LEVER CHARLES JAMES

SIR BROOK FOSSBROOKE, VOLUME I.

Charles Lever
Sir Brook Fossbrooke, Volume I.

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25451220
Sir Brook Fossbrooke, Volume I.:

Содержание

Charles James Lever
Sir Brook Fossbrooke, Volume I

To PHILIP ROSE, Esq

My dear Rose, – You have often stopped me when endeavouring to express all the gratitude I felt towards you. You cannot do so now, nor prevent my telling aloud how much I owe-how much I esteem you. These volumes were not without interest for me as I wrote them, but they yielded me no such pleasure as I now feel in dedicating them to you; and, with this assurance, believe me,

Your affectionate Friend,
CHARLES LEVER.
Spezia, October 20. 1866.

CHAPTER I. AFTER MESS

The mess was over, and the officers of H. M.'s – th were grouped in little knots and parties, sipping their coffee, and discussing the arrangements for the evening. Their quarter was that pleasant city of Dublin, which, bating certain exorbitant demands in the matter of field-day and guard-mounting, stands pre-eminently first in military favor.

"Are you going to that great ball in Merrion Square?" asked one., "Not so lucky; not invited."

"I got a card," cried a third; "but I 've just heard it's not to come off. It seems that the lady's husband is a judge. He's Chief something or other; and he has been called away."

"Nothing of the kind, Tomkins; unless you call a summons to the next world being called away. The man is dangerously ill. He was seized with paralysis on the Bench yesterday, and, they say, can't recover."

There now ensued an animated conversation as to whether, on death vacancies, the men went up by seniority at the bar, or whether a subaltern could at once spring up to the top of the regiment.

"Suppose," said one, "we were to ask the Colonel's guest his opinion. The old cove has talked pretty nigh of everything in this world during dinner; what if we were to ask him about Barons of the Exchequer?"

"Who is he? what is he?" asked another.

"The Colonel called him Sir Brook Fossbrooke; that's all I know."

"Colonel Cave told me," whispered the Major, "that he was the fastest man on town some forty years ago."

"I think he must have kept over the wardrobe of that brilliant period," said another. "I never saw a really swallow-tailed coat before."

"His ring amused *me*. It is a small smoothing-iron, with a coat-of-arms on it. Hush! here he comes."

The man who now joined the group was a tall, gaunt figure, with a high narrow head, from which the hair was brushed rigidly back to fall behind in something like an old-fashioned queue. His eyes were black, and surmounted with massive and much-arched eyebrows; a strongly marked mouth, stern, determined, and, except in speaking, almost cruel in expression, and a thin-pointed projecting chin, gave an air of severity and strong will to features which, when he conversed, displayed a look of courteous deference, and that peculiar desire to please that we associate with a bygone school of breeding. He was one of those men, and very distinctive are they, with whom even the least cautious take no liberties, nor venture upon any familiarity. The eccentricities of determined men are very often indications of some deep spirit beneath, and not, as in weaker natures, mere emanations of vanity or offsprings of self-indulgence.

If he was, beyond question, a gentleman, there were also signs

about him of narrow fortune: his scrupulously white shirt was not fine, and the seams of his well-brushed coat showed both care and wear.

He had joined the group, who were talking of the coming Derby when the Colonel came up. "I have sent for the man we want, Fossbrooke. I'm not a fisherman myself; but they tell me he knows every lake, river, and rivulet in the island. He has sat down to whist, but we 'll have him here presently."

"On no account; don't disturb his game for me."

"Here he comes. Trafford, I want to present you to a very old friend of mine, Sir Brook Fossbrooke, – as enthusiastic an angler as yourself. He has the ambition to hook an Irish salmon. I don't suppose any one can more readily help him on the road to it."

The young man thus addressed was a large, strongly, almost heavily built young fellow, but with that looseness of limb and freedom that showed activity had not been sacrificed to mere power. He had a fine, frank, handsome face, blue-eyed and bold-looking; and as he stood to receive the Colonel's orders, there was in his air that blending of deference and good-humored carelessness that made up his whole nature.

It was plain to see in him one easy to persuade, impossible to coerce; a fellow with whom the man he liked could do anything, bat one perfectly unmanageable if thrown into the wrong hands. He was the second son of a very rich baronet, but made the mistake of believing he had as much right to extravagance as his elder brother, and, having persisted in this error during two years

in the Life Guards, had been sent to do the double penance of an infantry regiment and an Irish station; two inflictions which, it was believed, would have sufficed to calm down the ardor of the most impassioned spendthrift. He looked at Fossbrooke from head to foot. It was not exactly the stamp of man he would have selected for companionship, but he saw at once that he was distinctively a gentleman, and then the prospect of a few days away from regimental duty was not to be despised, and he quickly replied that both he and his tackle were at Sir Brook's disposal. "If we could run down to Killaloe, sir," added he, turning to the Colonel, "we might be almost sure of some sport."

"Which means that you want two days' leave, Trafford."

