since there is no record of any garden whose perfume could be exhausted by smelling, nor any picture whose beauties mere sight could have absorbed. These observations, we are careful to record, were embodied in a very formal-looking document, signed by about twenty names, and only awaited the selection of a suitable envoy to be transmitted to the cottage.

It is but a fair tribute to American courage to own that, where so many held back, reluctant and timid, the Yankee declared his readiness to go forward. He protested that he would rather like it. “It was just his grit,” and that he was “main tired of sittin’ there like a wounded skunk, with his head out of a hole.” Whether from some lurking jealousy of the stranger, or some ungenerous disbelief in his address, the company did not accept his offer, or at least show such eagerness in the acceptance as they might, but broke up into twos and threes, discussing the event. While these deliberations went forward, a one-horse chaise drew up to the door, and a writing-desk and a small carpet-bag were deposited within it by the landlord, who, by a significant look towards his other guests, seemed to say, “Here’s your opportunity! This is your man!”

“Who is he? Where is he going?” asked one, calling him aside.

“He’s Mr. M’Kinlay, from London, the family law-agent, going over to the cottage.”

He had but finished this speech, when a middle-aged man, with a high complexion, and short grey hair, without whiskers, appeared, conning over his bill as he came forward.

“You can scarce call it supper, Mr. Pugh,” said he, in an accent unmistakably Scotch – “the bit of fish, and the leg of a cold turkey – except that it was eaten at eleven at night. It was just a snack.”

“It’s only two-and-six, Sir,” said the other, humbly.

“Only! I’d like to know what you’d make it, man. That’s the price of a right good meal up in town, and not served on a coarse tablecloth, nor over a sanded floor; and what’s this 1s. 10d.? What’s that?”

“Ale, Sir. Your servant drank it very freely.”

“If it only disagreed with him as it did with me, I’ll make no objection to his excess. Are these gentlemen waiting to speak to me, for I don’t think I have the honour – ”

“Yes, Sir,” said a short, apoplectic-looking man, with a bald head; “we are strangers – strangers casually thrown into acquaintance at this hotel. We have come here from motives of pleasure, or health, or indolence – one common object having its attraction for us all – the far-famed cottage of Dinaslyn. We have learned, however, to our infinite disappointment, that, by a whim, a mere caprice – for it is impossible it could be more – of the persons’ who are the present occupants, the travellers, the tourists I will call them, ate to be excluded in future, and all access refused to a spot which has its claims on the sympathies not alone of the Englishman, for I see at my side a learned professor from Jena, and a distinguished citizen of New York – ”

“Kansas, stranger, Little Rock,” said the Yankee, interrupting, and then advancing to the front. “Here’s how it is, Sir. Your friends up yonder ain’t content to have God’s gifts all their own, but they won’t even let a man look at them. That ain’t nature, and it ain’t sense. We have drawn up our notions in a brief message. Are you a mindin’ of me, stranger?”

This question was not completely uncalled for, since for some few seconds Mr. M’Kinlay had turned to the landlord, and was occupied in the payment of his bill.

“Seventeen shillings and fourpence, leaving eightpence for Thomas, Mr. Pugh; and remember that your driver is now fully paid, unless I should stay, to dinner.”

“Are you a mindin’ of *me*, Sir?” said the Yankee, with an energy that actually made the other start, and sent a deeper crimson to his cheeks.

“I must say, Sir – I will say, that, having no acquaintance with you, having never seen you till now —

“All your loss, stranger, that’s a fact! You’re not the first man that regretted he did not know the length of my boot before he put his foot on my corns. You’ll have to take them papers – do you mind? – you’ll have to take them papers, and give them to your friends up yonder!”

“I’m neither a postman nor your messenger, Sir,” said M’Kinlay, getting into the chaise.

“You’ll have to take them papers,” and he laid them on the seat of the carriage as he spoke, “that’s how it is! And, as sure as my name is Dodge! – Herodotus Manning Dodge! – you’d better give an account of ‘em when you drive out of that gate up there, for I’ll wait for you, if it was till next fall!”

“That’s mighty plain talking, anyhow,” broke in a voice with a very distinctive accent, “and a man needn’t be much of a gentleman to understand it.”

“Even a brief visit,” cried out the first speaker.

“Just to see the cedars, or Clorinda’s grotto,” lisped out a female voice.

But Mr. M’Kinlay did not wait for more, but by an admonitory poke of his umbrella set his driver off at full speed, and was soon well out of both eye and earshot.

To say that Mr. M’Kinlay drove away in a towering passion – that he was excessively angry and indignant, would be the truth, but still not the whole truth, for he was also terribly frightened. There was in the tall Yankee’s look, language, and gesture, a something that smacked of the bush and the hickory-tree – a vague foreshadowing of Lynch law, or no law – that overpowered him. Such a man, within a reasonable distance of Scotland Yard, for instance, might not have proved so terrible; but here he was in the heart of the Welsh mountains, in the very spot of all others where there was every facility for a deed of violence. “He might throw me over that cliff, or pitch me into that quarry hole,” muttered he; and the landscape at the moment offered both the illustrations to aid his fancy.

It was, then, in a tremor of mingled anger and terror that he drove up to the gate, and in no patient mood was it that he sat outside the padlocked portal till a messenger went up to the house with his card to obtain leave for his admission. The order was speedily given, and he passed in.

The brief interval of traversing the space between the gate-lodge and the cottage was passed by Mr. M'Kinlay in arranging his cravat, brushing the dust from his coat, and, so far as might be, smoothing down any asperities that should have betrayed themselves in his features; for, though neither a young man nor a man of the world of fashion, he had his pretensions, the most cherished one of all which was a design upon the hand of Miss Georgina Courtenay. Had Miss Courtenay been in the full blaze of her beauty, as she was some eight or nine years before, Mr. M'Kinlay would never have dared to lift his eyes to her; had she even continued to live in town and mingle in that society where she had always lived and moved, he would not have dreamed of such a presumption. But Mr. M'Kinlay knew the world. He had seen an exiled Grand-Duke in a Hansom cab, and had actually met a deposed Prince on a Margate steamer. In the changeful fortunes of life the "price current" was the only test of anything. Railroads, and mines, and telegraphic companies rose and fell with the fluctuations of the market, and marriageable ladies might come one day to figure in the share list! Miss Georgina, however ungallant the confession, represented a security at a discount. She had gone down year by year, and at last ceased to be quoted. And yet "it was a good thing." She had, none knew it better – very few so well – she had eighteen thousand pounds, besides expectations, the latter very reasonable and promising in their way. Her connexions were admirable – high enough to give him a very considerable lift socially, and yet not so elevated as to make his rise that of a mere "parvenu." Professionally, the advantage would be great, and lead to much parliamentary business, the carrying of local bills, and a deal of very profitable employment. He flattered himself that in most other respects there was much the world would deem suitable. He was twelve – well, if you like, fourteen – years her senior, but then neither were very young, and when a woman had reached we shall not say what of the thirties, her marrying was not subjected to the criticisms applied to the blushing bride of eighteen or twenty. Lastly, he was well off, had a capital business, a good house in a good street, was "well placed" amongst men of his class, and altogether favourably regarded by his betters. "She might do worse," muttered he, at the end of his rumination, as he descended from the chaise with an amount of activity in his movements that showed he had detected the flounce of a muslin dress at the drawing-room window.

"All well, I hope, Rickards?" said he to the stout butler, who bowed his welcome in most gracious guise.

"Quite well, Mr. M'Kinlay – and, indeed, you look the same, Sir."

"Nothing the matter with me, Rickards, that a little rest won't remedy. Over-work, over-work is my malady!"

Mr. Rickards sighed responsively; he had heard men speak of the affection, and the symptoms they mentioned were quite appalling. "Her Ladyship's not down yet, but Miss Georgina is in the drawing-room," added he, with great significance of manner. "Step this way, Sir."

Miss Courtenay was busily engaged searching for a letter in her writing-desk when the butler announced, in his most emphatic manner, Mr. M'Kinlay; but she only turned her head round, and, with a weak smile, said, "Oh, Mr. M'Kinlay! I trust they did not keep you waiting on the road. You know we have been obliged to have the gate locked."

"I heard so. Indeed, I have heard of little else since my arrival, Miss Courtenay," said he, not altogether mastering the anger he felt at his cool reception. "I hope Lady Vyner is well."

"Yes; as well as she ever is. What a provoking thing it is to mislay a letter; but I suppose it is an oversight you have never committed. You have everything in order, docketed, pigeon-holed, and what not."

"Pardon me, I am the most careless of men. All about me is a chaos of confusion."

“Indeed!” said she, with a faint, very faint show of interest, as though quite unexpectedly aware of some favourable trait in his character. “Who would have thought it! It is a letter from my niece’s governess I have lost, and with it all clue to her address.”

“I can, perhaps, supply that,” said Mr. M’Kinlay; “at least, if it be the town she stopped at while the yacht is being repaired.”

“Exactly so. What’s the name of it?”

“Here it is,” said he, producing a small clasped note-book, from which, after a brief search, he read, “Mademoiselle Heinzleman’s address will meanwhile be, ‘Carrick’s Royal Hotel, Westport, Ireland.’”

“What a blessing is red tapery after all!” said she, in a sort of soliloquy. “If there were not these routine people, what would become of us?”

“I am charmed that even my blemishes should have rendered you a service,” said he, with a tingling cheek.

“I don’t think my sister knows you are here,” said she, ignoring all his remarks.

“I suspect Rickards must have told her,” said he, half stiffly.

“Just as likely not; he is getting so stupid —*so* old.”

This was a very cruel speech to be so emphasized, for Rickards was only one year Mr. M’Kinlay’s senior.

“He looks active, alert, and I’d not guess him above forty-six, or seven.”

“I don’t care for the number of his years, but he is old enough to be fussy and officious, and he has that atrocious activity which displays itself with certain middle-aged people by a quick, short step, abrupt speech, and a grin when they don’t hear you. Oh, don’t you hate that deaf-man’s smile?”

Mr. M’Kinlay would fain have smiled too, but he feared the category it would sentence him to.

“I’m afraid you expected to find my brother here, but he’s away; he is cruising somewhere along the coast of Ireland.”

“I was aware of that. Indeed, I am on my way to join him, and only diverged at Crewe to come over here, that I might bring him the latest advices from home.”

“And are you going yachting?” said she, with a sort of surprise that sent the blood to M’Kinlay’s face and even his forehead.

“No, Miss Courtenay, I trust not, for I detest the sea; but Sir Gervais wants my advice about this Irish estate he is so full of.”

“Oh! don’t let him buy anything in Ireland. I entreat of you, Mr. M’Kinlay, not to sanction this. None of us would ever go there, not even to look at it.”

“I imagine the mischief is done.”

“What do you mean by being done?”

“That the purchase is already made, the agreement ratified, and everything completed but the actual payment.”

“Well, then, don’t pay; compromise, contest, make difficulties. You legal people needn’t be told how to raise obstacles. At all events, do anything rather than have an Irish property.”

“I wish I had one.”

“Well, I wish you had – that is, if you are so bent upon it. But I must go and tell my sister this distressing news. I don’t know how she’ll bear it! By the way,” added she, as she reached the door, “I shall find you here when I come back – you are not going away?”

“Certainly not without seeing Lady Vyner, if she will accord me that honour,” said he, stiffly.

“Of course she’ll see you,” cried she, and left the room.

Left alone with his reflections, Mr. M’Kinlay had not the pleasantest company. Had he mistaken all the relations between Miss Courtenay and himself, or was she changed to him – totally changed? Was it thus that they met last? He knew that she always had a certain flippant manner, and that she was eminently what the French call *inconséquent*; but she was more, far more, now. The allusion to

Rickards's age was a direct impertinence, and the question as to his yachting tastes was a palpable sneer at the habits of his daily life.

“The case does not look well – certainly not well,” murmured he, as he walked the room with his hands behind his back. “Many would throw up the brief, and say, ‘Take a nonsuit.’ Yes, most men would; but I’ll do nothing rashly!” And with this wise resolve he took up a book and began to read; but still the hours rolled on, and no one came. By the clock over the mantelpiece it was now four. Could it possibly be that it was two hours and a half since – since she had left him?

CHAPTER VIII. AN OLD BACHELOR'S HOUSE

It is quite true Georgina forgot all about Mr. M'Kinlay. The gardener had met her on her way, and presented her with a bouquet of Japanese roses – the real purple roses it was supposed never could be reared out of a Tycoon's garden; and so she hastened up to her sister's room, as totally oblivious of the man of law as though he had been hundreds of miles away. They talked pleasantly of flowers – flowers for the china vase, and flowers for the hair – they laughed at the incongruous blunders of the people who wore “wrong colours,” and that “drab bonnet” they had seen last Sunday in church. They next discussed dress, and the impossibility of wearing anything “decent” on the dusty roads; and, lastly, they ordered the ponies and the phaeton, and drove out.

How charmingly pleasant are these lives of little cares and of little duties: where conscience has no burden that would be too weighty for the strength of childhood – where no torturing anxieties invade, no tormenting ambitions pursue – where the morning's stroll through the garden is the very type of existence, a ramble amidst fragrance, and fruit, and flowers, with no other call upon exertion than to enjoy! And what a teachable faculty is that same one of enjoyment. How it develops itself under good training and favourable opportunities.

These sisters had a very pleasant life, and they knew it; that is, they no more overlooked the stones in their path than their neighbours; but they thoroughly understood that Fate had accorded them a very smooth road, and one right easy to travel. They chatted gaily as they drove along the side of a brightly eddying river, through a glen of some miles in extent. The day was one of those mellow ones of August, tempered with a slight breeze, that gently moved the cloud-shadows on the mountains, adding at each change some new effect of light and colour. “Let us go and call on Sir Within,” said Lady Vyner; “it would be a glorious day to see the old castle, and the mountain behind it.” Her sister agreed at once; for though the drive was full eight miles, the road was beautiful all the way, and at its end was a grand old keep, Dalradern Castle, with a charming old bachelor for its owner, than whom none better understood how to do the honours of his house. While the sisters push their smart ponies to a brisk trot, we shall take the opportunity to say a word of Sir Within Wardle. He was the last of a great Welsh family of large fortune and ancient name, but who had lived all his life away from England. He had been in diplomacy since his boyhood; he had joined an embassy in the Low Countries at the age of sixteen, and lived long enough to see the whole map of Europe new coloured.

It had been the dream of his existence to “come home” – to return to the temperate climate and genial air of England – to get back where the trees were really trees, and where grass was veritably green, and where people told the truth, and tradesmen were honest. Well, he did get back, but it was not to find everything as he had pictured it. The temperate climate rained a good deal. The genial air had a marked tendency to give bronchitis. The grass was unquestionably green, but so were they who walked in it, for wet feet were invariable. As to truthfulness in his own class, he had nothing to complain of; but he thought servants were pretty much as elsewhere, and as to his tradespeople, there was little to choose between Fleet-street and the “Graben,” and Piccadilly was not a whit above the Rue de la Paix!

In fact, there were many things as he had hoped, and not a few that disappointed him. People, generally, were what he deemed more narrow-minded; they sat more in judgment over their neighbours than he liked; they were more inquisitive and less charitable. In his world, where he had passed fifty odd years, the charming people were admitted to be charming, though certain delinquencies chargeable to them might have disparaged their claims to character. It was not held to the disadvantage of Beauty that discretion should not have united itself to loveliness, and Wit was just as highly appreciated as though its possessor had not been more than lucky with the dice-box. Sir Within, be it remarked, wanted none of these immunities on his own behalf. He had never been what is called a man of gallantry, never gambled. His great passion was a splendid house and grand

receptions. He liked great people, crowned heads, and after them coroneted ones. He revered Grand-Dukes and Serene Highnesses; and it was not by any means improbable that in his homage to the great lay the secret of that tolerance on the score of morals that marked him; for, be it said with respect, Kings and Kaisers have a habit of showing the world that they soar in a sphere above common proprieties, and can afford to do in ethics what they can do with the Bourse – go in for a rise or fall, as the whim seizes them.

To “come back” with tastes like these was a mistake, but to attempt to justify them was infinitely worse. Sir Within began to lecture his country neighbours on their hard-heartedness and ungenerosity. He enumerated scores of people who had taken little scampers into vice, and come back to live more gorgeously on virtue. What anecdotes he had of ministers who had cheated at cards! Great men, excellent men in all other respects, unimpeachable in all their public acts, and pillars of the State they pertained to.. He told of a society whose very laxity saved all friction, and which went on smoothly – for it always went downwards. The consequence may be anticipated. His neighbours – at least their wives – voted him an old monster of vice, corrupted by half a century of foreign iniquities. They refused his invitations, and neglected his advances. His presents of fruit – such fruit too! – were declined, and his society strictly avoided.

The Vyners, who only came to the neighbourhood for a few weeks in the year, scarcely knew anything of local feelings, and only heard that he never went out, and saw little company at home – facts which, when they came to be acquainted with him, struck them as strange, for he was eminently one made for society, and seemed to feel the raciest enjoyment in it. He had all that peculiar go and eagerness in him which pertains to men who talk well, and feel that they have this power.

Perhaps my reader may have met such a character – not that they exist as a class – but if he has done so, he will acknowledge that it is a very charming form of selfishness, and gifted with marvellous powers of pleasing. At all events, Lady Vyner and her sister delighted in him – most ungrateful had they been if they had not – for never was courtesy more polished, never homage more devoted or more respectful. Royalty could not have been received by him with a greater deference, and now, as they drove up to the massive entrance of the castle, and the sharp clatter of the ponies’ feet awoke the echoes of the solemn court-yard, Sir Within was promptly at his post to help them to descend; and as the wind blew his long white hair backwards, he stooped to kiss their hands with all the reverence of a courtier.

“Do you know, dear ladies,” said he, “that I had a vision of this visit? It was revealed to me – I cannot say how – that you would come over here to-day, and I told Bernais to prepare the orangery; for,” said I, “Bernais, I will offer *ces dames* no luncheon, but will insist on their taking an early dinner.”

“What a tempting proposal!” said Lady Vyner, looking at Georgina, whose fiat was always needed to every project.

“I vote for being tempted,” said Georgina, gaily; “but what do I see there – something new?”