"No, sir, four. It will take a day at least to get over there; another will be lost in exploring; all these late rains have sent such a fresh into the Shannon there's no knowing where to try."

"You see, Fossbrooke, what a casuistical companion I've given you. I 'll wager you a five-pound note that if you come back without a rise he 'll have an explanation that will perfectly explain it was the best thing could have happened."

"I am charmed to travel in such company," said Sir Brook, bowing. "The gentleman has already established a claim to my respect for him."

Trafford bowed too, and looked not at all displeased at the compliment. "Are you an early riser, sir?" asked he.

"I am anything, sir, the occasion exacts; but when I have an early start before me, I usually sit up all night."

"My own plan too," cried Trafford. "And there's Aubrey quite ready to join us. Are you a whister, Sir Brook?"

"At your service. I play all games."

"Is he a whister?" repeated the Colonel. "Ask Harry Greville, ask Tom Newenham, what they say of him at Grahams? Trafford, my boy, you may possibly give him a hint about gray hackles, but I 'll be shot if you do about the odd trick."

"If you 'll come over to my room, Sir Brook, we 'll have a rubber, and I 'll give orders to have my tax-cart ready for us by daybreak," said Trafford; and, Fossbrooke promising to be with him so soon as he had given his servant his orders, they parted.

"And are you as equal to this sitting up all night as you used to be, Fossbrooke?" asked the Colonel.

"I don't smoke as many cigars as formerly, and I am a little more choice about my tobacco. I avoid mulled port, and take weak brandy-and-water; and I believe in all other respects I 'm pretty much where I was when we met last, – I think it was at Ceylon?"

"I wish I could say as much for myself. You are talking of thirty-four years ago."

"My secret against growing old is to do a little of everything. It keeps the sympathies wider, makes a man more accessible to other men, and keeps him from dwelling too much on himself. But tell me about my young companion; is he one of Sir Hugh's family?"

"His second son; not unlike to be his eldest, for George has

gone to Madeira with very little prospect of recovery. This is a fine lad; a little wild, a little careless of money, but the very soul of honor and right-mindedness. They sent him to me as a sort of incurable, but I have nothing but good to say of him."

"There 'a great promise in a fellow when he can be a scamp and a man of honor. When dissipations do not degrade and excesses do not corrupt a man, there is a grand nature ever beneath."

"Don't tell him that, Fossbrooke," said the Colonel, laughing.

"I am not likely to do so," said he, with a grim smile. "I am glad, too, to meet his father's son; we were at Christ Church together; and now I see he has the family good looks. 'Le beau Trafford' was a proverb in Paris once."

"Do you ever forget a man?" asked the Colonel, in some curiosity.

"I believe not. I forget books, places, dates occasionally, but never people. I met an old schoolfellow t'other day at Dover whom I never saw since we were boys. He had gone down in the world, and was acting as one of the 'commissionnaires' they call them, who take your keys to the Custom-house to have your luggage examined; and when he came to ask me to employ him, I said, "'What! ain't you Jemmy Harper?' 'And who the devil are you?' said he. 'Fossbrooke,' said I. 'Not "Wart"?' said he. That was my school nickname, from a wart I once had on my chin. 'Ay, to be sure,' said I, 'Wart.' I wish you saw the delight of the old dog. I made him dine with us. Lord Brackington was with

me, and enjoyed it all immensely."

"And what had brought him so low?"

"He was cursed, he said, with a strong constitution; all the other fellows of his set had so timed it that when they had nothing to live on they ceased to live; but Jemmy told us he never had such an appetite as now; that he passed from fourteen to sixteen hours a day on the pier in all weathers; and as to gout he firmly believed it all came of the adulterated wines of the great wine-merchants. British gin he maintained to be the wholesomest liquor in existence."

"I wonder how fellows bear up under such reverses as that," said the Colonel.

"My astonishment is rather," cried Fossbrooke, "how men can live on in a monotony of well-being, getting fatter, older, and more unwieldy, and with only such experiences of life as a well-fed fowl might have in a hencoop."

"I know that's *your* theory," said the other, laughing.

"Well, no man can say that I have not lived up to my convictions; and for myself, I can aver I have thoroughly enjoyed my intercourse with the world, and like it as well to-day as on the first morning I made my bow to it."

"Listen to this, young gentlemen," said the Colonel, turning to his officers, who now gathered around them. "Now and then I hear some of you complaining of being bored or wearied, – sick of this, tired of that; here's my friend, who knows the whole thing better than any of us, and he declares that the world is the

best of all possible worlds, and that so far from familiarity with it inspiring disgust with life, his enjoyment of it is as racy as when first he knew it."

"It is rather hard to ask these gentlemen to take me as a guide on trust," said Fossbrooke; "but I have known the fathers of most of those I see around me, and could call many of them as witnesses to character. Major Aylmer, your father and I went up the Nile together, when people talked of it as a journey. Captain Harris, I 'm sure I am not wrong in saying you are the son of Godfrey Harris, of Harrisburg. Your father was my friend on the day I wounded Lord Ecclesmore. I see four or five others too, – so like old companions that I find it hard to believe I am not back again in the old days when I was as young as themselves; and yet I 'm not very certain if I would like to exchange my present quiet enjoyment as a looker-on for all that active share I once took in life and its pleasures."

Something in the fact that their fathers had lived in his intimacy, something in his manner, – a very courteous manner it was, – and something in the bold, almost defiant bearing of the old man, vouching for great energy and dignity together, won greatly upon the young men, and they gathered around him. He was, however, summoned away by a message from Trafford to say that the whist-party waited for him, and he took his leave with a stately courtesy and withdrew.

"There goes one of the strangest fellows in Christendom," said the Colonel, as the other left the room. "He has already gone

through three fortunes; he dissipated the first, speculated and lost the second, and the third he, I might say, gave away in acts of benevolence and kindness, – leaving himself so ill off that I actually heard the other day that some friend had asked for the place of barrack-master at Athlone for him; but on coming over to see the place, he found a poor fellow with a wife and five children a candidate for it; so he retired in his favor, and is content, as you see, to go out on the world, and take his chance with it."

Innumerable questions pressed on the Colonel to tell more of his strange friend; he had, however, little beyond hearsay to give them. Of his own experiences, he could only say that when first he met him it was at Ceylon, where he had come in a yacht like a sloop of war to hunt elephants, – the splendor of his retinue and magnificence of his suite giving him the air of a royal personage, – and indeed the gorgeous profusion of his presents to the King and the chief personages of the court went far to impress this notion. "I never met him since," said the Colonel, "till this morning, when he walked into my room, dusty and travel-stained, to say, 'I just heard your name, and thought I 'd ask you to give me my dinner to-day.' I owe him a great many, – not to say innumerable other attentions; and his last act on leaving Trincomalee was to present me with an Arab charger, the most perfect animal I ever mounted. It is therefore a real pleasure to me to receive him. He is a thoroughly fine-hearted fellow, and, with all his eccentricities, one of the noblest natures

I ever met. The only flaw in his frankness is as to his age; nobody has ever been able to get it from him. You heard him talk of your fathers, – he might talk of your grandfathers; and he would, too, if we had only the opportunity to lead him on to it. I know of my own knowledge that he lived in the Carlton House coterie, not a man of which except himself survives, and I have heard him give imitations of Burke, Sheridan, Gavin Hamilton, and Pitt, that none but one who had seen them could have accomplished. And now that I have told you all this, will one of you step over to Trafford's rooms, and whisper him a hint to make his whist-points as low as he can; and, what is even of more importance, to take care lest any strange story Sir Brook may tell – and he is full of them – meet a sign of incredulity, still less provoke any quizzing? The slightest shade of such a provocation would render him like a madman."

The Major volunteered to go on this mission, which indeed any of the others would as willingly have accepted, for the old man had interested them deeply, and they longed to hear more about him.

CHAPTER II. THE SWAN'S NEST

As the Shannon draws near Killaloe, the wild character of the mountain scenery, the dreary wastes and desolate islands which marked Lough Derg, disappear, and give way to gently sloping lawns, dotted over with well-grown timber, well-kept demesnes, spacious country-houses, and a country which, in general, almost recalls the wealth and comfort of England.

About a mile above the town, in a little bend of the river forming a small bay, stands a small but pretty house, with a skirt of rich wood projecting at the back, while the lawn in front descends by an easy slope to the river.

Originally a mere farmhouse, the taste of an ingenious owner had taken every advantage of its irregular outline, and converted it into something Elizabethan in character, a style admirably adapted to the site, where all the features of rich-colored landscape abounded, and where varied foliage, heathy mountain, and eddying river, all lent themselves to make up a scene of fresh and joyous beauty.

In the marvellous fertility of the soil, too, was found an ally to every prospect of embellishment. Sheltered from north and east winds, plants grew here in the open air, which in less favored spots needed the protection of the conservatory; and thus in the neatly shaven lawn were seen groups of blossoming shrubs or flowers of rare excellence, and the camellia and the salvia and the

oleander blended with the tulip, the moss-rose, and the carnation, to stud the grass with their gorgeous colors.

Over the front of the cottage, for cottage it really was, a South American creeper, a sort of acanthus, grew, its crimson flowers hanging in rich profusion over cornice and architrave; while a passion-tree of great age covered the entire porch, relieving with its softened tints the almost over-brilliancy of the southern plant.

Seen from the water, – and it came suddenly into view on rounding a little headland, – few could forbear from an exclamation of wonder and admiration at this lovely spot; nor could all the pretentious grandeur of the rich-wooded parks, nor all the more imposing architecture of the great houses, detract from the marvellous charm of this simple home.

A tradition of a swan carried away by some rising of the river from the Castle of Portumna, and swept down the lake till it found refuge in the little bay, had given the name to the place, and for more than a hundred years was it known as the Swan's Nest. The Swan, however, no longer existed, though a little thatched edifice at the water-side marked the spot it had once inhabited, and sustained the truth of the legend.