“No, something old, but restored. Don’t you remember the last day you were here saying that the silence of this old court wanted the pleasant plash of a fountain? and so I got these disabled nymphs and hamadryads remounted, and set them to blow their conchs and spout the cataracts as of yore.”

“How beautiful it all is!”

“Curious enough, the figures are really good. Some worthy ancestor of mine had purchased this group at Urbino from some ruined Italian mansion; and, as a work of art, it is almost equal to a Luca della Robb. The mistake is the era. It is not suited to this old dungeon. Here we are in the tenth century, and this group is cinque cento. Let me send it to the cottage. It would be perfect in your garden.”

“Not for worlds. I couldn’t think of it!”

“Don’t think of it, but say ‘Yes.’ Remember, that in villa ornamentation nothing comes amiss; there are no incongruities.”

“It is impossible, Sir Within – quite impossible.”

“Don’t imagine we have come here as brigands,” said Miss Courtenay, smiling.

“When you carry away my heart, what matters what is left me?” said he, sighing.

Miss Courtenay looked down – it was a bashful look, but not a displeased one – and, somehow, more conscious than the compliment of so old a gentleman might seem to warrant.

“And so Sir Gervais likes Ireland?” said he, as he introduced them into the drawing-room.

“So much so, that I fear he has made a purchase of some property there.”

“That is only a mistake when one feels that he must live on the spot he owns. Some witty Frenchman says: ‘I used to fancy that I owned my furniture, but I found that it owned me. I was the bondsman of an old arm-chair, and the actual slave of a chest of drawers!’ You laugh, ladies, but just see whether this old house or I be the master here.”

“Well, it’s not a very severe bondage after all,” said Georgina, smiling.

“How pleasantly one discusses another’s captivity! By the way, when are you all to come and pay me this long-promised visit? Remember, the longer you defer payment, the larger grows the debt; your week is now a month.”

“When Sir Gervais comes home, we shall be delighted.”

“Why not be here when he arrives? How much pleasanter he’d find the house where your presence had imparted that charm that comes of female influence. You cannot guess how this old room, that I thought so dreary a while ago, looks positively beautiful now. Yes, Bernais, bring it in.” This was said to the servant, who, after appearing at the door, made a hasty retreat. “It is the *menu* of our dinner, ladies, and my cook, M. Piquard, wishes to acquit himself with distinction. See, here is a query. ‘Is the pheasant to be “aux huitres,” or aux pointes d’asperges?’ Decide.”

“I should say with the asparagus,” said Miss Courtenay.

“And your judgment is correct; the other is a mere compromise to a supposed English taste. A summer day’s dinner is to the full banquet of mid-winter what a light ‘aquarelle’ is to an oil picture. You want grace, delicacy; you require elegance, transparency, softness; not depth, nor force, nor strong effect.”

“What Sybarites you must deem us!” said Lady Vyner, laughing.

“I am repeating for you to-day a little dinner I once gave the Duchesse de Sagance. She was much admired at the time by the Archduke Charles of Austria; but forgive me if I am talking of forbidden themes.”

“Oh, go on, Sir Within! We must implicitly bow to your discretion.”

“Ah, if you do that, I am ruined. You silence me at once!”

“You surely wouldn’t have us say, ‘Be indiscreet?’”

“No; but I’d have you say, ‘Talk to us as if we were all at Vienna, at Milan, or at Naples.’”

“Neither my sister nor myself ‘pose’ for prudery, Sir Within; but the world says that you are – what shall I call it? – too – too – do help me to the word.”

“How can I, when it is to my own blame? Who ever called on a prisoner to fill up his own indictment?”

“What the world means is, perhaps,” broke in Georgina, “that Sir Within occasionally forgets his geography, and fancies at the foot of Snowdon that he is close to Vesuvius.”

“I apprehend you,” said he, smiling; “but confess, that dress is not more a question of climate than conversation; both one and the other are lighter in the south of Europe, and what is of more moment, with perfect safety, too; mark that, Mesdames, with perfect safety.”

“It may be all very well for you, who are acclimatised, to say so,” said Lady Vyner; “but bear in mind that we only passed one winter at Rome.”

“And did you not like it? What a furious cataract of all manner of sensations is a first winter at Rome! Grandeur and littleness, Sublimity and absurdity – the splendid St. Peter’s and the slipshod priesthood – and, more ridiculous than all, our cockney population wandering over the Coliseum and Quirinal, not fully certain that they are getting the real article for their money, or whether Nero and

Tiberius are not dear at the price paid for them. I often wish it were right for an ex-Envoy to give his note-book, or some extracts from it, to the world. Impressions of the B. S. – the British Subject, I mean – by a late Foreign Minister.”

“Very amusing, doubtless; but very spiteful,” said Miss Courtenay.

“Here comes Bernais to announce dinner, and rescue you from my tartness;” and, giving an arm to each of the ladies, he led them forward.

Valued reader, is it amongst the number of your experiences to have “assisted” at a dinner – usually a Russian one – where, without having found anything pre-eminently good to eat, you are given to understand that all cost fabulous sums – that the fricassee you scarcely tasted was brought from the frontier of China, and the fish, that seemed flavourless, came by estafette from the Caspian? Such, in a certain way, was Sir Within’s conversation; it sparkled with great people – Kings glittered, and Queens bespangled it; it was evidently a dear article to have acquired, but, beyond that, it possessed little value. Yet, “for all that, and all that,” his guests liked it. To be sure, it was admirably aided; his “little dinner,” as he modestly styled it, was a banquet, not in ponderous detail or duration, but in the perfect selection and the exquisite delicacy of all that composed it.

And did he not relish the success he achieved – the double success of his cook and of himself! If there be a time when egotism is less odious than at others, it is when a host expatiates on the pains he has taken to feed you. The little selfish vaingloriousness of the moment is so readily pardoned, while the truffle is on your fork, or the ruby claret half way to your lips.

It was towards the close of the dinner that Sir Within, adroitly turning the topic from the meats to the guests, was discussing, with some knowledge of the subject, the people who made the pleasantest dinner company, and showing how an accomplished host makes the light talkers do duty at the first course, using them as mere skirmishers, who are to fall back and be ignored as the great engagement comes on. “I flatter myself,” said he, “that I can manage most classes of men, though I own there is one that totally defies me – that is to say, he is so obstinately self-willed, and so professionally trained to persistence, that he deems it a triumph. I mean your lawyer!”

“Oh, Laura! what have I done!” exclaimed Georgina, laying her hand on her sister’s arm, and staring half wildly at her.

“What is it? What is the matter?”

“Was there ever such a blunder – how shall we get over it?”

“What is it, then? tell it!” cried Lady Vyner, eagerly.

“I forgot all about him – utterly – completely forgot!”

“About whom?”

“Mr. M’Kinlay, the lawyer. He arrived this morning, came to the cottage very early, saying he was on his way to Ireland to meet Gervais, and only ran over from Crewe to see us; I left him to tell you that he was there. I had it in my head when I quitted the room, but what drove it out again, or what occurred to make me forget it, I cannot now imagine.”

In spite of all the annoyance of the incident, Lady Vyner laughed immoderately, and so did Sir Within, and so, at last, did Miss Courtenay, and the mirth was kept up by all sorts of fanciful conceits as to what the lawyer must have thought, said, or done.

“He has driven away in a towering passion; he’s hot-tempered at times, I know,” said Lady Vyner.

“No, no! you’ll find him very comfortably installed when you get back,” said Sir Within. “He’ll be vexed, he’ll be angry, doubtless; but as a minister plenipotentiary vents his ill-temper in a despatch, your man of law consigns all his indignation, more practically, to his bill of costs. What an avalanche of six-and-eightpences will fall on your forgetfulness.”

“We must hasten to repair the disaster. Sir Within, would you oblige me by ordering our ponies. I know you’ll forgive our abrupt leave-taking.”

“I shall never forgive the cause of it. Why not let me send a messenger over to ask him, saying I had insisted on detaining you?”

“Oh, on no account! Besides, he’s a touchy person, and my husband is most tenacious regarding him. I must hasten back and make my explanations in person.”

“I don’t know how I am to face him at all!” cried Georgina.

“I’d certainly not try,” said Sir Within.

Vague as the mere words were, they were uttered with a significance that plainly said, “You might stay where you are;” and Miss Courtenay evidently so read them, for her cheek reddened as she turned away.

Lady Vyner, however, went on: “I don’t think we shall have any difficulty about it – at least, I hope not – though what I’m to say, and how to say it, I cannot imagine.”

“Throw me into the breach,” said Sir Within; “say that, hearing of his arrival, I begged a visit from you – that I wanted some legal advice – I required a draft of – what shall I say? – I can scarcely be going to be married. Let it be a will, then.”

“Oh no, not a will, Sir Within!” said Georgina, with a very soft smile.

“It shall be whatever you decide for it,” said he, assisting her with her shawl as he spoke.

“Do you ever mean to come over to breakfast with us?” asked Lady Vyner. “The promise has been made and renewed, I think, a dozen times.”

“May I say next Sunday, then?”

“And you’ll promise to come to church with us afterwards?” cried Lady Vyner.

He muttered something with a smile to Miss Courtenay, and she turned away abruptly, but ere she drew down her veil her face betokened the reverse of displeasure.

Though, as they drove homeward, the unpleasant explanation that lay before them engaged much of their thoughts, taxing all their address how to encounter its difficulty, yet, from time to time, Georgina would return to talk of the house they had just quitted, and the host.

“It is easy enough to see why our straitlaced neighbours do not take to him,” said she; “he is too much a man of the world – too tolerant and forgiving for their notions.”

“A little too lax, also, for the proprieties of English life,” added Lady Vyner.

“For its hypocrisies, if you like, Laura. I’m certain people are pretty much the same everywhere, though the way they talk about themselves may be very different.”

“I suspect he has made a conquest, Georgy,” said her sister, laughing; “or rather, that his magnificent old castle, and his Vandykes, and his pineries, and his conservatory have – ”

“No! that I protest against. His ‘accessories,’ as the French would call them, are undeniable. It is a house absolutely princely in all its details; but I think he himself is the gem of the collection. He is so courteous and so pleasant, so anecdotic, and so full of all manner of *apropos*, and then so utterly unlike every one else that one knows.”

“I suppose there lies his chief attraction. We have to measure him with people all whose thoughts and ideas are so essentially homely, and who must of necessity be eternally talking of themselves – that is, of their own turnpike, their own turnips, and their own cock pheasants.”

“Is it not strange that he never married?” said Georgina, after a silence.

“I don’t think so. He’s not a man that would be likely to marry, and very far from being one that a woman would like to take as a husband.”

“Do you think so – do you really think so?”

“I’m certain of it. All those charming little schemes for our entertainment that captivated us a while ago, show a degree of care and attention bestowed on little things which would make life a perfect servitude. Cannot you imagine him spending his mornings giving audience to his cook, and listening to the report of his gardener? I fancy I see him in the midst of a levee of domestics, gravely listening to the narrative of the last twenty-four hours of his household.”

“So far from that,” said Georgina, warmly, “he told me Bernais did everything – engaged and discharged servants, changed furniture, rearranged rooms, and, in fact, managed little daily ‘surprises’ for him, that, as he said, compensated for much of the solitude in which he lived.”

“But why does he live in solitude? Why not go back to the life and the places that habit has endeared to him?”

“He told me to-day that he intended to do so; that he is only waiting for the visit of a certain relative, Mr. Ladarelle; after which he means to set out for Italy.”

“Ladarelle is the great banker, and, if I mistake not, his heir.” “Yes. Sir Within says that they scarcely know each other, and have all that dislike and distrust that usually separate the man in possession and the man in expectancy.”

“One can fancy how distasteful his heir must be to a man like Sir Within Wardle,” said Lady Vyner.

“To any man, sister,” broke in Georgina – “to any man who only knows the person as the inheritor of his fortune. I declare I think Sir Within spoke of the Ladarelles with much forbearance, aware, as he is, that they are coming down here to see in what state of repair the castle is, and whether the oaks are being thinned more actively than a mere regard for their welfare would exact.”

“Did Sir Within say that?” asked Lady Vyner, with a laugh. “No; but *I* guessed it!” “Well, he supplied the text for your theory?” “In a measure, perhaps. It was when you went with Groves to look at the large cactus he told me this, and mentioned that, by a singular provision, though the estate is strictly entailed, he could charge the property to any extent with jointure if he married; and perhaps, said he, my worthy relatives are anxious to satisfy themselves that this event has not, nor is very likely to occur.”

“Not now, certainly?” said Lady Vyner, with a saucy laugh. “I don’t know. There are many women well to do, and well off, would marry him.”

“That is to say, there are a considerable number of women who would sacrifice much for money.”

Miss Courtenay was silent; when she next spoke, it was about the evening – the air was growing fresh, and the twilight deepening. “I wonder in what mood we are to find Mr. M’Kinlay – if we are to find him at all.”

“I own it would be very awkward; but I am such a coward about meeting him, that I half wish he had gone away, and that we were left to make our lame excuses in a letter.”

“I have to confess that the matter sits very lightly on *my* conscience,” said Georgina, “though I am the real delinquent. I don’t like him, and I shall not be very unhappy if he knows it.”

“Possibly enough, but such a breach of all politeness – ”

“My dear Laura, he has met this incident, or something very like it, a hundred times. Earls and Viscounts have made appointments with him and forgotten him; he has been left standing on that terrace, or pacing moodily up that street, for hours long, and, as Sir Within said very smartly, consoled by the item that would record it in the bill of costs.”

“Yes, I remember the remark; it struck me as the only bit of vulgarity about him.”

“Vulgarity! Sir Within Wardle vulgar!”

“Well, I have no other word for it, Georgy. It was the observation that might readily have come from any ordinary and common-place person, and sounded unsuitably from the lips of a very polished gentleman.”

“Poor Sir Within! if in a gloomy moment you may be wondering to yourself what harsh or envious things your wealth, your splendour, and your taste may have provoked from us, I am certain that you never imagined that the imputation of being vulgar was one of them!”

Fortunately there was no time to continue a theme so threatening to be unpleasant, for already they were at the gate lodge, and a loud summons with the bell had announced their arrival.

CHAPTER IX. MR. M'KINLAY'S TRIALS

Mr. M'Kinlay was awakened from a pleasant nap over the "Man of Feeling," which he had persuaded himself he was reading with all the enjoyment it had once afforded him, by the French clock over the mantelpiece performing a lively waltz, and then striking five!

He started, rubbed his eyes, and looked about him, not very certain for some minutes where he was. The hum of the bees, the oppressive perfume of the sweetbriar and the jessamine, and the gentle drip-drip of a little trickling rivulet over some rock-work, seemed still to steep his senses in a pleasant dreamy languor, and a sort of terror seized him that the ladies might possibly have come in, and found him there asleep. He rang the bell and summoned Rickards at once.

"Where are the ladies?" asked he, eagerly.

"Not come back yet, Sir. It's very seldom they stay out so long. I can make nothing of it."

"You told her Ladyship I was here, didn't you?"

"I told Miss Georgina, Sir, and of course she told my Lady."

"What's your dinner-hour?"

"Always early, Sir, when Sir Gervais is from home. My Lady likes four, or half-past."

"And it's five now!"

"Yes, Sir; a quarter-past five. It's the strangest thing I ever knew," said he, going to the window, which commanded a view of the road at several of its windings through the valley. "We have an excellent lake trout for dinner; but by good luck it's to be grilled, not boiled, or it would be ruined utterly."

"Capital things, those red trout," said M'Kinlay, to whom, like most of his craft and way of life, the pleasures of the table offered great temptations. "Is your cook a good one, Rickards?"

"Only a woman, Sir; but by no means bad. Sir Gervais always takes M. Honoré with him on board the yacht; but you'll see, Sir, that she knows how to roast, and we have a sweet saddle of Welsh mutton to-day, if it's not over-done."

"That's what I'm afraid of, Rickards," said the lawyer; and if a sigh ever denoted sorrow, his did as he spoke. "Is the mutton small?"

"Very small, Sir. Mountain mutton."

"And of course it will be done to rags! She serves it with currant-jelly, I suppose?"

"No, Sir, with guava. Sir Gervais prefers it."

"And what else was there on your bill of fare for to-day?"

"A very simple dinner, Sir. Partridges on toast, a salad of white truffles, and a roast hare."

"Quite enough, quite enough. Do you bring your wine down with you!"

"Only the Madeira, Sir. Sir Gervais gets some claret over from an Irish house called Sneyd's, which he calls very drinkable."

"So do I, too; very drinkable, indeed; and your Madeira, you say, you bring with you. I say, Rickards, I think a glass of it and a biscuit wouldn't be amiss, if I'm to wait much longer."

"I was just thinking the same, Sir; and if you'll step into the dining-room and take a morsel of game-pie, I'll fetch the Madeira out of the sun. It's fine and mellow by this time."

"Is this your woman cook's performance?" said Mr. M'Kinlay, as he helped himself for the second time to the pie.

"Yes, Sir; and she'd do better, too, if it wasn't that the ladies don't like so much jelly. Here's a fine whole truffle, Sir!"

"She's a valuable woman – a very valuable woman. Tell her, Rickards, that I drank her health in a bumper. Yes, up to the brim with it. She shall have all the honours."

"Something sweet, Sir? A little cherry tart?"

"Well, a little cherry tart I'll not object to. No, no, Rickards, don't open champagne for me."

“It’s in the ice, Sir, and quite ready.”

“Let it stay there. I’m very simple about both eating and drinking. I’d not have made a bad hermit, if I hadn’t been a lawyer.”

“No, indeed, Sir! I never saw a gentleman so easily pleased. You’re not like Mr. Grenfell, Sir, that has the bill of fare brought up every morning to his dressing-room; ay, and M. Honoré himself, too, summoned, just as if it was before a magistrate, to explain what’s the meaning of this, and why he doesn’t do the other.”

“Your master permits this?”

“He likes it, Sir; he laughs heartily at it.”

“And the ladies, do they like it?”

“Oh, Mr. Grenfell only comes over to Beau Park when the ladies is away, Sir, up in town, or at the sea-side.”

“He’s no favourite of theirs, then?”

“I don’t believe they ever saw him, Sir. At all events, he was never down with us when we were all at home.”

“I suspect I know why,” said M’Kinlay, knowingly.

“Yes, Sir,” replied Rickards, as knowingly, while he took up a jar of pickled onions from the sideboard, and held it ostentatiously forward.