The owner of the place was a Dr. Lendrick: he had come to it about twenty years before the time at which our story opens, – a widower with two children, a son and a daughter. He was a perfect stranger to all the neighborhood, though by name well known as the son of a distinguished judge, Baron Lendrick of the Court of Exchequer.

It was rumored about, that, having displeased his father, first by adopting medicine instead of law as his profession, and subsequently by marrying a portionless girl of humble family, the Baron had ceased to recognize him in any way. Making a settlement of a few hundreds a year on him, he resolved to leave the bulk of his fortune to a step-son, the child of his second wife, a Colonel Sewell, then in India.

It was with no thought of practising his profession that Dr. Lendrick had settled in the neighborhood; but as he was always ready to assist the poor by his advice and skill, and as the reputation of his great ability gradually got currency, he found himself constrained to yield to the insistence of his neighbors, and consent to practise generally. There were many things which made this course unpalatable to him. He was by nature shy, timid, and retiring; he was fastidiously averse to a new acquaintanceship; he had desired, besides, to live estranged from the world, devoting himself entirely to the education of his children; and he neither liked the forced publicity he became exposed to, nor that life of servitude which leaves the doctor at the hourly mercy of the world around him.

If he yielded, therefore, to the professional calls upon him, he resisted totally all social claims: he went nowhere but as the doctor.

No persuasion, no inducement, could prevail on him to dine out; no exigency of time or season prevent him returning to his home at night. There were in his neighborhood one or two

persons whose rank might have, it was supposed, influenced him in some degree to comply with their requests, – and, certainly, whose desire for his society would have left nothing undone to secure it; but he was as obdurate to them as to others, and the Earl of Drum-carran and Sir Reginald Lacy, of Lacy Manor, were not a whit more successful in their blandishments than the Vicar of Killaloe – old Bob Mills, as he was irreverently called – or Lendrick's own colleague, Dr. Tobin, who, while he respected his superior ability and admitted his knowledge, secretly hated him as only a rival doctor knows how to hate a brother practitioner.

For the first time for many years had Dr. Lendrick gone up to Dublin. A few lines from an old family physician, Dr. Beattie, had, however, called him up to town. The Chief Baron had been taken ill in Court, and was conveyed home in a state of insensibility. It was declared that he had rallied and passed a favorable night; but as he was a man of very advanced age, at no time strong, and ever unsparing of himself in the arduous labors of his office, grave doubts were felt that he would ever again resume his seat on the Bench. Dr. Beattie well knew the long estrangement that had separated the father from the son; and although, perhaps, the most intimate friend the Judge had in the world, he never had dared to interpose a word or drop a hint as to the advisability of reconciliation.

Sir William Lendrick was, indeed, a man whom no amount of intimacy could render his friends familiar with. He was positively charming to mere acquaintanceship, – his manner was

a happy blending of deference with a most polished wit Full of bygone experiences and reminiscences of interesting people and events, he never overlaid conversation by their mention, but made them merely serve to illustrate the present, either by contrast or resemblance. All this to the world and society was he; to the inmates of his house he was a perfect terror! It was said his first wife had died of a broken heart; his second, with a spirit fierce and combative as his own, had quarrelled with him so often, so seriously, and so hopelessly, that for the last fifteen years of life they had occupied separate houses, and only met as acquaintances, accepting and sending invitations to each other, and outwardly observing all the usages of a refined courtesy.

This was the man of whom Dr. Beattie wrote: "I cannot presume to say that he is *more* favorably disposed towards you than he has shown himself for years, but I would strenuously advise your being here, and sufficiently near, so that if a happier disposition should occur, or an opportunity arise to bring you once more together, the fortunate moment should not be lost. Come up, then, at once, come to my house, where your room is ready for you, and where you will neither be molested by visitors nor interfered with. Manage too, if you can, to remain here for some days."

It is no small tribute to the character of filial affection when one can say, and say truthfully, that scarcely any severity on a parent's part effaces the love that was imbibed in infancy, and that struck root in the heart before it could know what unkindness

was! Over and over again in life have I witnessed this deep devotion. Over and over again have I seen a clinging affection to a memory which nothing short of a hallowed tie could have made so dear, – a memory that retained whatever could comfort and sustain, and held nothing that recalled shame or sorrow.

Dr. Lendrick went up to town full of such emotions. All the wrong – it was heavy wrong too – he had suffered was forgotten, all the Injustice wiped out. He only asked to be permitted to see his father, – to nurse and watch by him. There was no thought for himself. By reconciliation he never meant restoration to his place as heir. Forgiveness and love he asked for, – to be taken back to the heart so long closed against him, to hear himself called Tom by that voice he knew so well, and whose accents sounded through his dreams.

That he was not without a hope of such happiness, might be gathered from one circumstance. He had taken up with him two miniatures of his boy and girl to show "Grandfather," if good fortune should ever offer a fitting moment.

The first words which greeted him on reaching his friend's house were: "Better. A tolerably tranquil night. He can move his hand. The attack was paralysis, and his speech is also improved."

"And his mind? how is his mind?"

"Clear as ever it was, – intensely eager to hear what is said about his illness, and insatiable as to the newspaper versions of the attack."

"Does he speak? Has he spoken of – his family at all?" said

he, falteringly.

"Only of Lady Lendrick. He desired to see her. He dictated a note to me, in terms of very finished courtesy, asking her if, without incurring inconvenience, she would favor him with an early call. The whole thing was so like himself that I saw at once he was getting better."

"And so you think him better?" asked Lendrick, eagerly.

"Better! Yes – but not out of danger. I fear as much from his irritability as his malady. He will insist on seeing the newspapers, and occasionally his eye falls on some paragraph that wounds him. It was but yesterday that he read a sort of querulous regret from some writer that 'the learned Judge had not retired some years ago, and before failing health, acting on a very irascible temperament, had rendered him a terror alike to the bar and the suitors.' That unfortunate paragraph cost twenty leeches and ice to his temples for eight hours after."

"Cannot these things be kept from him? Surely your authority ought to be equal to this!"

"Were I to attempt it, he would refuse to see me. In fact, any utility I can contribute depends on my apparent submission to him in everything. Almost his first question to me every morning is, 'Well, sir, who is to be my successor?' Of course I say that we all look with a sanguine hope to see him soon back in his court again. When I said this yesterday, he replied, 'I will sit on Wednesday, sir, to hear appeals; there will be little occasion for me to speak, and I trust another day or two will see the last of

this difficulty of utterance. Pemberton, I know, is looking to the Attorney-Generalship, and George Hayes thinks he may order his ermine. Tell them, however, from me, that the Chief Baron intends to preside in his court for many a year to come; that the intellect, such as it is, with which Providence endowed him, is still unchanged and unclouded.' This is his language, – this his tone; and you may know how such a spirit jars with all our endeavors to promote rest and tranquillity."

Lendrick walked moodily up and down the room, his head sunk, and his eyes downcast. "Never to speak of me, – never ask to see me," muttered he, in a voice of intense sadness.

"I half suspected at one time he was about to do so, and indeed he said, 'If this attack should baffle you, Beattie, you must not omit to give timely warning. There are two or three things to be thought of.' When I came away on that morning, I sat down and wrote to you to come up here."

A servant entered at this moment and presented a note to the doctor, who read it hastily and handed it to Lendrick. It ran thus: —

"Dear Dr. Beattie, – The Chief Baron has had an unfavorable turn, partly brought on by excitement. Lose no time in coming here; and believe me, yours sincerely,

"CONSTANTIA LENDRICK."

"They've had a quarrel; I knew they would. I did my best to prevent their meeting; but I saw he would not go out of the world without a scene. As he said last night, 'I mean her to hear my

“charge.” She must listen to my charge, Beattie;’ and I ‘d not be astonished if this charge were to prove his own sentence.”

“Go to him at once, Beattie; and if it be at all possible, if you can compass it in any way, let me see him once again. Take these with you; who knows but their bright faces may plead better than words for us?” and thus saying, he gave him the miniatuies; and overcome with emotion he could not control, turned away and left the room.

CHAPTER III. A DIFFICULT PATIENT

As Dr. Beattie drove off with all speed to the Chief Baron's house, which lay about three miles from the city, he had time to ponder as he went over his late interview. "Tom Lendrick," as he still called him to himself, he had known as a boy, and ever liked him. He had been a patient, studious, gentle-tempered lad, desirous to acquire knowledge, without any of that ambition that wants to make the knowledge marketable. To have gained a professorship would have appeared to have been the very summit of his ambition, and this rather as a quiet retreat to pursue his studies further than as a sphere wherein to display his own gifts. Anything more unlike that bustling, energetic, daring spirit, his father, would be hard to conceive. Throughout his whole career at the bar, and in Parliament, men were never quite sure what that brilliant speaker and most indiscreet talker would do next. Men secured his advocacy with a half misgiving whether they were doing the very best or the very worst for success. Give him difficulties to deal with, and he was a giant; let all go smoothly and well, and he would hunt up some crotchet, – some obsolete usage, – a doubtful point, that in its discussion very frequently led to the damage of his client's cause, and the defeat of his suit.

Display was ever more to him than victory. Let him have

a great arena to exhibit in, and he was proof against all the difficulties and all the casualties of the conflict. Never had such a father a son less the inheritor of his temperament and nature; and this same disappointment rankling on through life – a disappointment that embittered all intercourse, and went so far as to make him disparage the high abilities of his son – created a gulf between them that Beattie knew could never be bridged over. He doubted, too, whether as a doctor he could conscientiously introduce a theme so likely to irritate and excite. As he pondered, he opened the two miniatures, and looked at them. The young man was a fine, manly, daring-looking fellow, with a determined brow and a resolute mouth, that recalled his grandfather's face; he was evidently well grown and strong, and looked one that, thrown where he might be in life, would be likely to assert his own.