“You’re right, Rickards, you’ve hit it correctly. One glass more of that admirable wine. What’s that great ringing at the gate? Is that your mistress?”

“No, Sir. The lodge people have orders never to keep her waiting; they always have a look-out when she’s coming. There it is again. If you’ll excuse me a moment, Sir, I’d better step out and see what it means!”

The permission was graciously accorded, and Mr. M’Kinlay emptied the last of the Madeira into his glass, discussing with himself whether the world had anything really more enjoyable to offer than a simple cottage life, with a good cook, and a capital cellar! Little heed did he give to the absence of Rickards, nor was he in the least aware that the bland butler had been above a quarter of an hour away, when he entered flushed and excited.

“It’s the same as a burglary, Sir, there’s no difference; and it’s by good luck you are here to declare the law of it!”

“What’s the matter – what has happened, Rickards?”

“They’re in the drawing-room, Sir; they walked in by the open windows; there was no keeping them out.”

“Who are in the drawing-room?”

“The tourists, Sir,” exclaimed Rickards. “The tourists! The people that would force their way into Windsor Castle and go through it, if the King was at his dinner there!”

Strong in a high purpose, and bold with the stout courage of that glorious Madeira, Mr. M’Kinlay arose. “This is an unparalleled outrage,” cried he; “follow me, Rickards;” and he took his way to the drawing-room. Though the noise and tumult bespoke the presence of several people, there were not above half a dozen in the room. One, however, a pale, sickly-looking young man, with long hair, which required everlasting tossing of his head to keep out of his eyes, sat at the piano, playing the most vigorous chords, while over his shoulder leaned a blue-eyed, fair, ringletted lady, whose years – past the forties – rather damaged the evident determination she evinced to be youthful and volatile.

“Do, Manny, do dearest, there’s a love,” said she, with the faintest imaginable lisp, “do compothe something. A Fanthasia, on visiting Dinaslryn. A dhream – ”

“Pray be quiet, Celestina!” said he, with a wave of his hand. “You derange me!”

“Have they got a ‘catalog’ of the gimcracks?” exclaimed a nasal voice that there was no mistaking. “I a’n’t posted in brass idols and boxwood saints, but I’d like to have ‘em booked and ticketed.”

“Are you aware, gentlemen and ladies,” said Mr. M’Kinlay, with a voice meant to awaken the very dullest sense of decorum – “are you aware that you are in the house of a private gentleman, without any permission or sanction on his part?”

“Oh, don’t, don’t disturb him, Sir,” broke in the ringletted lady. “You’ll never forgive yourself if you spoil it;” and she pointed to the artist, who had now let all his hair fall forward, after the fashion of a Skye terrier, and sat with his head drooped over the piano, and his hands suspended above the keys.

“Say what for the whole bilen,” cried the Yankee. “It ain’t much of a show; but I’ll take it over to New York, and charge only twenty-five cents for the reserved seats!”

“I repeat, Sir,” exclaimed M’Kinlay, “your presence here, and that of all your companions, is a most unreasonable intrusion – a breach of all propriety – one of those violations of decency, which, however practised, popular, and approved of in a certain country, neither distinguished for the civilisation of its inhabitants, nor for their sense of refinement – ”

“Is it Ireland you mane, Sir – is it Ireland?” said a short, carbuncled-nosed little man, with a pair of fiery red eyes. “Say the word if it is.”

“It is not Ireland, Sir. I respect the Irish. I esteem them.”

“Could you get them to be quiet, Celestina?” said the artist, faintly; “could you persuade the creatures to be still?”

“Hush, hush!” said she, motioning with both her hands.

A tremendous crash now resounded through the room. It was Mr. Herodotus M. Dodge, who, in experimenting with his umbrella on a Sèvres jar, to detect if it were cracked, had smashed it to atoms, covering the whole floor with the fragments.

“Send for the police! Tell the porter to lock the gate, and fetch the police!” shouted M’Kinlay. “I trust to show you, Sir, that you’re not in Fifteenth-street, or Forty-sixth Avenue. I hope to prove to you that you’re in a land of law and order.”

Overcome by his rage, he followed Rickards out of the room, declaring that he’d make all England ring with the narrative of this outrage.

The legal mind, overbalanced for an instant, suddenly recovered its equanimity, and he began to reflect how far he was justified in a forcible detention. Would “a claim lie” for false imprisonment? Were he to detain them, too, what should be his charge? Was it a trespass? Had they been warned off? “Wait a moment, Rickards,” said he; “I must think a minute or two. There’s a difficulty here. Where a person, passing in the street, smashes accidentally – it must be accidentally – a pane of plate-glass, of the value of, let us say five-and-twenty or thirty guineas, the law only holds him responsible for the damage of an ordinary window-pane; so that here it will be quite open to the defence to show that this man imagined he was breaking a common jug, a mere earthenware pipkin. It is, then, to the trespass we must look. Call the lodge-keeper; say I wish to have a word with him.”

While Rickards hastened on his errand, Mr. M’Kinlay sat down to ponder carefully over the case. Your men conversant with great causes in equity and weighty trials at bar, are nervously fearful of meddling with the small cases which come before petty tribunals. They really know little about them, and are almost certain to fail in them; and they feel – very naturally – ashamed at the sorry figure they must exhibit in such failures.

“They’re all gone, Sir – they’ve made a regular retreat of it – not one left.”

“Who – who are gone?”

“Them tourists, Sir. They overtook me as I went down the avenue, and made George open the gate; and away they are, the whole of ‘em.”

“I’m not sorry for it, Rickards. I declare I’m not sorry. It would cost more time and more trouble to follow them up than they’re worth; and I am certain, besides, Sir Gervais wouldn’t have the affair in the newspapers for ten times the amount of all the damage they’ve done him. What’s that noise without – who’s coming now?”

“My Lady!” exclaimed Rickards, and hastened out to receive her. Mr. M’Kinlay could notice that a short dialogue took place between the ladies and the butler before they entered the door, and that they both laughed at something he was telling them. Was the story that amused them of him, or of the invasion? He had not time to consider, when they entered.

“How d’ye do, Mr. M’Kinlay?” said Lady Vyner, quietly. “We’ve kept you very long waiting, I fear. You may serve dinner at once, Rickards. Mr. M’Kinlay will excuse our dining in morning dress, Georgina.”

“I should hope so,” said her sister, with a very saucy toss of the head.

“Your Ladyship will excuse my not remaining to dinner,” said he, with a marked coldness. “I only wanted to see you, and ask if you had any commissions for Sir Gervais.”

“No, there’s nothing, I fancy. I wrote yesterday – I think it was yesterday.”

“Tell him not to meddle with Irish property, and come away from that country as soon as he can,” said Georgina.

“Say the garden is looking beautiful since the rain,” said Lady Vyner, rising. “Good-by, and a pleasant journey!”

“Good-by!” said Georgina, giving him the tips of her fingers.

And Mr. M’Kinlay bowed and took his leave, carrying away as he went very different thoughts of cottage life and its enjoyments from those he might have felt had he gone when he had finished the last glass of Madeira.

CHAPTER X. THE SHEBEEN

Just as we see on the confines of some vast savage territory one solitary settlement that seems to say, "Here civilisation ends, beyond this the tracts of cultivated man are unknown," so there stood on the borders of a solitary lake in Donegal – Lough Anare – a small thatched house, over whose door an inscription announced "Entertainment for Man and Beast," the more pretentious letters of the latter seeming to indicate that the accommodation for Beast was far more likely to prove a success than that intended for mere humanity.

What imaginable spirit of enterprise could have induced Mr. O'Rorke to have established an inn in such a region is not easy to guess. To the north of Lough Anare lay a vast untravelled, almost roadless district. Great mountains and deep valleys, wild plains of heather, enclosing lakes, with islands, sometimes mere rocks, sometimes covered with an oak scrub – last remnants of primeval forests – succeeded each other apparently without end. A miserable shealing, usually padlocked on the outside, was all that betokened habitation, and a living being was rarely met with. It is true there was scenery which for grandeur and beauty might have vied with the most vaunted spots on the island. Mountain gorges far finer than Dunluce, lakes more varied in shape, and with margins bolder in outline and richer in colour than Killarney, and coast-line with which the boasted Glengarriff could not for a moment compete, all destined to remain as unknown as if they lay thousands of miles away in some Indian sea.

A great proportion of this territory was the property of the University of Dublin – endowment made in the time of Queen Elizabeth, when probably all lands without the pale had about the same value; some of it pertained to a wealthy English noble, who, until the accident of a governmental survey, had never so much as cared to ascertain his limits, and who made the first use of his knowledge by announcing for sale the lands of Mac-na-Morroch, Knochlifty, Eilmacooran, and Denyvaragh; in all, nigh fifty thousand acres of mountain, bog, callow, and lake, whose great capabilities, whether for sheep-farming, fishing, for the quarries of marble, or the immense mineral resources, were vouched for by a roll of scientific names, whose very titular letters enforced conviction. If the pen of an imaginative writer might have been employed in depicting the stores of wealth and fortune that lay here entombed, no fancy could have exaggerated the natural loveliness of the landscape. All that was wild and grotesque in outline, with all that was most glowing in colour, were there; and when on the nameless lakes the setting sun added his glory to the golden purple of their reflected lights, the scene became one of such gorgeous splendour as Art would not have dared to imitate.

The little inn we have just mentioned stood on a rocky eminence which projected from the mountain-side, and could be seen for miles off, more conspicuous, besides, by a large green flag, with a harp in the centre, which by the patriotism of Mr. O'Rorke flaunted its folds to the wild mountain breezes, as though enjoying in the solitude an immunity which the Saxon might have resented elsewhere. Tim O'Rorke was indeed one who had "suffered for Ireland." Four several times had he figured in Crown Prosecutions, and both fine and imprisonment had been his portion. On the last occasion, however, either that national enthusiasm was cooling down, or that suspicions of Tim's honesty were getting abroad, the subscription for his defence was almost a failure. No imposing names headed the list, and the sums inscribed were mean and contemptible. Unable to fee the great bar, to retain which, perhaps, formed the grandest triumph of his life, O'Rorke decided to defend himself, and in the course of his defence launched forth into a severe and insulting castigation of his party, who, after using up his youth and manhood in their cause, left him, when old and broken and dispirited, to the merciless cruelty of his enemies. He read aloud in open court the names of the powerful and wealthy men who at first stood by him, and then, with a shameless insolence, contrasted them with the ignoble friends who remained to him. He recited the proud sums once contributed, and, amidst the laughter of the court, ridiculed the beggarly half-crowns that now represented Irish

patriotism. The verdict was against him, and once more was he sent back to Kilmainham, to serve out a two years' sentence, this time unalienated by the sympathy of any friends, or the kind wishes of any partisans. His sentence completed, he made two to three efforts to reinstate himself in public esteem; he established an eating-house called "The Rebel's Home," he instituted an evening paper entitled the *Pike*, he invented a coat-button marked '98, but somehow friends and enemies had become wearied of him. It was seen that he was one of those who neither have the power of good nor evil, that he could be of no use to his own, no injury to others, and the world dropped him – dropped him as it does its poor and disreputable relatives, taking no heed of his gaunt looks nor his tattered raiment, and by its tacit indifference showed that the mass of mankind can behave on certain occasions pretty much as would an individual man. Tim threatened, stormed, and reviled; he vowed vengeance and menaced disclosures; he swore that his revelations would impeach some of the highest in the land, and he intimated that up to a certain day he was yet appeasable. Threats, however, were not more successful than entreaties, and Tim, gathering together a few pounds, under the plea of departure for Australia, quitted the scene he had so long troubled, and was heard of no more.

For years he had continued to exist in some fashion or other – poaching the chief source – in the wild spot we have just described; and it was on the rock in front of his door, with a short pipe in his mouth, that he now lay stretched, on a fine autumn morning, lazily gazing down the valley, where at a great distance off he could detect a small speck upon the road, intimating that rarest of all events, the approach of a jaunting-car. He threw his glance upwards to see that his flag disported its folds to the air, and to the sign over his door – "The Vinegar Hill, by T. O'Rorke, Entertainment for Man and Beast" – to be sure that all was in order, and he then smoked quietly on and watched the road.

By a landslip which had occurred several years before, and whose effects had never been remedied, the road was blocked up about a mile from the little inn, and travellers desirous of its accommodation were obliged to continue their journey on foot. Whether from the apathy of hope deferred, or calculating on the delay that must thus intervene, Mr. O'Rorke saw two persons descend from the car, and, each taking his carpet-bag, set out to walk, without the slightest movement on his part to provide for their reception; and this, though he was himself cook, waiter, and housemaid – all that the inn possessed of master or attendant.

Mr. O'Rorke's experience of travellers included but two categories, each of them rare enough in their visitations. They either came to shoot grouse or convert the natives. All who were not sportsmen were missionaries. A certain amount of peril attended both pursuits. The people were a wild, semi-civilised set, who saw with jealousy a stranger amongst them, and certain hints, palpable enough not to be mistaken, intimated to the lovers of sport, as well as the distributors of tracts, that their pursuits were dangerous ones; and thus, in time, the numbers decreased year by year, till at last the advent of a traveller was a rare event.

The two who now ascended the rocky pathway had neither guns nor fishing-tackle – as little had they of missionaries in their aspect – and he watched them with a lazy curiosity as they approached.

"Are you Mr. O'Rorke?" cried the first who came forward, who was our acquaintance Sir Gervais Vyner.

"Yes, my name is O'Rorke."

"And the owner of this inn, I take it?" asked Grenfell, somewhat haughtily.

"The same."

"Is this your usual way of receiving strangers, my friend, or is your present manner an especial politeness to ourselves?"

"Can you let us have a dinner, and make up a couple of rooms?" broke in Vyner, hastily. "We should like to stop here a few days."

"You can see the rooms, whether they'll do for you or not; such as they are, you can have them, but I can't make them better."

"And for eating, what can you give us?"

“Mutton always – fish and game when there’s the season for them – and poteen to wash them down.”

“That is the illicit spirit, isn’t it?” asked Grenfell.

“Just as illicit as anything else a man makes of his own produce for his own use; just as illicit as the bread that is made of his own corn.”

“You’re a politician, I see,” said Grenfell, with a sneering laugh. “I half suspected it when I saw your green flag there.”

“If I hadn’t been one, and an honest one too, I’d not be here today,” said he, with an energy greater than he had shown before. “Have you anything to say against that flag?”

“Of course he has not. Neither he nor I ever saw it before,” said Vyner.

“Maybe you’ll be more familiar with it yet; maybe the time isn’t far off when you’ll see it waving over the towers of Dublin Castle!”

“I’m not aware that there are any towers for it to wave over,” said Grenfell, mockingly.

“I’ll tell you what there are! There are hills and mountains, that our fathers had as their own; there are plains and valleys, that supported a race braver and better than the crafty Saxons that overcame them; there are holy churches, where our faith was taught before we ever heard of Harry the Eighth and his ten wives!”

“You are giving him more than the Church did,” said Grenfell.

“I don’t care whether they were ten or ten thousand. He is your St. Peter, and you can’t deny him!”

“I wish I could deny that I don’t like this conversation,” said Vyner. “My friend and I never came here to discuss questions of politics or polemics. And now about dinner. Could you let us have it at three o’clock; it is just eleven now?”

“Yes, it will be ready by three,” said O’Rorke, gravely.

“The place is clean enough inside,” whispered Grenfell, as he came from within, “but miserably poor. The fellow seems to have expended all his spare cash in rebellious pictures and disloyal engravings.”

“He is an insupportable bore,” muttered Vyner; “but let us avoid discussion with him, and keep him at a distance.”

“I like his rabid Irishism, I own,” said Grenfell, “and I intend to post myself up, as the Yankees say, in rebellious matters before we leave this.”

“Is that Lough Anare, that sheet of water I see yonder?”

“Yes,” said O’Rorke.

“There’s a ruined tower and the remains of seven churches, I think, on an island there?”

“You’d like to draw it, perhaps?” asked O’Rorke, with a cunning curiosity in his eye.

“For the present, I’d rather have a bathe, if I could find a suitable spot.”

“Keep round to the westward there. It is all rock along that side, and deep water close to the edge. You’ll find the water cold, if you mind that.”

“I like it all the better. Of course, George, you’ll not come? You’ll lie down on the sward here, and doze or dream till I come back.”

“Too happy, if I can make sleep do duty for books or newspapers,” yawned out Grenfell.

“Do you want a book?” asked O’Rorke.

“Yes, of all things. What can you give me?”

He returned to the house, and brought out about a dozen books. There were odd volumes of the press, O’Callaghan’s “Celts and Saxons,” and the Milesian Magazine, profusely illustrated with wood-cuts of English cruelty in every imaginable shape that human ingenuity could impart to torture.

“That will show you how we were civilised, and why it takes so long to do it,” said O’Rorke, pointing to an infamous print, where a celebrated drummer named Hempenstall, a man of gigantic

stature, was represented in the act of hanging another over his shoulder, the artist having given to the suffering wretch an expression of such agony as no mere words would convey.

“This fellow is intolerable,” muttered Vyner, as he turned away, and descended the rocky path. Grenfell, too, appeared to have had enough of his patriotic host, for he stretched himself out on the green sward, drawing his hat over his eyes, and giving it to be seen that he would not be disturbed.

O’Rorke now retreated to the kitchen to prepare for his guest’s entertainment, but he started with astonishment as he entered. “What, Kitty, is this you?” cried he; “when did you come?”

The question was addressed to a little girl of some ten or eleven years old, who, with her long golden hair loose on her shoulders, and her cheeks flushed with exercise, looked even handsomer than when first we saw her in the ruined Abbey at Arran, for it was the same child who had stood forward to claim the amber necklace as her right.

“My grandfather sent me home,” said she, calmly, as she threw the long locks back from her forehead, “for he had to stay a day at Murranmore, and if he’s not here to-morrow morning I’m to go on by myself.”

“And was that all you got by your grand relation, Kitty?” said he, pointing to the necklace that she still wore.

“And isn’t it enough?” answered she, proudly; “they said at the funeral that it was worth a king’s ransom.”

“Then they told you a lie, child, that’s all; it wouldn’t bring forty shillings – if it would thirty – to-morrow.”

“I don’t believe you, Tim O’Rorke,” said she, boldly; “but it’s just like you to make little of what’s another’s.”