The girl, wonderfully like him in feature, had a character of subdued humor in her eye, and a half-hid laughter in the mouth, which the artist had caught up with infinite skill, that took away all the severity of the face, and softened its traits to a most attractive beauty. Through her rich brown hair there was a sort of golden *reflet* that imparted great brilliancy to the expression of the head, and her large eyes of gray-blue were the image of candor and softness, till her laugh gave them a sparkle of drollery whose sympathy there was no resisting. She, too, was tall and beautifully formed, with that slimness of early youth that only escapes being angular, but has in it the charm of suppleness that

lends grace to every action and every gesture.

"I wish he could see the originals," muttered Beattie. "If the old man, with his love of beauty, but saw that girl, it would be worth all the arguments in Christendom. Is it too late for this? Have we time for the experiment?"

Thus thinking, he drove along the well-wooded approach, and gained the large ground-space before the door, whence a carriage was about to drive away. "Oh, doctor," cried a voice, "I'm so glad you 're come; they are most impatient for you." It was the Solicitor-General, Mr. Pemberton, who now came up to the window of Beattie's carriage.

"He has become quite unmanageable, will not admit a word of counsel or advice, resists all interference, and insists on going out for a drive."

"I see him at the window," said Beattie; "he is beckoning to me; good-bye," and he passed on and entered the house.

In the chief drawing-room, in a deep recess of a window, sat the Chief Baron, dressed as if to go out, with an overcoat and even his gloves on. "Come and drive with me, Beattie," cried he, in a feeble but harsh voice. "If I take my man Leonard, they 'll say it was a keeper. You know that the 'Post' has it this morning that it is my mind which has given way. They say they 've seen me breaking for years back. Good heavens! can it be possible, think you, that the mites in a cheese speculate over the nature of the man that eats them? You stopped to talk with Pemberton I saw; what did he say to you?"

"Nothing particular, – a mere greeting, I think."

"No, sir, it was not; he was asking you how many hours there lay between him and the Attorney-Generalship. They 've divided the carcase already. The lion has to assist at his autopsy, – rather hard, is n't it? How it embitters death, to think of the fellows who are to replace us!"

"Let me feel your pulse."

"Don't trust it, Beattie; that little dialogue of yours on the grass plot has sent it up thirty beats; how many is it?"

"Rapid, – very rapid; you need rest, – tranquillity."

"And you can't give me either, sir; neither you nor your craft. You are the Augurs of modern civilization, and we cling to your predictions just as our forefathers did, though we never believe you."

"This is not flattery," said Beattie, with a slight smile.

The old man closed his eyes, and passed his hand slowly over his forehead. "I suppose I was dreaming, Beattie, just before you came up; but I thought I saw them all in the Hall, talking and laughing over my death. Burrowes was telling how old I must be, because I moved the amendment to Flood in the Irish Parliament in '97; and Eames mentioned that I was Curran's junior in the great Bagenal record; and old Tysdal set them all in a roar by saying he had a vision of me standing at the gate of heaven, and instead of going in, as St. Peter invited me, stoutly refusing, and declaring I would move for a new trial! How like the rascals!"

"Don't you think you'd be better in your own room? There's

too much light and glare here."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. You need quiet, and the absence of all that stimulates the action of the brain."

"And what do *you*, sir, – what does any one, – know about the brain's operations? You doctors have invented a sort of conventional cerebral organ, which, like lunar caustic, is decomposed by light; and in your vulgar materialism you would make out that what affects *your* brain must act alike upon *mine*. I tell you, sir, it is darkness – obscurity, physical or moral, it matters not which – that irritates *me*, just as I feel provoked this moment by this muddling talk of yours about brain."

"And yet I 'm talking about what my daily life and habits suggest *some* knowledge of," said Beattie, mildly.

"So you are, sir, and the presumption is all on my side. If you'll kindly lend me your arm, I'll go back to my room."

Step by step, slowly and painfully, he returned to his chamber, not uttering a word as he went.

"Yes, this is better, doctor; this half light soothes; it is much pleasanter. One more kindness. I wrote to Lady Lendrick this morning to come up here. I suppose my combative spirit was high in me, and I wanted a round with the gloves, – or, indeed, without them; at all events, I sent the challenge. But *now*, doctor, I have to own myself a craven. I dread the visit Could you manage to interpose? Could you suggest that it is by your order I am not permitted to receive her? Could you hint" – here he smiled

half maliciously – "that you do not think the time has come for anodynes, – eh, doctor?"

"Leave it to me. I 'll speak to Lady Lendrick."

"There 's another thing: not that it much matters; but it might perhaps be as well to send a few lines to the morning papers, to say the accounts of the Chief Baron are more favorable to-day; he passed a tranquil night, and so on. Pemberton won't like it, nor Hayes; but it will calm the fears of a very attached friend who calls here twice daily. You'd never guess him. He is the agent of the Globe Office, where I 'm insured. Ah, doctor, it was a bright thought of Philanthropy to establish an industrial enterprise that is bound, under heavy recognizances, to be grieved at our death."