“You have the family tongue if you haven’t their fortune,” said he, with a laugh. “Are you tired, coming so far?”

“Not a bit; I took the short cut by Lisnacare, and came down where the waterfall comes in winter, and it saved more than four miles of the road.”

“Ay, but you might have broken your neck.”

“My neck was safe enough,” said she, saucily.

“Perhaps you could trust your feet if you couldn’t your head,” said he, mockingly.

“I could trust them both, Tim O’Rorke; and maybe they’d both bring me farther and higher than yours ever did you.”

“There it is again; it runs in your blood; and there never was one of your name that hadn’t a saucy answer.”

“Then don’t provoke what you don’t like,” said she, with a quivering lip, for though quick at reply she was not the less sensitive to rebuke.

“Take a knife and scrape those carrots, and, when you’ve done, wash those radishes well.”

The girl obeyed without a word, seeming well pleased to be employed.

“Did she leave any money behind her?” asked he, after a pause.

“No, none.”

“And how did he treat you? – was he civil to you all?”

“We never saw him.”

“Not see him! – how was that? Sure he went to the wake?”

“He did not. He sent us ‘lashins’ of everything. There was pork and potatoes, and roast hens and ducks, and eggs and tea, and sugar and whisky, and cakes of every kind.”

“But why didn’t he come in amongst you to say that you were welcome, to wish you a good health, and the time of the year?”

“I don’t know.”

“And your grandfather bore that?”

She made no answer, but her face became crimson.

“I suppose it was all right; he wanted to show you that it was all over between him and you, and that when she was gone you didn’t belong to him any more.”

Two heavy tears rolled along the hot and burning cheeks of the child, but she never spoke.

“Your old grandfather’s well changed, Kitty, from what I knew him once, or he wouldn’t have borne it so quietly. And what did you get for your journey?”

“We got all her clothes – elegant fine clothes – and linen – two big boxes full, and knives and forks, and spoons and plates, that would fill two dressers as big as that. And this,” and she lifted the amber beads as she spoke, with a flashing eye – “and this besides.”

“He knew you well; he treated you just the way they treat the wild Indians in the Rocky Mountains, where they buy all that they have in the world for an old brass button or a few spangles. In his eyes you were all poor savages, and no more.”

“I wish I never set foot in your house, Tim O’Rorke,” said she, throwing down the knife, and stamping her bare foot with anger. “Tis never a good word for man or woman comes out of your mouth, and if it wasn’t so far to go I’d set off now.”

“You’re the making of a nice one,” said he, with a sneering laugh.

“I’m the making of what will be far above you one day,” said she, and her large blue eyes dilated, and her nostrils expanded with passion.

“Go down to the well and fill that pitcher,” said he, calmly. And she took the vessel, and tripped as lightly on the errand as though she had not come seventeen long miles that same morning.

CHAPTER XI. THE LEGEND OF LUTTRELL AND THE —

Doubtless the fresh free mountain air had its influence, and something, too, lay in the surprise at the goodness of the fare, but Vyner and Grenfell sat at the open door after their dinner in the pleasant frame of mind of those who have dined to their satisfaction, and like to reflect on it.

“I can almost look with complacency on your idea of an Irish property, Vyner, when I think of that mutton,” said Grenfell, as he lazily puffed his cigar, while he lay full stretched on the grass. “With what consummate tact, too, the fellow avoided all attempts at fine cookery, and sent us up those trouts plainly fried.”

“This is the only thing I cannot relish – this vile, semi-sweet and smoky compound. It is detestable!” And he held the whisky to his nose, and laid it down again. “Are we sure that he cannot command something better?”

“Here goes to see,” said Grenfell, starting up. “What a crowning pleasure would a glass of sherry – that Amontillado of yours – be in such a spot.”

“Fetch me out that map you’ll find on my table,” said Vyner, as the other moved away, and he lay half dreamily gazing out at the long valley with its mountain barrier in the distance. It was the thought of space, of a splendid territory princely in extent, that captivated his mind with regard to this purchase. All told him that such acquisitions are seldom profitable, and very often perilous; that whatever changes are to be wrought must be carried out with patience and infinite caution, and that the people – the wild natives, who consider the soil as more than half their own – must be conciliated. But was there ever a man – at least an imaginative, impulsive man – who did not fancy he was the person to deal with such difficulties? That by his tact, and skill, and delicate treatment, the obstacles which had closed the way for others would be removed; that with an instinctive appreciation of the people, of their moods of thought, their passions, and their prejudices, *he* would discover the road to their hearts, and teach them to trust and confide in him?

It was in a sort of fool’s paradise of this kind that Vyner lay. He was a prince in his own wild mountain territory, his sway undisputed, his rule absolute. He had spread benefits innumerable around him, and the recipients were happy, and, what is more, were grateful. Some terrible crime – agrarian outrage, as newspaper literature has it – had come before the House, and led to a discussion on the question of Irish landlordism, and he imagined himself rising in his place to declare his own experiences – “very different, indeed, from those of the Right Honourable Gentleman who had just sat down.” What a glowing picture of a country he drew; what happiness, what peace, what prosperity. It was Arcadia, with a little more rain and a police force. There was no disturbance, no scarcity, very little sickness, religious differences were unknown, a universal brotherhood bound man to man, and imparted to the success of each all the sentiment of a general triumph. “And where, Sir, will you say, is this happy region – in what favoured country blessed by nature is this Elysium? and my reply is, in the wild and almost trackless mountains of Donegal, amidst scenery whose desolate grandeur almost appals the beholder; where but a few years back the traveller dared not penetrate above a mile or two from the coast, and where in comparison the bush in Newfoundland or the thicket in New Zealand had been safe. It is my proud privilege to declare, Sir, and this I do, not alone before this House, but in face of the country – ”

“That you never saw a prettier face than that,” said Grenfell, leading forward the little girl by the hand, and placing her before him.

“She is pretty; she is downright beautiful,” said Vyner, warmly. “Where did you find this queen of the fairies?”

“At the well yonder, trying to place on her head a pitcher not much smaller than herself. She tells me she is a stranger here, only waiting for her grandfather to come and fetch her away.”

“And where to?” asked Vyner.

“To Glenvallah.” And she pointed in the direction of the mountains.

“And where have you come from now?”

“From Arran – from the island.”

“What took you to the island, child?”

“I was at my aunt’s wake. It was there I got this.” And she lifted one of the beads of her necklace with a conscious pride.

“Amber and gold; they become you admirably.”

The child seemed to feel the praise in her inmost heart. It was a eulogy that took in what she prized most, and she shook back the luxuriant masses of her hair, the better to display the ornaments she wore.

“And it was your aunt left this to you?” asked Grenfell.

“No; but we had everything amongst us. Grandfather took this, and Tom Noonan took that, and Mark Tracey got the other, and this – this was mine.”

“Were you sorry for your aunt?” asked Vyner.

“No, I didn’t care.”

“Not care for your father’s or your mother’s sister?”

“She was my mother’s sister, but we never saw her. She couldn’t come to us, and he wouldn’t let us come to her.”

“He, I suppose, means her husband?”

The child nodded assent.

“And what was the reason of this; was there a family quarrel?”

“No. It was because he was a gentleman.” “Indeed!” broke in Grenfell. “How did you know that?”

“Because he never worked, nor did anything for his living. He could stay all day out on the sea-shore gathering shells, and go home when he pleased to his meals or his bed.”

“And that is being a gentleman?”

“I think it is; and I wish I was a lady.”

“What was this gentleman’s name?”

“John Hamilton Luttrell – Luttrell of Arran we called him.”

“John Luttrell! And was your aunt his wife, child?” asked Vyner, eagerly; “and are you the cousin of Harry Luttrell?”

“Yes; but he would not let me say so; he is as proud as his father.”

“He need not be ashamed of such a cousin, I think,” said Vyner, as he surveyed her; and the child again raised her fingers to her necklace, as though it was there that lay all her claim to admiration.

“Keep her in talk, George, while I make a sketch of her; she is the very brightest thing I ever saw in nature.”

“Tell me the names of all these mountains,” said Grenfell; “but first of all, your own.”

“My name is Kitty; but I like them to call me Katherine – as the priest does.”

“It is statelier to be Katherine,” said Grenfell, gravely.

And she gave a nod of haughty acknowledgment that almost provoked a smile from him.

“That mountain is Caub na D’haoul, the Devil’s Nightcap; whenever he takes it off, there’s a storm at sea; and there’s Kilmacreenon, where the Bradleys was killed; and that’s Strathmore, where the gold mines is.”

“And are there really gold mines there?”

“Ay, if one had leave from the devil to work them; but it was only old Luttrell ever got that, and he paid for it.”

“Tell me the story, child; I never heard it.”

The girl here seated herself on a knoll directly in front of them, and, with a demure air, and some of that assumed importance she had possibly seen adopted by story-tellers, she began, in a tone and with a fluency that showed she was repeating an oft-told tale:

“There was one of the Luttrells once that was very rich, and a great man every way, but he spent all his money trying to be greater than the King, for whatever the King did Luttrell would do twice as grand, and for one great feast the King would give, Luttrell would give two, and he came at last to be ruined entirely; and of all his fine houses and lands, nothing was left to him but a little cabin on Strathmore, where his herd used to live. And there he went and lived as poor as a labourin’ man; indeed, except that he’d maybe catch a few fish or shoot something, he had nothing but potatoes all the year round. Well, one day, as he was wanderin’ about very low and sorrowful, he came to a great cave on the hill-side, with a little well of clear water inside it; and he sat down for sake of the shelter, and began to think over old times, when he had houses, and horses, and fine clothes, and jewels. ‘Who’d ever have thought,’ says he, ‘that it would come to this with me; that I’d be sittin’ upon a rock, with nothing to drink but water?’ And he took some up in the hollow of his hand and tasted it; but when he finished, he saw there was some fine little grains, like dust, in his hand, and they were bright yellow besides, because they were gold.

“‘If I had plenty of you, I’d be happy yet,’ says he, looking at the grains.

“‘And what’s easier in life, Mr. Luttrell?’ says a voice; and he starts and turns round, and there, in a cleft of the rock, was sittin’ a little dark man, with the brightest eyes that ever was seen, smoking a pipe. ‘What’s easier in life,’ says he, ‘Mr. Luttrell?’

“‘How do you know my name?’ says he.

“‘Why wouldn’t I?’ says the other. ‘Sure it isn’t because one is a little down in the world that he wouldn’t have the right to his own name? I have had some troubles myself,’ says he, ‘but I don’t forget my name, for all that.’

“‘And what may it be, if it’s pleasin’ to you?’ says Luttrell.

“‘Maybe I’ll tell it to you,’ says he, ‘when we’re better acquainted.’

“‘Maybe I could guess it now,’ says Luttrell.

“‘Come over and whisper it, then,’ says he, ‘and I’ll tell you if you’re right.’ And Luttrell did and the other called out, ‘You guessed well; that’s just it!’ “‘Well,’ says Luttrell, ‘there’s many a change come over me, but the strangest of all is to think that here I am, sittin’ up and talking to the – ’ The other held up his hand to warn him not to say it, and he went on: ‘And I’m no more afeard of him than if he was an old friend.’

“‘And why would you, Mr. Luttrell? – and why wouldn’t you think him an old friend? Can you remember one pleasant day in all your life that I wasn’t with you some part of it?’”

“‘Give up that drawing, Vyner, and listen to this,’ said Grenfell. “‘I’ll make her begin it again for you.’”

“‘I am listening. I’ve heard every word of it,’ said Vyner. “‘Go on, dear.’”

“‘I know what you mean well enough,’ says Luttrell. ‘I know the sort of bargain you make, but what would be the good of all my riches to me when I’d lose my soule?’

“‘Isn’t it much trouble you take about your soule, Mr. Luttrell?’ says he. ‘Doesn’t it keep you awake at night, thinking how you’re to save it? Ain’t you always correctin’ and chastisin’ yourself for the good of your soule, not lettin’ yourself drink this or eat that, and warnin’ you, besides, about many a thing I won’t speak of, eh? Tell me that.’

“‘There’s something in what you say, no doubt of it,’ says Luttrell; ‘but, after all,’ says he, with a wink, ‘I’m not going to give it up as a bad job, for all that.’

“‘And who asks you?’ says the other. ‘Do you think that a soule more or less signifies to me? It don’t: I’ve lashins and lavins of them.’

“‘Maybe you have,’ says Luttrell.

“Have you any doubt of it, Mr. Luttrell?” says he. ‘Will you just mention the name of any one of your friends or family that I can’t give you some particulars of?’

“I’d rather you’d not talk that way,’ says Luttrell; ‘it makes me feel unpleasant.’

“I’m sure,’ says the other, ‘nobody ever said I wasn’t polite, or that I ever talked of what was not pleasin’ to the company.’

“Well,’ says Luttrell, ‘supposin’ that I wanted to be rich, and supposin’ that I wouldn’t agree to anything that would injure my soule, and supposin’ that there was, maybe, something that you’d like me to do, and that wouldn’t hurt me for doin’ it, what would that be?’

“If you always was as cute about a bargain, Mr. Luttrell,’ says the other, ‘you’d not be the poor man you are to-day.’

“That’s true, perhaps,’ says he; ‘but, you see, the fellows I made them with wasn’t as cute as the – ’

“Don’t,’ says the other, holding up his hand to stop him; ‘it’s never polite. I told you I didn’t want your soul, for I’m never impatient about anything; all I want is to give you a good lesson – something that your family will be long the better of – and you want it much, for you have, all of you, one great sin.’ “We’re fond of drink?” says Luttrell. “No,’ says he; ‘I don’t mean that.’ “It’s gamblin’?” “Nor that.’

“It’s a likin’ for the ladies?” says Luttrell, slyly. “I’ve nothing to say against that, for they’re always well disposed to me,’ says he.

“If it’s eatin’, or spendin’ money, or goin’ in debt, or cursin’ or swearin’, or being fond of fightin’ – “

“It is not,’ says he; ‘them is all natural. It’s your pride,’ says he – ‘your upsettin’ family pride, that won’t let you do this, or say that. There’s what’s destroyin’ you.’

“It’s pretty well out of me now,’ says Luttrell, with a sigh. “It is not,’ says the other. ‘If you had a good dinner of beef, and a tumbler of strong punch in you, you’d be as impudent this minute as ever you were.’

“Maybe you’re right,’ says Luttrell.

“I know I am, Mr. Luttrell. You’re not the first of your family I was intimate with. You’re an ould stock, and I know ye well.’ “And how are we to be cured?” says Luttrell. “Easy enough,’ says he. ‘When three generations of ye marry peasants, it will take the pride out of your bones, and you’ll behave like other people.’

“We couldn’t do it,’ says Luttrell. “Try,’ says the other. “Impossible!’

“So you’d say about livin’ on potatoes, and drinkin’ well water.’ “That’s true,’ says Luttrell.

“So you’d say about ragged clothes and no shoes to your feet.” Luttrell nodded.

“So you’d say about settin’ in a cave and talking over family matters to – to a stranger,’ says he, with a laugh.

“I believe there’s something in it,’ said Luttrell; ‘but sure some of us might like to turn bachelors.’

“Let them, and welcome,’ says he. ‘I don’t want them to do it one after the other. I’m in no hurry. Take a hundred years – take two, if you like, for it.’

“Done,’ says Lnttrell. ‘When a man shows a fair spirit, I’ll always meet him in the same. Give me your hand; it’s a bargain.’

“I hurt my thumb,’ says he; ‘but take my tail, ‘twill do all the same.’ And though Mr. Luttrell didn’t like it, he shook it stoutly, and only let it go when it began to burn his fingers. And from that day he was rich, even till he died; but after his death nobody ever knew where to find the gold, nor ever will till the devil tells them.”

“And did his family keep the bargain; did they marry the peasants?” asked Grenfell.

“Two of them. One before, John Lnttrell of Arran; and another must do it, and soon too, for they say the two hundred years is near out now.”

“And is it said that the remedy succeeded?” asked Vyner; “are the Luttrells cured of their family pride?”

“They can’t be till the third marriage takes place; indeed, my grandfather says they’ll be worse than ever just before they’re cured; ‘for,’ says he, ‘every one that makes a bargain with the devil thinks he has the best of it.’”

“And that, I suspect, is a mistake, Katherine,” said Vyner.

She threw down her eyes, and seemed lost in thought, making no reply whatever to his remark.

“I’d have had no dealings with him at all,” said Vyner.

“You are rich, and you don’t need him,” said she, almost fiercely, as though his words had conveyed a sneer.

“That’s just it, Kitty,” said Grenfell; “or if he did want him it would be for something different from money.”

She gave a saucy toss of her head, as though to show she agreed with him, and turned to the table where Vyner was at work with his chinks.

“That’s me,” said she, gravely.

“I like your own face better,” said Vyner.

“So would that little fellow with the pipe that you were telling us of,” said Grenfell.

“Let him say so,” said she, with a ringing laugh; and she bounded from the spot, and skipping from crag to crag flew down the rock, and hurried down the little path at speed.

“There’s a man coming up the road; don’t you see him waving his hat?”

“It’s an old man,” said Vyner, as he looked through his telescope. “I snnose her grandfather.”

CHAPTER XII. THE WALK IN THE MOUNTAINS

When Vyner went to sleep that night, it was to dream of all that the last few days had presented before him. The wild and rocky Arran, with its ruined Abbey and its lonely occupant; the bright-eyed but over-thoughtful-looking boy, with all the freshness of childhood and all the contemplative temperament of a man; then the iron-bound shore and the semi-savage natives; and last of all the mountain region where he then was, with that fairy figure more deeply impressed than he had drawn her, and whom he now fancied to be tripping lightly before him up the rocky sides of Strathmore.

As he opened his eyes, the view that met them startled him. It was one of those vast stretches of landscape which painters cannot convey. They are too wide, too boundless for picture. The plain which lay outstretched before him, rising and falling like a vast prairie, was unmarked by habitation – not a hovel, not a hut to be seen. Vast groups of rocks stood out here and there abruptly, grotesque and strange in outline, as though giants had been petrified in the act of some great conflict, the stunted trees that crowned the summits serving as feathers on the helmets. A great amphitheatre of mountain girded the plain, save at one spot, the Gap of Glenvallah, through which, as his map told him, his road on that morning lay.