"I must not make you talk, Sir William. I must not encourage you to exert yourself. I 'll say good-bye, and look in upon you this afternoon."

"Am I to have a book? Well; be it so. I I 'll sit and muse over the Attorney-General and his hopes."

"I have got two very interesting miniatures here. I 'll leave them with you; you might like to look at them."

"Miniatures! whose portraits are they?" asked the other, hastily, as he almost snatched them from his hand. "What a miserable juggler! what a stale trick this!" said he, as he opened the case which contained the young man's picture. "So, sir, you lend yourself to such attempts as these."

"I don't understand you," said Beattie, indignantly.

"Yes, sir, you understand me perfectly. You would do, by a

piece of legerdemain, what you have not the courage to attempt openly. These are Tom Lendrick's children."

"They are."

"And this simpering young lady is her mother's image; pretty, pretty, no doubt; and a little – a shade, perhaps – of *espièglerie* above what her mother possessed. She was the silliest woman that ever turned a fool's head. She had the ineffable folly, sir, to believe she could persuade me to forgive my son for having married her; and when I handed her to a seat, – for she was at my knees, – she fainted."

"Well. It is time to forgive him now. As for her, she is beyond forgiveness, or favor, either," said Beattie, with more energy than before.

"There is no such trial to a man in a high calling as the temptation it offers him to step beyond it. Take care, sir, that with all your acknowledged ability, this temptation be not too much for you." The tone and manner in which the old judge delivered these words recalled the justice-seat. "It is an honor to me to have you as my doctor, sir. It would be to disparage my own intelligence to accept you as my confessor."

"A doctor but discharges half his trust when he fails to warn his patient against the effects of irritability."

"The man who would presume to minister to my temper or to my nature should be no longer medico of mine. With what intention, sir, did you bring me these miniatures?"

"That you might see two bright and beautiful faces whose

owners are bound to you by the strongest ties of blood."

"Do you know, sir, – have you ever heard, – how their father, by his wilfulness, by his folly, by his heartless denial of my right to influence him, ruined the fortune that cost my life of struggle and labor to create?"

The doctor shook his head, and the other continued: "Then I will tell it to you, sir. It is more than seventeen years to-day when the then Viceroy sent for me, and said, 'Baron Lendrick, there is no man, after Plunkett, to whom we owe more than to yourself.' I bowed, and said, 'I do not accept the qualification, my Lord, even in favor of the distinguished Chancellor. I will not believe myself second to any.' I need not relate what ensued; the discussion was a long one, – it was also a warm one; but he came back at last to the object of the interview, which was to say that the Prime Minister was willing to recommend my name to her Majesty for the Peerage, – an honor, he was pleased to say, the public would see conferred upon me with approval; and I refused! Yes, sir, I refused what for thirty-odd years had formed the pride and the prize of my existence! I refused it, because I would not that her Majesty's favor should descend to one so unworthy of it as this fellow, or that his low-born children should inherit a high name of my procuring. I refused, sir, and I told the noble Marquess my reasons. He tried – pretty much as you have tried – to bring me to a more forgiving spirit; but I stopped him by saying, 'When I hear that your Excellency has invited to your table the scurrilous author of the lampoon against you in the "Satirist," I will begin to

listen to the claims that may be urged on the score of forgiveness; not till then.'"

"I am wrong – very wrong – to let you talk on themes like this; we must keep them for calmer moments." Beattie laid his finger on the pulse as he spoke, and counted the beats by his watch.

"Well, sir, what says Death? Will he consent to a 'nolle prosequi,' or must the cause go on?"

"You are not worse; and even that, after all this excitement, is something. Good-bye now till evening. No books, – no newspapers, remember. Doze; dream; do anything but excite yourself."

"You are cruel, sir; you cut off all my enjoyments together. You deny me the resources of reading, and you deny me the solace of my wife's society." The cutting sarcasm of the last words was shown in the spiteful sparkle of his eye, and the insolent curl of his mouth; and as the doctor retired, the memory of that wicked look haunted him throughout the day.

CHAPTER IV. HOME DIPLOMACIES

"Well, it 's done now, Lucy, and it can't be helped," said young Lendrick to his sister, as, with an unlighted cigar between his lips, and his hands in the pockets of his shooting-jacket, he walked impatiently up and down the drawing-room. "I 'm sure if I only suspected you were so strongly against it, I 'd not have done it."

"My dear Tom, I'm only against it because I think papa would be so. You know we never see any one here when he is at home, and why should we now, because he is absent?"

"Just for that reason. It's our only chance, girl."

"Oh, Tom!"