His object was to see with his own eyes the so much vaunted scenery of this region, to visit the lonely spot, and talk himself with its wild natives; he doubted, indeed, if both the solemnity and the savagery had not been exaggerated. To acquire the property was, after all, only one of those caprices which rich men can afford themselves. They can buy some rare and costly relic – some curious manuscript, some singular specimen of a contested species, a shell, a stone, a fragment of sculptured marble – to show which once or twice to some critical eye is all its value; why not then possess in nature what, had it been reduced to art, and signed Poussin or Salvator, would have been priceless? It was thus he reasoned: “If this place be but what they have described it, I shall own a landscape that all the galleries of Europe cannot rival. A landscape, too, whose varying effects of sun and shadow, of daybreak and twilight, shall be endless. The greatest of all painters, the sun, shall throw over the scene his own lights, and the storm shall wash the canvas and bring out afresh all the most lovely tints of colour.”

Grenfell had promised him overnight to be up and stirring by an early hour, but when called he refused to rise; he had his lazy fit on him, he said; he might have called it rather a malady than a paroxysm, for it was chronic. He declared that the view from the rock before the door fully satisfied him; he was no glutton about scenery; a little did for him, and here was a feast. “Besides,” said he, “I have been reading those atrocious magazines all night, and I mean to devote my day to some rebel colloquies with my host.”

Perhaps, after all, Vyner was scarcely sorry to set out alone; Gren-fell’s companionship was of so essentially worldly a character, his qualities were best exercised when they discussed the men, the things, and the topics of his day: such a man saw in the wild sublimity of a mountain scene little else than its desolation, and Vyner bethought him how often this town-bred gentleman had jarred upon him in moments of peaceful reverie and errant fancy.

O’Rorke served his breakfast in silence; either he was not in communicative mood, or he mistrusted his guest. He answered with brevity the few questions about the road, only adding, “that it was a pity the gentleman had not mentioned before where he was going, for there was an old man and his granddaughter had just set out on that very road.”

“The child I saw here yesterday?”

“The same.”

“Have they been long gone? Could I overtake them, think you?”

“Easy enough; they’ve taken some bread and a bottle of milk for their breakfast, and you’ll come up with them, if you walk briskly, before they reach the Gap.”

He lost no further time, but strapping on a light knapsack, and armed with a stout stick, set out at once.

“If it’s a gauger you are, you’d wish yourself back in the place you came from before night,” said O’Rorke, as he looked after him. Vyner was a good walker, and trained to the mountains, so that his eye quickly detected any available short cut, and enabled him at a glance to choose his path. If there was not actual peril in his position – thus alone and companionless in a wild region, where any suspicion may attach to the stranger – there was that amount of adventure that summons a man’s courage to its post, and tells him that he must look to his own safety; and who that has felt this sensation, this proud sense of self-dependence, does not know its ecstasy! Who has not tasted the small heroism of being alone on the mountain, on the wild heath at midnight, on the rolling sea with a gathering storm in the distance, and who, having felt, has not gloried in it?

But to the man who leaves behind a home of every comfort, where all that can adorn and embellish existence are to be found, the contrast of present privation with past indulgence has something wonderfully exciting. He pictures the pleasant drawing-room with its cheerful fire, and the happy faces round the hearth; he fancies he hears the merry laugh, the melodious chords of the piano, the swell of some sweet voice, and then he bends his ear to the rugged splash of the breaking sea, or the whistling wind as it sweeps through some Alpine “crevasse.” If no sense of such dangers arose to Vyner’s mind, yet there was enough to make him feel how different was his present position from anything that his daily life exacted. The chances that we voluntarily confront have a wondrous fascination.

From his map he learned that the estate which he wished to purchase began at the Gap of Inchegora, a solemn gorge visible for many a mile off! It was indeed a grand portal that same Gap, not fully fifty feet in width, and more than nine hundred in height – a mere fissure, in fact, as complete as though made by the stroke of a giant’s scimitar. With his eyes directed constantly to this spot, he went onward, and came at length to a little stream, at the margin of which, and under the shelter of a solitary ash, sat the old peasant and his granddaughter at their breakfast.

“I have walked hard to come up with you,” said Vyner. “I wanted to have your company to the Gap.” The old man touched his hat in acknowledgment of this speech, and then bent down his head, while the child spoke to him in Irish.

“‘Tis deaf my grandfather is, Sir, and he didn’t hear you,” said the girl.

“Tell him I would be glad he’d be my guide as far as Mort-na – ”

She laughed merrily at his poor attempt at the name, and said, with a racy intonation, “Mortnagheela. ‘Tis there we live ourselves.”

The old peasant munched his bread and lifted the bottle twice to his lips before he answered the girl’s question, and then said, “Ask him is he a gauger.”

“No,” said Vyner, laughing; “I have not come here to molest any one. I want nothing more than to look at your big mountains and grand old cliffs.”

“You’re a surveyor,” said the old man, whose hearing seemed to have not lost one word Vyner uttered.

“Not even that, my good friend – a mere idler, no more.”

The peasant said something in Irish to the child, and she laughed heartily at it, looking up the while in Vyner’s face, as though it made the jest more poignant.

“Well, will you let me bear you company, Katherine?” asked he. As the girl repeated the question, the old fellow gave a half impatient shrug of the shoulders, and uttered a few sentences in Irish with a voluble energy that savoured of passion.

“‘Tis what he says, Sir,” said the child; “that he was in trouble once before, and found it hard enough to get out of it, and if misfortune was to come to you, that he’d be blamed for it.”

“So, then, he’d rather have nothing to do with me,” said Vyner, smiling. “What does he mean by trouble?”

The old man looked up full in his face, and his eyes took an almost defiant expression as he said, "Isn't the assizes trouble? – isn't it trouble to be four months in gaol waiting for them? – isn't it trouble to stand up in the dock, with two sons of your own, and be tried for your life?"

"Yes, that indeed may be called trouble," said Vyner, compassionately, as he sat down on the bank and took out a cigar. "Do you smoke? Will you have one of these?"

The old man looked at the cigar and shook his head; either he did not value, or did not understand it.

"That's the reason I come up here," resumed the peasant. "I'm a Mayo man, and so is all belongin' to me, but after that" – he laid an emphasis on the last word – "the landlord, ould Tom Luttrell, wouldn't renew my lease, and so I come up to this wild place, where, praise be to the Virgin, there's no leases nor landlords either." "How does that happen? The land surely has an owner?" "If it has, I never saw him, nor *you* neither. And whoever he is, he knows better than to come here and ax for his rents." The bitter laugh with which the old fellow finished his speech was scarcely short of an insult – indeed, Vyner half winced as he felt that it might have been meant as a menace to himself. "No," continued he, as though following out the flow of his own thoughts; "there's the Gap of Inchehora before us, and through that Gap tithe-proctor, agent, or bailiff, never passed, and if they did, they'd never pass back again!"

"And who is supposed to own these lands?" asked Vyner, mildly. "The College of Dublin has some of them; Lord Landsborough has more; John Luttrell of Arran says that there's part of them his; and, for the matter of that, I might say that the mountain there was mine – and who's to contradict me? – or what better am I after saying it?"

Pouring out a cupful of brandy from his flask, Vyner offered it to him, and this he took with gratitude, his eyes devouring with admiration the little silver goblet that held it.

"Drink Mr. Luttrell's health," said Vyner, pouring out the last of the liquor into the cup; "he was an old friend of mine long ago."

"Here's health to him, and long life, too, if it was any use to him," said the man, doggedly.

"There is truth in what you mean; a life such as he leads now can be of little pleasure, or profit either."

"And who brought him to it?" burst in the old man, fiercely, for the spirit had mounted to his brain, maddening and exciting him. "What was it but the ould Luttrell pride that ruined every one of them, and will ruin them yet? He married a decent girl, well brought up, and good-looking; she wasn't a lady, but not a lady in the land had a better heart or a finer temper, but he wouldn't own her for all that. No, not a bit of it; there she lived, now with one brother, now with another, nobody darin' to call her Mrs. Luttrell, nor even as much as hint she was married. How we stood it – we never were very patient – I don't know, but we did, and more ill luck to us for doing so!" There was a long pause before he continued: "At last there came that trouble I was telling you of. When Mr. Crowe was shot, and I was tuk with my two sons – as innocent every one of us as that little girl there, but what did that signify? – the Attorney-General said, 'It's eight-and-twenty years I'm coming this circuit, and I never knew a capital felony to be tried without a Malone in it! I wonder,' says he, 'will the time ever come when this will cease?' There was eight of us then banished, some in Botany Bay, and some in America, and, by coorse, it was hard for us to make up money for the 'defence' – the more because we spent so much already on lawyers. Howsomever, we did do it. We got a pound here, and ten shillings there, and at last gathered twenty-two fourteen-six. I'll never forget it, twenty-two fourteen-six – in fact, I used to go on saying it over to myself, as I sat in my cell, just as if saying it would make it grow. The attorney, Mr. Roach, who was a good friend of ours, towld me in secret that there was two or three ugly things in the case, and that short of ould Mr. Clancy, the King's counsel, there warn't a man could get us off; 'and less than thirty guineas,' says he, 'won't bring him down.' All this time, none of us would ask Sally Luttrell for a farthin'. We all knew she had nothing of her own, and we wouldn't be beholdin' to Mr. Luttrell. At last, my youngest daughter couldn't bear it any longer; she

sets off for the house where Sally was stoppin', and what she said, or how she did it, we never knew, but the next morning there came to Mr. Roach's office a note with the money. It was an order on French's Bank, signed with a letter L. When the trial was come on – it was the third day – the Crown lawyers was pushing hard to make out a charge of conspiracy, and show that half the country was in it, and at last declared that they were ready to prove that an immense sum of money lay in the Bank just to defend all the people that ever broke the law, or did anything wrong, and that in this case they would produce a list of subscribers, each of them down for some trifle, every one of whom had been once at least in that dock with an indictment against him. Sure enough, however he come by it, he had the list. And such a set of witnesses as he brought up never was seen afore. 'Gentlemen of the jury, I only ask you to look at them,' says he; 'just look at them, and you'll know what sort of a tie binds these people to the prisoners in the dock.' Clancy said nothing till it was all over – he wouldn't cross-question one – but he holds a bit of paper in his hand, and says, 'My Lord,' says he, 'it appears to me, that to be poor and wear ragged clothes in this country is to be outlawed, and that any man whose condition is not as comfortable as my learned friend's, must be declared a rebel to his King and a liar to his Maker. It's very hard,' says he, 'but as it comes from so high an authority as the Attorney-General, it must be good law, and I'll not dispute it. Fortunately, however, for my unhappy client, his character has not only made friends for him amongst good men and kind men – it is not only by his equals in life that his honest nature is known – poor labourers, humble peasants testify by their hard-earned pittance, freely given, to their love for an old neighbour and friend. But what good is it? They are poor, and must be perjured; they are half-famished, and of course they are infamous. But here, my Lord, is a witness well enough to do to be respected; he eats, drinks, and dresses in the way the law requires; he has an estate, and of course a conscience; he keeps an agent, and therefore he has a sowl to be saved; his sympathies are written down here at the cost of eleven pounds eight shillings, and – though his modesty is satisfied with a mere letter L – his name is John Hamilton Luttrell.'"

As if the strain on his memory to recal the precise words employed, and to bring back the whole scene, had been too much for him, or as though the emotions of the past had surged back to overwhelm him, the old peasant held his hand over his eyes, and sat several minutes without speaking.

"Did Luttrell come on the table, then?" asked Vyner.

"No, Sir; he was seen in court a short time before, but when he was called he couldn't be found; nor from that day out was he ever seen in the streets of Castlebar. It was that sent him away to the island. His pride and his shame together."

"You are less than just to my old friend," said Vyner, warmly. "To know what he felt, to understand all the difficulties that he saw before him. you should be in *his* place as he was."

"That's as much as to say that I ought to be a gentleman before I condemned him," said the old fellow, with a look of intense craftiness. "But the lawyer that defended *me* didn't want to be a labourin' man to explain what *I* felt, or what was passin' in my heart. No, Sir, there's things in the world that are just the same to the rich man as to the poor one, just as sickness and sorrow is. Get up, Kitty, we're stayin' too long here; it will be black night before we get home."

"How many miles do you count it?"

"Twenty-one – long miles, too – the last four of them over shingle, and steep besides."

"Shall I find an inn – well, shall I find shelter for the night?" said he, correcting himself.

"Shelter I could give you myself, but I'd rather you'd look for it anywhere else. I told you already why."

"Well, I'm not afraid of your company, and, if you don't dislike mine, we'll travel together."

The little girl said something with eagerness in Irish, and then turning to Vyner she took his hand, and said, "Yes, come with us." And they set out.

CHAPTER XIII. THE PROJECT

It was on the evening of the second day after Vyner's departure that Grenfell, never much given to anxieties about others, felt a certain uneasiness, and sauntered down the glen, wondering what might have detained him. He had not gone fully a mile, when he saw in the grey twilight a man approaching; he hailed, and was answered in his friend's voice, "All right; it is I."

"I was going to start the hue and cry, or whatever may represent that institution here, after you, Vyner. Where have you been all this time?"

"As to the where, my friend, it would require a very different tongue from yours and mine to say; Russian and Polish names are nothing in comparison. As to the how I have been, is easier to answer – never better; though with all due gratitude be it said, I have passed my time in rather questionable company."

"At least they recognised the rights of hospitality?"

"Arabs themselves were never more punctilious. My host was the grandfather of our little friend the fairy queen, a man of nigh eighty, who had been tried on two capital charges, and ought, I suspect, to have been convicted on both. His friends, to the number of twenty odd, were all Whiteboys, Ribbonmen, or whatever other name includes lawbreakers of the first magnitude; and one, as handsome and frank-featured a young fellow as ever you saw, who accompanied me to the lake side this evening, had made his escape from Castlebar gaol when under sentence of death, and actually went back to the town to witness the execution of his cousins on the following Saturday, it being, as he said, the only mark of affection he was able to show them."

"I make you my compliment, as the French say, on your company. And the women, what were they like?"

"I saw but two: an old hag that was brought down special to give an opinion upon me from external traits, and pronounce whether I had the colour of hair or eyes that indicated a tendency to bear witness against my neighbour; the other was a sickly creature, bedridden though in the prime of life, mother of little Katherine."

"But explain how you could have prolonged your stay amongst such people. What were you doing? what were you saying?"

"Doing? The whole day we walked the mountains. They led me by paths known only to themselves over an immense mountain district, showing me all that was noteworthy, and pointing out effects of scenery and picturesque spots with a feeling and taste that amazed me. They used no cant of art, none of that tricky phraseology, it is true, which we accept as the vernacular of all landscape description; but in their wild imagery and reckless imagination they gave names to the places which showed how deeply objects of terror or beauty had appealed to them. Then at nightfall we gathered close to the turf fire and the potato 'kish,' a wide, open basket, which served as strainer and dish together. There we supped, talked politics, religion, law, and a little literature – at least so far as the Life of Freeny and the story of Moll Flanders enter into biographical letters."

"How I should like to have drawn a cordon of policemen round the party and netted the whole."

"You might like to have planned the campaign, but I'll be sworn if you had been favoured with a look at the company you'd never have led the expedition."

"What a traveller's knack it is to exaggerate the war-paint of one's Indian friends," said Grenfell, superciliously. "But here we are with our supper waiting for us, and even Mr. 'O'Rorke's noble feast' will contrast favourably with your host's."

The meal ended, they seated themselves on the door-sill, looking out into the still and starry night, and resumed the theme they were discussing.

"I take it that you said you were a mere tourist rambling for pleasure?" asked Grenfell.

“No, I told them I had come down to see the country, with some intentions to make a purchase. It was not so easy to explain that I was more eager to acquire a very beautiful and picturesque tract than a very remunerative one, but they believed me at last – that is, they gave credit to my sincerity at the cost of my shrewdness.” Grenfell nodded, as though he agreed with them, and Vyner went on: “We were a full house when I made my declaration – there were, I should say, six or seven-and-twenty present – and they concurred in applauding the frankness with which I spoke to them. A very old man, a venerable figure, whose high forehead and white beard would have impressed me, perhaps, more reverentially if I had not been told that he had been flogged by John Beresford, in the year ‘98, for some cruel outrage he had committed – this apart – he, however, complimented me highly on my straightforwardness, and said that if others would do like me there would be fewer disturbances about land; and the illustration he used was this: ‘If you go into a fair to buy a horse, and you see a splendid animal, strong-boned, well-ribbed, and powerful, with every promise of speed and strength; – you are as well satisfied with his price as with his perfections, but do your inquiries stop there? – not a bit of it. You know well that he may be a capital hunter and a noble roadster, but you want to learn what his temper is. All his fine qualities depend upon this, for if he be unruly and unmanageable, to what purpose is his power or his activity? It is precisely the same with a property: you may have wood and water, arable land and lay, mines and meadows, and, with all these, there may be a “temper” that renders them worthless. Landlords won’t believe this; buyers won’t listen to it. They say, “Make out my title clear and clean, and leave me to deal with it.” Men with money in the bank, and who, because they can live anywhere, are chained to nowhere, cannot understand the love of a poor labouring man to some mud-hovel or some shealing, to a brook where he has paddled in boyhood, to the mountain that he has seen from his earliest infancy. They do not, cannot, conceive why poverty should sharpen any susceptibilities – poverty, that can blunt so many – and they say, “Turn him out. I’ll find a place for him elsewhere.” But that’s a mistake; you might as well say you’d replace the child he has followed to the churchyard. The man, in the very proportion of his destitution, has bound up his heart with some half-dozen little objects that have, from time and long usage, grown to be part of him. The monotony that wearies the rich man is the luxury of the poor. To live where their fathers lived, to see an unchanged world around them, to have few contrasts of the present with the past, is their paradise – ”

“Where did you get all this?” broke in Grenfell. “From your friend of the cat-o’-nine-tails?”

“Exactly. The words of wisdom were all his own, and, unlike the fate of most wisdom, it was listened to. He showed me, in fact, that though the Law might give possession, it would not ensure me one of the rights of property: I might own, but not enjoy; I might have and hold, but neither sow nor reap; I might walk over and shoot over, but with no privilege to keep any other from doing the same, and that before I thought of preserving the game, I should take some measures about preserving myself. The man who enunciated these principles – for they were principles – declared them calmly and dispassionately, not as sentiments that conveyed anger or passion; far from it – he felt all the dignity of a sage instructing ignorance. He was a great Saquem delivering the laws of his tribe, and showing what had been their guides and directors for centuries. I did, indeed, once, only once, venture upon a mild remonstrance, that there were some things which a landlord possessed for the betterment of those under him; that he might assist them in many ways, and be the means of their advancement and prosperity; but he demurred to this, and so did his followers. Their experience, they said, did not confirm this: as a class, they had found landlords narrow-minded and selfish, very ignorant of the people, and very indifferent to them. They opined that, as an institution, landlordism had not succeeded, and half hinted that it was a Saxon innovation that was brought over in days of violence and oppression, and did not suit the conditions of the country at present.”

“And you listened to these rascals coolly propounding such doctrines?”

“Yes; and so would you have done too, had you been in my place, my dear George! A minority is never very truculent when the majority could pitch it over a cliff without the slightest risk of being called to account for it.”

“It would have pushed my patience hard, though.” “It would have been your prudence, and not your patience, that you’d have consulted.”

“Well, I’ll not quarrel with the rogues if they have disabused you as to the pleasures of Irish proprietorship; they’ve done you a good service, but, I must say, I think their case a more hopeless one, now that I see lawlessness is a system.”

“I don’t think you would if you talked with them! They were too argumentative not to be open to conviction; too logical, with all their prejudices, not to be approachable by reason. I was, all the time we were talking, so impressed with this, that I could not help imagining what a race so quick-sighted and intelligent might become when educated and instructed. Take my word for it, George, Hodge will have no chance against Paddy if he ever get book-learning.” A mocking laugh was Grenfell’s answer.

“So satisfied am I of the truth of what I say, that I’m going to give a proof of it.”

“What, going to set up a school in the wilds of Donegal!” “No. I’m going to carry away that pretty child, and educate her with Ada.”

“You’ll not do anything so foolish, I trust!” “It is all settled, the conditions arranged, the terms agreed to. I have given her grandfather ten pounds for her outfit, some few things she needed, and as much more to pay their journey over to Wales, for the old fellow, with a caution that was creditable to him, wished to see the ladies to whom his child was to be confided, and confer a little with them besides.”

“All your scheme for the property was absolute wisdom compared with this!” “How so?”

“Where everything is so absurd one cannot decide what to ridicule. Suppose you succeed – and it is what I by no means grant – what will you do with her? You’ll give her the tastes, the accomplishments, and the habits of a lady – to marry her to your gamekeeper or your gardener. You’ll turn her brain with ten years of luxury – to make the whole of her after life a dreary servitude. You’ll excite ambition, whose very least evil will be bitter disappointment; and for what? To gratify a caprice, to paint the moral of a vapid theory about Irish intelligence. No, no, Vyner, don’t make such a blunder as this, and a serious blunder too; for, amongst other pleasant contingencies, Paddy MacHackaway is sure to call you to account some fine day: why you dared to do this, or omitted to do that; and with all your respect for his reasoning qualities, he sometimes expresses his sentiments with a bludgeon.”

“The thing is done, George, if you were to rail at it for a week. It is done, and cannot be undone, even if I wished it.”

“But why not? What is easier than to send for this old rascal who has so over-blarneyed you, and compromise the matter? A couple more of those crisp ten-pounders that I must say you displayed before these creatures with an unpardonable rashness – ”

“Be it so,” broke in Vyner. “But let me tell you that they saw my pocket-book full of them; they saw on the window-seat, where by chance I had left it, a purse heavy with gold, and yet these poor fellows were proof against the temptations; and it was the gaol-breaker himself who carried my knapsack on my way back, which contained, as he knew, both purse and pocket-book; so that against their honesty I’ll not listen to a word.”

“Let them have all the virtues under the sun if you will; call them all Arcadians. All I ask is that we should have no dealings with them. Send off O’Rorke; let him bring this old fellow before me, and I’ll answer for it that I settle the question at once.”

“No, no; my word is pledged, and I’ll not break it.”

“I don’t ask you to break it. What I propose is, that you should be released from a very ill-judged contract, certain to turn out ill to all it includes. Let me at least try if what I suggest is not practicable.”

“If the negotiation were to be carried on with men of your own rank and condition, Grenfell, there is not any one to whom I would with, more confidence confide it; but forgive me if I say that you’re not the man to deal with these people.”

“Why not?”

“For a number of reasons. First of all, you are strongly prejudiced against them; you are disposed to regard them as something little better than savages – ”

“Pardon me, there you are wrong – as not one whit better.”

“That’s enough, then; you shall be no envoy to them from me.”

“Well, I’ll knock under; I’ll agree to your high estimate of them, intellectually and morally, only with that detractive element of poverty which makes even clever men submissive, and occasionally squeezes conscience into a compromise. You tell me they are very amenable to reason; let me see if I agree with you. You assure me that with all their seeming impulsiveness and headlong rashness they are eminently calculating and forecasting. I want to see this. Bethink you what a grand witness I shall be to the truth of your theory when I am converted. Come, consent to send for this old fellow; make any pretext you please for seeing him, so that I may have a quarter of an hour’s talk with him.”

“To what end? You could scarcely address to him the arguments you have just used to me – ”

“Leave that to my discretion. I suspect, Vyner – mind, it is mere suspicion – but I suspect that your Celtic friend will be far more practical and business-like in his dealings with me than with you; that his shrewdness will show him that I am a common-place man of the world, not caring, nor indeed believing, in any great regeneration for Ireland, and that all our intercourse must take the shape of a bargain.”

“I consent,” said Vyner; “but, I own, less from choice than necessity, for time presses, and I find by a note I have just received that M’Kinlay, my man of business, has arrived at Westport, and whatever we decide on must be done at once.”

“If I’m not very much mistaken, Vyner, my negotiation will not take ten minutes, and perhaps as many pounds, so that you may order whatever it be that is to carry us hence, and I’ll guarantee to be ready.”

While Vyner hastened to give the necessary orders, Grenfell opened his writing-desk, from which he took some bank-notes and gold, and thrust them together in his pocket.

CHAPTER XIV. A DISCUSSION

“When that old man comes,” said Grenfell – “Malone, I think, is the name – let him come in here. I want to speak to him.”

“He’s outside now, before the door,” said O’Rorke, whose prying looks showed how eager he felt to know what might be the subject of their conversation.

“Does he hold any land in this neighbourhood?”

“He’s like the rest,” replied the other, half sullenly; “he lives where he can, and how he can.”

“What you would call a squatter?” said the Englishman, who smiled at his own sharpness in employing the word.

“What I wouldn’t call any such thing,” replied O’Rorke, firmly. “No more than I’d say it was squatting to sit down on my own hearthstone.”

“Which, perhaps, wouldn’t be your own, my good friend, if you were merely a tenant, and not a solvent one.”

“You may talk that way up in Leinster, or some of the counties that border on Leinster; but I tell you that you know mighty little of Ireland if you think that what your newspapers call the ‘Great name of England’ terrifies any one down here. Just try it. It’s about fifty miles from this to the Land’s End, and I’ll give you all that distance to find ten, no, but five men, that you’ll frighten by the threat of British law or British vengeance – which is about the same thing.”

“I’m sorry to hear it; that is to say, I should be sorry it was true.”

“Well, if you mean to deny, why don’t you prove it? What’s easier than to tell the carman we’re not going to Westport, we’re going up through Donegal to count the people that’s in love with the British rule in Ireland! You shake your head. I don’t wonder, indeed; no shame to you, that you wouldn’t like the journey. But I’ll tell you what you can do instead of it,” said he, with a firm and steady voice.

“What’s that?”

“Leave sixpence here, in my hands, and it will treat every well-wisher of England from this to the Giant’s Causeway! Isn’t that a fine investment for you?”

Grenfell’s face flashed, his brow darkened, and he turned to hurl a stern reproof to this insolence; but he saw in the elated look of the other all the delight of one who was gradually drawing an adversary into the lists, and to a combat in which practice had given him a certain dexterity.

Determined, at all events, to foil this design, the Englishman affected indifference, looked at his watch, turned over some papers that lay on the table, and then carelessly said, “Send in Malone here.”

With the dogged air of one disappointed and baffled in his designs, O’Rorke left the room, and soon after the old man entered, stroking down his white hair as he came forward, and making his reverences with a strange mixture of servility and defiance.

“Your name is Malone?” said Grenfell.

“Peter Malone, Sir.”

“Come nearer, Malone. I have heard a good deal about you from my friend, whom you treated so hospitably up in the mountains, and he has also spoken to me of a sort of plan – I won’t call it a very wise one – that he struck out the other night, and which, it appears, you agreed to, about your granddaughter.” He paused, hoping that the peasant would speak, but the old man simply bent his two dark and piercing eyes on him, and nodded. Grenfell went on: “I have pointed out to him some, though very far from all, of the inconveniences of the scheme, and I have asked his leave to point them out to you, and from what he has told me of your good sense and clear-headedness, I suspect I shall not have undertaken my task in vain.”

“Does he mean that he wants to go back of it?” asked Malone, with a calm and resolute look.

“Listen to me patiently, and you shall hear all.” It is not necessary I should weary my reader with a sermon where the text conveys so much. The chief burden of Grenfell’s argument was what he had addressed to Vyner; and upon this he expanded freely, laying much stress on the misfortune that must accrue to any young girl raised to a temporary elevation, from which she must come down to meet a life of perhaps privation and hardship. He pictured an existence of luxury on the one hand, and of poverty on the other, and asked what right had any one to expose another to such extremes – what preparation could ease and indulgence be to a life of toil and suffering? “How were the acquirements of the one to be made applicable to the other? – how,” he asked, “is the young lady – for she will have become a young lady – to change at once to the condition of the ill-fed, ill-dressed, hard-worked country girl?”

Had the orator only glanced as he spoke at the features of the listener, he would have seen what a lamentable blunder his rhetoric had made. At the mention of the words “young lady,” the whole expression of the old man’s face altered; his half-sullen obduracy, his rugged sternness, disappeared, his eyes lighted up; his lips parted, his nostrils dilated, and his whole face beamed with a joy that was positively triumphant. “Go on, Sir! – go on!” he cried, as though he yearned for a perfect picture of what imagination had but sketched an outline.

“You cannot mean, my good man,” said Grenfell, hastily, “that you would think it any benefit to be placed where you couldn’t remain? – to stand at a height where you couldn’t balance yourself? It’s not enough that people can dress well, and talk well, and look well; they must have, besides, the means to do all these, day after day, without an effort, without as much as a care or a thought about them. Do you understand me?”

“Sure, people wasn’t born ladies and gentlemen from the beginnin’ of the world?”

“No; great families took their rise in great actions. Some by courage, some by cleverness, some by skill, and some by great industry.”

“Just so!” broke in the old man. “There was always some one to begin it, and likely enough too in a mighty small way. Dare I ax your honour a question?”

“Ask freely, my good fellow.”

“Though I suppose your honour will have to go back very far, can you tell me what was the first of your own great family?”

From the purpose-like energy of the old peasant’s manner, and the steady and penetrating look of his bright eyes, Grenfell felt certain that the man had been prompted to put this insult upon him, and in a voice broken by passion, he said:

“You’ll gain very little by insolence, old man! With my family you have nothing to do; they were in no wise connected with yours.”

“Be gorra! I knew it,” cried the peasant, slapping his thigh with his hand. “I’d have taken my oath of it. I was as sure of it as I was of my skin that you were not a born gentleman. You may be as rich as you please, and have houses, and lands, and cows, and hones, but there’s not a dhrop of the real blood in your body! I said it the first minute I looked at you, and I say it again.”

Pale and quivering with anger, Grenfell could not utter a word. The savage violence of the peasant came on him so much by surprise, that he was actually overwhelmed by it; and though he darted on the old fellow a look of fury, he turned away without speaking, and entered the house.

Vyner had just received tidings that Mr. M’Kinlay had arrived at Westport to await his instructions, and he was writing a honied line to despatch by the messenger, to say, that he would return there on the morrow, when Grenfell entered, and threw himself into a chair.

“I have met with ruffianism in most shapes, Vyner,” cried he, “but so insolent a scoundrel as that yonder never came across me before.”

“Insolent! Is it possible? What pretext could he have for insolence?”

“I know well, with your infatuation for these people, what a hopeless task it would be to persuade you that they were not miracles of good manners, as well as of loyalty and good conduct. I am quite

prepared to hear that I mistook, or misunderstood – that, in short, what I fancied was insult was Irish *naïveté*.”

“But tell me what passed between you; what he said.”

“I will not.”

“Will you not let me judge of what you accuse him?”

“I will not; nay, more, I make it a charge upon you, as you desire our friendship to continue, that not only you never interrogate me on this matter, but that you neither question nor permit that man to be questioned upon it. Such a fellow should have as small a place in one’s memory as in one’s esteem, and I’d rather forget him.”

“Tell me, at least, what have you done in the negotiation?”

“Nothing. He opines that you have given him a pledge, to which as a gentleman you are bound, and as he sees neither peril nor inconvenience to result from converting a peasant child into a mock young lady, I suppose you have no choice, but must carry out your fine project with all the success it deserves.”

“I wish you would let me know what passed between you. If there was any intentional offence I’d certainly not overlook it.”

“I’ll tell you nothing.”

“Shall he ask your pardon?”

“He may; but he shall never have it.”

“You are provoking, George, I must say. You are not just to either of us; for certainly if I were convinced that you were aggrieved to the extent you suppose – ”

“I tell you once again, and for the last time, I will not discuss it; and as you have promised me not to open the matter with this fellow, it may be forgotten at once.”

“You really wish this?”

“I insist upon it.”

“That is sufficient.” Vyner took out his pocket-book, and walked to the door. “Malone,” cried he; and the old man came forward bareheaded and respectful, without a shade of passion on his face. “Malone, I am not so fully assured as I felt last night when I first proposed it, that my plan for your grandchild would be a wise one; at least, reflection has shown me some difficulties about it – ”

“Just tell me, Sir, do you want to draw back?” said the old man, resolutely, but respectfully.

“It would be better that you heard me out,” said Vyner, severely. “I am willing to do all that I offered – ”

“That will do, Sir. I never doubted the word of a real gentleman.”

“I was going to say, that if, instead of taking your child from you, you preferred that I should settle a certain sum of money on her, to be her marriage portion – ”

“No, Sir; no, Sir. What you offered or nothing. Make her a lady, as you said you would, or leave her where she is.”

“I think, my good man, you suffer your hot blood to get the better of your judgment occasionally, and it would be as well if you would give yourself some more time for reflection.”

“My blood is just as God gave it to me, neither hotter nor colder; and what I say now, I’d say to-morrow. Keep your word, or break it, whichever you please!”

“I can very well understand how my friend – ” Vyner stopped himself in time, and, after a second’s pause, proceeded: “You hold me, then, to my bargain?”

“How can I hold you? You may hold yourself, but *I* can’t hold you!”

Vyner’s cheek flushed, partly with anger, partly with shame, and he said: “With this you will buy what clothes your grandchild will require at present. Do not spend more of it than you like, for these things shall be looked to by others; and this will pay the cost of your journey. I have written down the way you are to go, and also the name and place of my house. My present intention is to be at home within a fortnight; but if you arrive before that, you will be equally welcome.”

“Very well, Sir,” said the old man, as he deposited the bank-notes in a leather purse. “I may go now?”

“Yes, you may go. Remember, however, Malone, that if between this and next Thursday week, you are inclined to think that my last offer is a better one – ”

“No fear of that, your honour!” broke in the old man, with a laugh. “I’m a poor man and an ignorant man, but I know what’s best for the stock I come from. It isn’t money we want. It’s the place where we can make money, and more than money;” and with a jerk of his frieze coat over his shoulder, the old fellow strode away down the valley.

CHAPTER XV. Mr. M'KINLAY'S MISSION

When Mr. M'Kinlay set out from the cottage in Wales, it was in no especial good humour towards Miss Courtenay. She had what is vulgarly called "snubbed him" and this is a process uncommonly painful to a well-to-do middle-aged gentleman, accustomed to a great deal of daily respect, and not a little looked up to in his peculiar sphere.

All night long, as he travelled, he pondered over these things, his irritation growing ever deeper. He recalled every word she had said, and in his anger even imitated to himself the careless impertinence of her tone as she said, "And are *you* going yachting?" just as if such, a thought was too absurd to be entertained. "And why not, I'd like to know? Is there anything in my status or position that would make a pleasure excursion ridiculous in a man like me? I could afford it. I hope she doesn't imply I'm too old for it. Age is an ugly subject; she'd better not cross-examine her witnesses there. And my red tapery! What a blessing it was that there were creatures to docket, and tie up, and register, and save superior souls the trouble of remembering anything! And then her last impertinence, when, after a sneer at Irish property, she said she wished I had one! I'm much mistaken, Madam," cried he, half aloud, "if a little of that same secluded savagery that Ireland affords wouldn't do you a world of good – if a couple of years of country life, with a bog landscape and a rainy sky, wouldn't prove an admirable alternative to you! No fine acquaintances, none of those pleasant idlers, who like to run down for a week to the country, and bring all the gossip of town along with them, will follow you to Ireland. No fealty, no affection will cross the Channel and traverse that dreary waste of morass, dotted with mud-hovels, they call in irony the Green Isle. If anything could bring you to your senses, Madam, it would be a residence here."

Such were Mr. M'Kinlay's thoughts as the mail lumbered heavily along through the deeply-rutted roads, and the rain swooped down in torrents. "I should like to see her yonder," muttered he, as they passed a dreary two-storied house that stood alone on the bleak moor they call the Curragh. "That's the reformatory I should like to try you with!"

With such benevolent intentions as these did he arrive at Carrick's Royal Hotel, in Westport, just as Vyner and Grenfell had reached the same spot.

"You've had an uncomfortable journey of it, I fear, Mr. M'Kinlay," said Vyner, as he shook him cordially by the hand. "Nothing but wind and rain for the last three days. Come in to my room here, I want to speak to you before you meet any one. I don't think you know Grenfell," said he, when they were alone, "and I should like to prepare you a little for a man who, with unquestionable abilities, has a number of oddities about him, and has a most intense pleasure in contradiction. This has been especially called out by a project of mine, which, perhaps, you will not fully approve, but, at all events, will accept as a pardonable caprice."

With this prelude he related his plan about the little girl whom he destined to make a companion for Ada. He told how he had been struck by her wonderful beauty, but far more by the signs of remarkable intelligence she displayed, and the traits of decision and firmness so rare in a creature of her age. He urged the advantage it would be to Ada, whose fault was an excess of timidity, to see one of her own age so bold and fearless. "That intrepid spirit, trained to independence, will certainly impart some of its nature to my timid and gentle girl," said he, "and the companionship will as certainly dispel the tendency to depression which is the besetting sin of my dear child."

"Do you mean to adopt her?" asked the lawyer.

"No, not adopt her. I mean to educate her, and bring her up with Ada, portion her when she is married, or make some provision for her if she lives single."

"That is to say, you want some eight or ten years of her life, and are not overburdened with anxiety as to what comes of her after."

“Grenfell himself couldn’t have judged me more unfairly, M’Kinlay. I want to deal honourably and liberally by her, and I want you to counsel me how to do so.”

“Make a settlement on her, fix upon a sum, appoint trustees, and arrange that on her coming to a certain age she shall be declared in the enjoyment of it.”

“I’m quite willing; nay, more, I’ll leave the entire matter in your hands. You shall decide on the amount – yes, I insist upon it – and shall make all the other arrangements. I don’t think there will be much more to detain us here, for I am not so eager about this property as I was some weeks ago.”

“Have you been over it?”

“Yes, and am delighted with its picturesque beauty. It is infinitely finer than I expected, and if I believed they’d let me live there for a few weeks every year, I would even build a house and furnish it.”

“And who doubts it?”

“I do; and so would you, M’Kinlay, if you talked the matter over, as I did with a committee of the whole House. We discussed the thing very coolly and impartially; we entered upon the question of landlordism in all its bearings, what it contained of good, and where it degenerated into evil; and although they failed to convince me that capital, skill, and intelligence, backed by an honest desire to do good, were only unwarrantable interferences with people who wanted none of them, they assuredly made me believe that the pleasure of possession would be dear at the price of being shot at, and that the great probability of being thrown over a precipice rather detracted from one’s enjoyment of wild scenery.”

“The fellows who talk like this are not the stuff murderers are made of, Sir Gervais. They like to frighten away purchasers, just as people get up ghost stories to deter persons from taking a house. If you like the property – ”

“I repeat, I am charmed with it.”

“In that case, don’t lose it. Ireland cannot remain for ever out of the law. One day or other she must come into civilisation, and these acres, that are bought for less money than so much land in South Africa or New Zealand, will be as profitable as an estate in the West Riding.”

Vyner smiled and shook his head. “Have you not been hearing this story for more than a century back?”

“Let us hear it for a century still, and the investment will pay cent. per cent. But come, I will tell you of a plan to test this problem fairly. Make the estate the fortune you intend for this young girl, with a power of redemption on your part by payment of a certain sum – let us say half as much more as you are now to pay for it. By the time that she will have grown up to womanhood you will have had the opportunity of deciding whether you desire to become an Irish proprietor or not. At all events, she will have either a good round sum in hand, or an estate which certainly will be no perilous heritage to her, though it might be a dangerous possession to you. This, I think, meets every difficulty.”

“Grenfell would tell us that instead of overcoming one obstacle it raises two,” said Vyner, laughing.

“But why consult him on the matter?”

“Because I shall want him. I should like to make him a trustee; he’s a hard-headed man of the world, and well adapted for the office.”

“And whom will you name for the other? Has the girl any relative or connexion of a class sufficiently elevated for the duty?”

“I suspect not; they are all peasants, and of the very poorest kind. I doubt greatly if there be one amongst the number who could read and write. Stay!” cried he, suddenly. “An idea just occurs to me, and if the notion be at all practicable, it solves every difficulty at once. This child’s aunt, a peasant like the others, was married to a gentleman, an old friend and college companion of my own. Unfortunate in many ways, and, of course, lost to the world of society by this unequal match, he retired to a lonely island on the coast, where he has lived for some years in a condition and with habits scarcely above the half-savage creatures about him. He was and is still a man of considerable ability,

although soured and disgusted with a world wherein he met nothing but failure. I met him last week by mere accident, having landed on the lonely rock he inhabits. I will not say he was at all pleased with the recognition, but, in short, we renewed acquaintance, and parted a little more like friends than we met. If he could be induced to accept this trust, it would accomplish all that I wish.”

“Has his wife any influence over him?”

“She is dead. She died a few days since.”

“Does he care for and interest himself about those who belonged to her?”

“I have no means of knowing; but I suspect not.”

“Then probably it would be better that you made this proposition to him without any intimation that you knew of the relationship between him and this girl; asking him to assist you in carrying out a whim – a mere caprice?”

“I have been thinking over that. I believe you are right. He might not feel indisposed to serve these people, though he might shrink from declaring them his near connexions. At the same time, I feel he may refuse us on other grounds. He rejects whatever in the remotest way would lead him back into the world he has quitted. His is a passive sort of misanthropy, – I believe, the least curable kind.”

“It would be a pity not to secure him; he is the very man, with his local knowledge and thorough acquaintance with the people, to give your experiment the fairest chance of success.”

“Well, here goes for the attempt. Let us first have our dinner, M’Kinlay, and then I’ll write your credentials. You shall go over to Arran, and use your best powers of persuasion. I’ll tell you by-and-by all that you ought to know beforehand of your adversary, for adversary you’ll find him, whatever subject you broach; but I shall call it a great victory if you succeed.”

“Where is Arran?” asked the lawyer, in some trepidation, for he only half liked his mission.

“Here it is,” said Vyner, spreading a map over the table, and pointing to some three or four insignificant dots off the coast of Donegal. “It is the most northern of these – that one.”

“And how is it to be come at?”

“We must learn all that from the people of the inn here. A fishing lugger, I take it – ”

“I declare, frankly, I have no fancy for the expedition; nor is there, indeed, any reason for it. A letter will be amply sufficient to explain your object.”

“Yes, but not to urge and persuade him – not to meet the doubts and the difficulties he will suggest – not to reassure him about this, and convince him about that. He’s a clever fellow, M’Kinlay, and one who will require to examine every phase of a subject before he’ll accept it.”

“Good Heavens! what a place to go to,” cried the other, as his eyes were still intently bent upon the little spots on the map.

“The place is most interesting; some remarkable scenery, and a very curious ruin of an ancient Abbey.”

“Not in my way – not at all in my way, Sir Gervais. I’d rather see a snug chop-house than the purest specimen of pointed Gothic.”

“Well, it will be an event in your life, at any rate – an incident to recal (sp) hereafter; and more than all, it will be a service to myself personally, which I shall not easily forget.”

“If you make a point of it, I’ll certainly go. I have told you that the adventurous spirit is not my strongest characteristic. Out-of-the-way places or buildings, or out-of-the-way people, have no interest far me. They are like a language I don’t know; they may be eloquent and charming to others, to me they make no appeal; but I’ll go, as you wish it, and I’ll do my best.”

“And you’ll succeed, too, I know it. Luttrell and you will understand each other at once. He’ll be pleased with your purpose-like, straightforward manner, while he’d reject flatly any attempt to influence or cajole him. He’ll possibly oppose his habitual indolence and his life of isolation to all plans for exertion or activity, but you’ll satisfy him that we have no intention to burden him unnecessarily, and that, in all likelihood he’ll not be called upon for more than a single act of an executive nature.”

“What are these luggers like? Are they considered safe?”

“The best sea-boats in the world.”

“And the sailors?”

“None better in the kingdom. In fact, on a coast like this – ”

Be stopped suddenly, just remembering in time, that by any picturesque description of an iron-bound shore or an Atlantic swell, he might effectually deter M’Kinky from all thought of the expedition. “Say nothing of what we’ve been talking over, at dinner,” said he; “and I rejoice to say, here comes the waiter to announce it.”

M’Kinlay sighed; he could have eaten with a capital appetite half an hour ago. It was all gone now. He’d have liked a stiff glass of brandy-and-Seltzer-water, nothing more.

CHAPTER XVI. THE OLD LEAVES

The little intercourse which Luttrell maintained with the world was with his agent, a gentleman who had long acted in that capacity for his family when such an office was profitable, and when portentous tin boxes on office shelves, with the name of Hamilton Luttrell on them, told of title-deeds and estates.

To this gentleman Luttrell had applied to assist him to sell a quantity of antiquarian objects, the collecting of which had been the pursuit of many a solitary day, and in cataloguing which he had passed many a long night. At first, this taste had been adopted as a pastime – a something to impart an interest to a dreary and purposeless life; but when three deficient harvests had so far lessened his income that he was driven to obtain a small loan to live, he resolved to sell his collection, and applied to his agent to aid him, making one only condition – that the bargain should not be effected in Ireland, where his name was still well known, but with some English dealer, who might never have heard of the Luttrells.

Though the carefully-drawn catalogue which Luttrell forwarded comprised a variety of rare and curious objects all bearing upon and illustrating ancient Irish history, they were, with a very few exceptions, of little intrinsic value. There were weapons of stone, spear-heads and javelin-points, massive clubs embossed with sharpened pebbles, bronze ornaments and clasps, strangely-shaped casques and shields, and swords of form that bespoke an antiquity long antecedent to the Roman wars, with amulets of amber and silver. Some rings and a sword-hilt alone were gold; this latter carved with marvellous beauty of design and great artistic excellence.

At last, after many months of utter silence on the matter, he received the following letter:

“Kildare-street, Dublin.

“Dear Mr. Luttrell, – I am very sorry at the failure of all my attempts to dispose of your collection. Vangheest, however, in sending me back, as you wished, the catalogue yesterday, spoke of an American gentleman who appeared disposed to treat with you. As he is a perfect stranger to both of us, and the native of a distant country, I saw no reason for refusing him the permission which he asked, to view the collection, and, if allowed, confer with you personally.

“I have accordingly given him a few lines of introduction, and he will present himself to you as Mr. or Captain Herodotus M. Dodge, U. S. I do not opine you will find him the possessor of much antiquarian lore; but he is an outspoken, straightforward man, with whom a business matter can be readily transacted.

“I know how reluctant you are to be intruded upon, but I am aware – better, perhaps, than yourself – that you want money at this moment, and I trust you will pardon me for having transgressed your orders respecting visitors, and made this case an exception to your rule. If, however, you persist in your determination not to receive a stranger, a line addressed to Mr. D., at Carrick’s Hotel, will be in time, any day till the tenth, to prevent his visit.

“Should you deal with Mr. D., you need not give yourself any trouble about the details of the payment, as his reference to bankers and others here have perfectly satisfied me as to his respectability.

“Believe me, dear Mr. Luttrell,

“Faithfully yours,

“George Cane, for Cane and Carter.”

Luttrell was very angry at this letter. It was an insufferable liberty that Cane had taken. Cane should have written – should have asked his pleasure – should have inquired whether even the certainty of selling the collection was not overpaid for at the price of this unseemly intrusion. “There is no inn on the island. This man must be my guest, and with the variable weather here, who can tell for

how long? He may feel, or affect to feel, interested about the place and its people, and prolong his stay for days!”

There was, however, one passage in the letter which pained him to the quick; it was very brief, but, to him, very significant. It ran thus: “But I am aware – better, perhaps, than you are – that you are in want of money.”

Now, Messrs. Cane and Carter had been for some time making advances – small, it is true – to Luttrell, and as well to intimate to him that he had overdrawn with them, as to imply that they did not desire a continuance of the practice, his correspondent threw in that parenthesis – so full of meaning as it was.

There was a time, as late as his own father’s day, when Messrs. Cane and Company would not have written such a letter. Not a few of the broad acres of the Luttrells had passed into their hands since that, however. They had not their country-houses and conservatories in those days; nor their sons in the “Guards;” nor a daughter married to a Viscount.

How is it that men will often grow more bitter over their fallen fortunes, when they contrast them with the prosperity of others who have never injured them? Cane had actually befriended Luttrell in many ways; in keeping the agency of the small remnant of property that belonged to him, he was really performing a kind office; but Luttrell could not, for all this, forgive him for being prosperous.

He sat down to write two notes, one to Mr. Cane, a very sharp reproof, for a liberty which he ought never to have presumed upon, and which nothing, in their respective conditions, could warrant or excuse. “While,” added he, “I am no less surprised at your remark, that you are even more than myself aware of my need of money. The observation either implies a sensitive sympathy for which I was not prepared, or a covert impertinence which I hesitate to accept as credible.

“I will not receive your friend Mr. Dodge, nor shall I again trouble you with the private and personal interests of

“Your faithful servant,

“John Hamilton Luttrell.”

The second note was even briefer. “Mr. Luttrell begs to inform Mr. H. M. Dodge that he cannot receive his visit at Arran, nor can he at present decide to dispose of his collection.”

“How is the wind, Hennesy?” asked he of his boatman.

“Strong from the east, Sir, and comin’ on harder.”

“Could you beat up to Westport, think you? I have two letters of importance to send.”

“We might, Sir,” said the man, doubtingly, “but its more likely we’d be blown out to sea.”

“How long is this gale likely to last?”

“It’s the season of these winds, your honour, and we’ll have, maybe, three weeks or a month of them, now.”

“In that case, you must try it. Take three men with you, and the large yawl; put some provisions and water on board; perhaps a little ballast, too.”

“That we will, Sir. She’ll take a ton more, at least, to carry sail in this weather.”

“Are you afraid to go?” asked Luttrell, and his voice was harsh, and his manner stern.

“Afraid! devil a bit afraid!” said the man, boldly, and as though the imputation had made him forget his natural respect.

“I’d not ask you to do what I’d not venture on myself.”

“We all know that well, Sir,” said the boatman, recovering his former manner. “Tis only that, maybe, we’ll be more time about it than your honour thinks. We’ll have to make a long stretch out beyond Spanish Bay, perhaps, near ‘the Cobbles.’”

“I don’t care how you do it, but mind that these two letters reach Westport by Monday night, on Tuesday morning at farthest. This is for the post, this for the person whose name is on it, and who will be at Carrick’s Hotel. Give it if you can into his own hands, and say that there is no answer required.”

“You bade me remind you, Sir, that the next time the boat went over to Westport, that I was to take Master Harry, and get him measured for some clothes; but of course you’d not like to send him in this weather.”

“I think not; I think there can be no doubt of that,” cried Luttrell, half angrily. “It’s not when the strong easterly gales have set in, and a heavy sea is coming up from the south’ard, that I’d tell you to take a boy –” He stopped suddenly, and turning fiercely on the sailor, said, “You think I have courage enough to send you and a boat’s crew out, and not to send my son. Speak out, and say it. Isn’t that what you mean?”

“It is not, Sir. If you towld me to take the child, I wouldn’t do it.”

“You wouldn’t do it?” cried Luttrell, passionately. “I would not, Sir, if you never gav’ me another day’s pay.” “Leave the room – leave the house, and prepare to give up your holding. I’ll want that cabin of yours this day month. Do you hear me?” “I do, Sir,” said the man, with a lip pale and quivering. “Send Sam Joyce here.” “He’s only up out of the fever since Monday, Sir.”

“Tell Maher I want him, then; and mind me, Sir,” added he, as the man was leaving the room, “no story-telling, no conspiring, for if Dan Maher refuses to obey my orders, whatever they are, he’ll follow you, and so shall every man of you, if I leave the island without a family except my own.”

“Don’t send your child out, anyways,” said the man.

“Leave the room, Sir,” said Luttrell, imperiously; and the man, cowed and crestfallen, closed the door and withdrew.

As though to carry corroboration to the sailor’s warning, a fierce blast struck the window at the moment, making the old woodwork rattle, and threatening to smash it in, while the dark sky grew darker, and seemed to blend with the leaden-coloured sea.

“I want you to go over to Westport, Maher,” said Luttrell to a hard-featured, weather-beaten man of about fifty, who now stood wet and dripping at the door.

“Very well, Sir,” was the answer.

“Take the big yawl, and any crew you please. Whenever all is ready, come up here for your orders.”

“Very well, Sir,” said the man, and retired.

“Where’s Master Harry, Molly?” cried Luttrell, advancing into the passage that led toward the kitchen.

“He’s out on the rocks, Sir, watching the sea.”

“Call him in here. I want to speak to him. What are you doing here, Sir? I told you to leave this.” This stern speech was addressed to Hennesy, who, with evident signs of sorrow on his face, stood half hid beside the door.

“I was hopin’ your honour wouldn’t torn me out after nine years’ sarvice, when I never did or said one word to displaze you.”

“Away with you – be off – I have no time to parley with fellows like you. Come in here, Harry,” and he laid his hand on the boy’s shoulder, and led him into his room. “I’m sending a boat over to Westport; would you like to go in her?”

“Wouldn’t I?” said the boy, as his eyes flashed wildly.

“You are in want of clothes, and you could go to Sweeney’s and get measured for a suit.”

“I do not care for the clothes; but I’d like the sail. Isn’t Tim Hennesy to go?”

“Hennesy is not to go. Maher is to command the boat.”

“I’d rather have Tim; but I don’t care.”

“Be ready, then, in half an hour.”

“I’m ready now.”

“I mean, get another coat, something warmer, for you’ll be out one night at least; and put your woollen wrapper round your throat. Molly will give it to you.”

“There’s thunder!” cried the boy; “I hope it won’t lull the wind. It’s blowing fiercely now.”

“You’re a good swimmer, ain’t you?”

“I can beat every one but Tim.”

“And what would you do if you were upset?”

“Hold on by the boat, or a spar.”

“Till you were picked up? But if none came to pick you up?”

“Hold on still, till I was near enough to swim.”

“And if you didn’t get near enough?”

“Go down, I suppose,” said the boy, with a laugh. “One can always do that!”

Luttrell nodded, and after a moment said, “Get ready now, for here’s Maher coming for orders.”

CHAPTER XVII. THE NOR'-WESTER

The day – a dark and stormy one – was drawing to a close as the yawl got under weigh. She was manned by a stout crew of five hardy islanders; for although Maher had selected but three to accompany him, Tim Hennesy volunteered, and, indeed, jumped on board, as the boat sheered off, without leave asked or given. Luttrell had parted with his boy in his habitual impassive way – reminded him that he was under Tom Maher's orders, equally on shore as on board – that he trusted to hear a good account of him on his return, and then said a cold "good-by," and turned away.

When Harry, who rarely had so long an interview with his father, left the room, he felt a sort of relief to think it was over; he had been neither punished nor scolded, even the warning that was given was very slight, and uttered in no unkindness.

"Give me a kiss, Molly, and throw an old shoe after me, for luck!" cried he, gaily, as he reached the door. "We've got the big yawl, and though Tom has put two reefs in the mainsail, won't I make him shake them out when we're well out to sea!"

"I'll just go and tell the master this minit, then," said she, eagerly, "and you'll see what he'll say to you."

"Will you be quiet?" said he, catching hold of her apron to detain her; "wasn't I only joking? I'm to be under Tom's orders, and of course I'll obey him."

There was a waggish drollery in the way he said this that by no means reassured her, but taking his hand, she walked down to the beach beside him, telling him to be careful of himself, and do nothing rash, and to mind what Tom Maher said, and, above all, to remember he was the last of the family, and if anything was to happen to him there was an end of the name for ever.

"And don't you think, Molly, that the world would continue to go round, even if it lost us, great as we are?"

"Ah, ye're a young imp! that's what ye are;" said she, wiping a tear from her eye as she spoke. "'Tis wishin' them well I am, the same clothes. I'd rather see you in a suit of sealskin, than sent out on such a day as this, just to be measured by a tailor."

"You'd dress me worse than Brian O'Lynn, Molly," said the boy, with a merry laugh. "Did you ever hear what he did for a watch?"

"Arrah! what do I care what he did."

"Here it is, and very ingenious, too," said he:

"Bryan O'Lynn had no watch to put on,
So he scooped out a turnip to make him a one,
He then put a cricket clean under the skin,
'They'll think it is ticking,' says Bryan O'Lynn."

"May I never!" began she, trying to reprove his levity; but as he stepped into the boat at the same instant, her grief overcame all else, and she burst into tears. She threw her apron over her face to hide her emotion; but she suddenly drew it down as a wild cry, half yell, half cheer, broke from the fishermen on the shore; a squall had struck the boat just as she got under weigh, and though she lay over, reeling under the shock, she righted nobly again, and stood out boldly to sea.

"There's not a finer craft in the King's navy," said a very old man, who had once been a pilot. "I'd not be afeerd to go to 'Quaybeck' in her."

"Come up and taste a dhrop of sperits this wet day," whispered Molly in his ear, for his words were a balm to her aching heart.

At first from the window of his lonely room, and then, when the boat had rounded the point of land, and could be no more seen, from a little loopholed slit in the tower above him, Luttrell watched

her course. Even with his naked eye he could mark the sheets of spray as they broke over the bow and flew across her, and see how the strong mast bent like a whip, although she was reduced to her very shortest sail, and was standing under a double-reefed mainsail, and a small storm-jib. Not another boat, not another sail of any kind was to be seen; and there seemed something heroically daring in that little barque, that one dark speck, as it rose and plunged, seen and lost alternately in the rolling sea.

It was only when he tried to look through the telescope, and found that his hand shook so much that he could not fix the object, that he himself knew how agitated he was. He drew his hand across his brow and found it clammy, with a profuse and cold perspiration. By this time it was so dark that he had to grope his way down the narrow stairs to his room below. He called for Molly. "Who was that you were talking to? I heard a strange roice without there."

"Old Moriarty, the pilot, your honour; I brought him in out of the wet to dry himself."

"Send him in here to me," said Luttrell, who, throwing a root of oak on the fire, sat down with his back to the door, and where no light should fall upon his face.

"It's blowing fresh, Moriarty," said he, with an affected ease of manner, as the old man entered and stood nigh the door.

"More than fresh, your honour. It's blowin' hard."

"You say that, because you haven't been at sea these five-and-twenty years; but it's not blowing as it blew the night I came up from Clew, no, nor the day that we rounded Tory Island."

"Maybe not; but it's not at its worst yet," said the old fellow, who was ill-pleased at the sneer at his seamanship.

"I don't know what the fellows here think of such weather, but a crew of Norway fishermen – ay, or a set of Deal boatmen – would laugh at it."

"Listen to that now, then," said the other, "and it's no laughing matter;" and as he spoke a fierce gust of wind tore past, carrying the spray in great sheets, and striking against the walls and windows with a clap like thunder. "That was a squall to try any boat!"

"Not a boat like the large yawl!"

"If it didn't throw two tons of water aboard of her, my name isn't Moriarty."

"Master Harry is enjoying it, I'm certain," said Luttrell, trying to seem at ease.

"Well! It's too much for a child," said the old man, sorrowfully.

"What do you mean by a child? He's no child, he's a well-grown boy, and if he's eyer to have a man's heart in him, ought to begin to feel it now."

"It was no night to send him out, anyhow; and I say it, though it was your honour did it!"

"Because you're an old fool, and you think you can presume upon your white head and your tottering limbs. Look here; answer me this –"

A fearful thunder roll, followed by a rattling crash like small-arms, drowned his words. "It is a severe night," said he, "and if she wasn't a fine sea-boat, with a good crew on board her, I'd not feel so easy!"

"Good as she is, it will thry her."

"What a faint-hearted old dog you are, and you were a pilot once."

"I was, Sir. I took Sir George Bowyer up the Chesapeak, and Commodore Warren could tell you whether I know the Baltic Sea."

"And you are frightened by a night like this!"

"I'm not frightened, Sir; but I'd not send a child out in it, just for –" He stopped, and tried to fall back behind the door.

"Just for what?" said Luttrell, with a calm and even gentle voice – "just for what?"

"How do I know, your honour. I was saying more than I could tell."

"Yes; but let me hear it. What was the reason that you supposed – why do you think I did it?"

Deceived and even lured on to frankness by the insinuating softness of his manner, the old man answered: "Well, it was just your honour's pride, the ould Luttrell pride, that said, 'We'll never send a man where we won't go ourselves,' and it was out of that you'd risk your child's life!"

"I accused you of being half a coward a minute ago," said Luttrell, in a low deep voice, that vibrated with intense passion, "but I tell you, you're a brave man, a very brave man, to dare to speak such words as these to me! Away with you; be off; and never cross this threshold again." He banged the door loudly after the old man, and walked up and down the narrow room with impatient steps. Hour after hour he strode up and down with the restless activity of a wild animal in a cage, and as though by mere motion he could counteract the fever that was consuming him. He went to the outer door, but he did not dare to open it, such was the force of the storm; but he listened to the wild sounds of the hurricane – the thundering roar of the sea, as it mingled with the hissing crash, as the waves were broken on the rocks. Some old tree, that had resisted many a gale, seemed at last to have yielded, for the rustling crash of broken timber could be heard, and the rattling of the smaller branches as they were carried along by the swooping wind. "What a night I what a terrible night!" he muttered to himself. There was a faint light seen through the chinks of the kitchen door; he drew nigh and peeped in. It was poor Molly on her knees, before a little earthenware image of the Virgin, to whom she was offering a candle, while she poured out her heart in prayer. He looked at her, as, with hands firmly clasped before her, she rocked to and fro in the agony of her affliction, and noiselessly he stole away and entered his room.

He opened a map upon the table, and tried to trace out the course the boat might have taken. There were three distant headlands to clear before she could reach the open sea. One of these, the Turk's Head, was a noted spot for disasters, and dreaded by fishermen even in moderately fresh, weather. He could not take his eyes from the spot; that little speck so full of fate to him. To have effaced it from the earth's surface at that moment, he would have given all that remained to him in the world! "Oh, what a destiny!" he cried in his bitterness, "and what race! Every misfortune, every curse that has fallen upon us, of our own doing! Nothing worse, nothing so bad, have we ever met in life as our own stubborn pride, our own vindictive natures." It required some actual emergency, some one deeply momentous' crisis, to bring this proud and stubborn spirit down to self-accusation; but when the moment *did* come, when the dam *was* opened, the stream rushed forth like the long pent-up waters of a cataract.

All that he had ever done in life, all the fierce provocations he had given, all the insults he had uttered, his short-comings too, his reluctance to make amends when in the wrong, passed spectre-like before him, and in the misery of his deep humiliation he felt how all his struggle in life had been with himself.

That long night – and how long it was! – was spent thus. Every wild gust that shook the window-frames, every thunder-clap that seemed to make the old ruin rock, recalling him to thoughts of the wild sea on which his poor child was tossing. "Have they got well out to sea by this time, or are they beating between the Basket Rocks and the Turk's Head?" would he ask himself over and over. "Can they and will they put back if they see the storm too much for them?" He tried to remember his parting words. Had he taunted them with reluctance to venture out? Had he reflected on their courage? He could not now recal (sp) his words, but he hoped and he prayed that he had not.

The leaden grey of morning began to break at last, and the wind seemed somewhat to abate, although the sea still rolled in such enormous waves, and the spray rose over the rocks and fell in showers over the shingle before the windows. Luttrell strained his eyes through the half-murky light, but could descry nothing like a sail seaward. He mounted the stairs of the tower, and stationing himself at the loopholed window, gazed long and earnestly at the sea. Nothing but waves – a wild, disordered stretch of rolling water – whose rocking motion almost at last made his head reel.

The old pilot, with his hat tied firmly on, was standing below, and, careless of the beating rain, was looking out to sea.

“The gale is lessening, Moriarty,” cried out Luttrell; “it has blown itself out.”

It was evident the old man had not caught the words aright, for all he said was, “She’s a fine sea-boat if she did, Sir,” and moved away.

“He thinks it doubtful – he does not believe they have weathered the storm,” said Luttrell; and he sat down with his head between his hands, stunned and almost senseless.

There is no such terrible conflict as that of a proud spirit with misfortune. He who sees nothing in his calamities but his own hard fate has the dreariest and least hopeful of all battles before him. Now, though Luttrell was ready to utter his self-accusings aloud, and charge himself audibly with the faults that had wrecked his life, yet, strange as it may seem, the spirit of true humility had never entered his heart, far less any firm resolve to repent.

With all the terrible consequences that his unbridled temper could evoke before him, he still could not but regard himself as more persecuted than erring. “I did not make myself,” cried he, impiously. “I no more implanted the passions that sway than the limbs that move me! Other men – is not the world full of them? – have been as haughty, as unyielding, and domineering as myself, and yet have had no such disasters heaped upon them – far from it. Out of their very faults has sprung, their fortune. In their pride they have but asserted that superiority that they knew they possessed.”

While he reasoned thus, his heart, truer to nature than his brain, trembled at every freshening of the storm, and sickened as the dark squalls shot across the sea.

Nor was his agony less that he had to control it, and not let those about him see what he suffered. He sat down to his breakfast at the accustomed hour, and affected to eat as usual. Indeed, he rebuked Molly for some passing carelessness, and sent her away almost choked with tears, “as if,” as she sobbed to herself – “as if she was a dog. To know whether the milk ‘took the fire’ or not! Musha! any man but himself wouldn’t know whether it was milk or salt water was afore him.”

It was his habit to pass the morning in reading. He would not appear to deviate from this custom, but sat down to his books as usual.

No sooner, however, was all still and quiet around him than he stole up to the tower, and stationed himself at the narrow window that looked over the sea.

The wind had greatly abated, and the sea also gone down, but there was still the heavy roll and the deafening crash upon the shore, that follow a storm. “The hurricane is passing westward,” muttered Luttrell; “it has done its work here!” And a bitter scorn curled his lips as he spoke. He was calling upon his pride to sustain him. It was a hollow ally in his time of trouble; for, as he gazed and gazed, his eyes *would* grow dim with tears, and his heavy heart would sigh, as though to bursting.

As the day wore on, and the hour came when he was habitually about, he strolled down to the beach, pretending to pick up shells, or gather sea anemones, as he was wont. The fishermen saluted him respectfully as he passed, and his heart throbbed painfully as he saw, or fancied he saw, a something of compassionate meaning in their faces. “Do they believe, can they think that it is all over, and that I am childless?” thought he. “Do they know that I am desolate?” A pang shot through him at this, that made him grasp his heart with his hand to suppress the agony.

He rallied after a minute or so, and walked on. He had just reached the summit of the little bay, when a sort of cheer or cry from those behind, startled him. He turned and saw that the fishermen were gathered in a group upon one of the rocks, all looking and pointing seaward; with seeming indolence of gait, while his anxiety was almost suffocating him, he lounged lazily towards them.

“What are the fellows looking at?” said he to the old pilot, who, with some difficulty, had just scrambled down from the rock.

“A large lugger, your honour, coming up broad.”

“And is a fishing-boat so strange a thing in these waters?”

“She’s out of the fishin’ grounds altogether, your honour; for she’s one of the Westport boats. I know her by the dip of her bowsprit.”

“And if she is, what does it signify to us?” asked Luttrell, sternly.

“Only that she’s bearin’ up for the island, your honour, and it’s not often one of them comes here.”

“The seldomer the better,” said Luttrell, gloomily. “When the fellows find there are no grog-shops here, they turn to mischief, break down our fences, lop our trees, and make free with our potatoes. I’ll have to do one of these days what I have so often threatened – warn all these fellows off, and suffer none to land here.”

Perhaps the old pilot thought that other and very different feelings might at that moment have had the sway over him, for he looked away, and shook his head mournfully.

“She has a flag at the peak,” cried one of the men from the rock.

“She has what?” asked Luttrell, impatiently.

“She has the half-black, half-white ensign, your honour.”

“Your own flag at the peak,” said the pilot.

“More of their insolence, I suppose,” said Luttrell; “because they have a hamper or a parcel on board for me, perhaps.”

“I don’t think it’s that, Sir,” said the other, moodily.

“What is it, then?” cried he, harshly.

“‘Tis, maybe, your honour, that they have some news of – ” he was going to say “Master Harry,” but the ghastly paleness of Luttrell’s face appalled and stopped him.

“News of what, did you say?”

“Of the big yawl, Sir; they, maybe, saw her at sea.”

“And if they had, would that give them a right to hoist the Luttrell flag? We are low enough in the world, Heaven knows!” he cried; “but we are not come to that pass yet, when every grocer of Westport can carry our crest or our colours.” This burst of mock anger was but to cover a rush of real terror; for he was trembling from head to foot, his sight was dimmed, and his brain turning. He felt the coward, too, in his heart, and did not dare to face the old man again. So, turning abruptly away, he went back to the house.

“My fate will soon be decided now,” said he, as he tottered into his room, and sat down, burying his face in his hands.

The group of fishermen on the rock grew larger and larger, till at last above thirty were clustered on the point, all eagerly watching, and as earnestly discussing every motion of the lugger. It was soon clear that her course was guided by some one who knew the navigation well, for instead of holding on straight for the bay, where she was to cast anchor, she headed to a point far above it, thus showing that her steersman was aware of the strong shore current that had force enough to sweep her considerably out of her course. Meanwhile, they had ample time to discuss her tonnage, her build, her qualities for freight and speed, and her goodness as a sea-boat. “I wonder did she see the yawl?” said one at length, for, with a strange and scarcely accountable terror, none would approach the theme that was uppermost in every heart. The word once uttered, all burst in at once, “‘Tis with news of her she’s come! She saw her ‘put in’ to Belmullet, or to Westport, or she saw her sheltering, perhaps, under the high cliffs of the coast, ‘lying to,’ till the gale lightened.” None would say more than this.

“Hurrah!” cried one at last, with a joyful cheer, that made every heart bound, “I see Master Harry; he’s steerin’!”

“So he is!” shouted another; “he’s settin’ up on the weather gunwale, and his head bare, too. I see his hair flyin’ wild about him.”

“Go up and tell the master.”

“Faix, I’m afeerd; I never spoke to him in my life.”

“Will you, Owen Riley?”

“Sorra step I’ll go; he turned me out of the place for saying that the cobbler wanted a coat of pitch, and she sank under me, after. Let ould Moriarty go.”

“So I will. ‘Tis good news I’ll have to bring him, and that never hurt the messenger.” And so saying, the old pilot hastened, as fast as his strength would permit, to the house.

The door was open, and he passed in. He sought for Molly in the kitchen, but poor Molly was away on the beach, following the course the lugger seemed to take, and hoping to be up at the point she might select to anchor at. The old man drew cautiously nigh Luttrell’s door, and tapped at it, respectfully.

“Who’s there? Come in; come in at once,” cried Luttrell, in a harsh voice. “What have you to say? Say it out.”

“‘Tis to tell your honour that Master Harry – ”

“What of him? What of him?” screamed Luttrell; and he seized the old man by the shoulders, and shook him violently.

“He’s steerin the lugger, your honour, and all safe.”

A cry, and a wild burst of laughter, broke from the overburdened heart, and Luttrell threw himself across the table and sobbed aloud.

Overcome with terror at such a show of feeling in one he had deemed dead to every emotion, the old man tried to move away unseen; but just as he had closed the door behind him, Luttrell screamed out, “Come back. You saw him – you saw him yourself?”

“No, Sir; but better eyes than mine did, and they could see that he had no cap on his head.”

“And they were sure it was he?”

“There’s no mistakin’ him among a thousand!”

“If they deceived me – if this was false – ” he stopped and wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. “There, I see her now. She’s rounding to – she’s going to anchor. I have been poorly of late, Moriarty,” said he, in a low, subdued tone; “things fret and worry me, that I’d not let annoy me if I were stronger. Men of *your* stamp fancy there can never be much amiss with men of *mine*, because we have enough to eat and drink. What’s that noise without? Who is talking there?”

The door opened suddenly, and Harry, with flushed face and wildly disordered hair, and with clothes all wet and dripping, stood before his father. He made no motion to embrace, nor even approach him, but stood within the door respectful, but not abashed, and as if waiting for leave to advance farther.

Luttrell’s cheek trembled, and changed colour twice, but, subduing his emotion with a great effort, he said, in a tone of affected indifference, “You had rough weather – did you make Westport?”

“No, Sir; we lost the boat.”

“Lost the boat! how was that?”

“She filled; at least, she took so much water that she would not answer her helm, and then she heeled over and went down.”

“Down all at once?”

“Yes; I had barely time to cut away our ensign from the peak. I thought I’d save the Luttrell colours, and so I did.”

“Were you far from land at the time?”

“About fifteen miles; as good as fifty, for the wind was strong off shore, and such a sea!”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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