"Well, I don't mean that exactly, but I said it to startle you. No, Lucy; but, you see, here's how the matter stands. I have been three whole days in their company. On Tuesday the young fellow gave me that book of flies and the top-joint of my rod. Yesterday I lunched with them. To-day they pressed me so hard to dine with them that I felt almost rude in persisting to refuse; and it was as much to avoid the awkwardness of the situation as anything else that I asked them up to tea this evening."

"I'm sure, Tom, if it would give you any pleasure – "

"Of course it gives me pleasure," broke he in; "I don't suspect that fellows of my age like to live like hermits. And whom do

I ever see down here? Old Mills and old Tobin, and Larry Day, the dog-breaker. I ask his pardon for putting him last, for he is the best of the three. Girls can stand this sort of nun's life, but I 'll be hanged if it will do for us."

"And then, Tom," resumed she, in the same tone, "remember they are both perfect strangers. I doubt if you even know their names."

"That I do, – the old fellow is Sir Brook something or other. It 's not Fogey, but it begins like it; and the other is called Trafford, – Lionel, I think, is his Christian name. A glorious fellow, too; was in the 9th Lancers and in the blues, and is now here with the fifty – th because he went it too hard in the cavalry. He had a horse for the Derby two years ago." The tone of proud triumph in which he made this announcement seemed to say, Now, all discussion about him may cease. "Not but," added he, after a pause, "you might like the old fellow best; he has such a world of stories, and he draws so beautifully. The whole time we were in the boat he was sketching something; and he has a book full of odds and ends; a tea-party in China, quail-shooting in Java, a wedding in Candia, – I can't tell what more; but he 's to bring them up here with him."

"I was thinking, Tom, that it might be as well if you 'd go down and ask Dr. Mills to come to tea. It would take off some of the awkwardness of our receiving two strangers."

"But they 're not strangers, Lucy; not a bit of it. I call him Trafford, and he calls me Lendrick; and the old cove is the most

familiar old fellow I ever met."

"Have you said anything to Nicholas yet?" asked she, in some eagerness.

"No; and that's exactly what I want you to do for me. That old bear bullies us all, so that I can't trust myself to speak to him."

"Well, don't go away, and I'll send for him now;" and she rang the bell as she spoke. A smart-looking lad answered the summons, to whom she said, "Tell Nicholas I want him."

"Take my advice, Lucy, and merely say there are two gentlemen coming to tea this evening; don't let the old villain think you are consulting him about it, or asking his advice."

"I must do it my own way," said she; "only don't interrupt. Don't meddle, – mind that, Tom." The door opened, and a very short, thick-set old man, dressed in a black coat and waistcoat, and drab breeches and white stockings, with large shoe-buckles in his shoes, entered. His face was large and red, the mouth immensely wide, and the eyes far set from each other, his low forehead being shadowed by a wig of coarse red hair, which moved when he spoke, and seemed almost to possess a sort of independent vitality.

He had been reading when he was summoned, and his spectacles had been pushed up over his forehead, while he still held the county paper in his hand, – a sort of proud protest against being disturbed.

"You heard that Miss Lucy sent for you?" said Tom Lendrick, haughtily, as his eye fell upon the newspaper.

"I did," was the curt answer, as the old fellow, with a nervous shake of the head, seemed to announce that he was ready for battle.

"What I wanted, Nicholas, was this," interposed the girl, in a voice of very winning sweetness; "Mr. Tom has invited two gentlemen this evening to tea."

"To tay!" cried Nicholas, as if the fact staggered all credulity.

"Yes, to tea; and I was thinking if you would go down to the town and get some biscuits, or a sponge-cake, perhaps – whatever, indeed, you thought best; and also beg Dr. Mills to step in, saying that as papa was away – "

"That you was going to give a ball?"

"No. Not exactly that, Nicholas," said she, smiling; "but that two friends of my brother's – "

"And where did he meet his friends?" cried he, with a marked emphasis on the "friends." "Two strangers. God knows who or what! Poachers as like as anything else. The ould one might be worse."

"Enough of this," said Tom, sternly. "Are you the master here? Go off, sir, and do what Miss Lucy has ordered you."

"I will not, – the devil a step," said the old man, who now thrust the paper into a capacious pocket, and struck each hand on a hip. "Is it when the 'Jidge' is dying, when the newpapers has a column of the names that 's calling to ask after him, you are to be carousing and feastin' here?"

"Dear Nicholas, there's no question of feasting. It is simply

a cup of tea we mean to give; sorely there's no carousing in that. And as to grandpapa, papa says that he was certainly better yesterday, and Dr. Beattie has hopes now."

"I have n't, then, and I know him better than Dr. Beattie."

"What a pity they have n't sent for you for the consultation!" said Tom, ironically.

"And look here, Nicholas," said Lucy, drawing the old man towards the door of a small room that led off the drawing-room, "we could have tea here; it will look less formal, and give less trouble; and Mears could wait, – he does it very well; and you need n't be put out at all." These last words fell to a whisper; but he was beyond reserve, beyond flattery. The last speech of her brother still rankled in his memory, and all that fell upon his ear since that fell unheeded.

"I was with your grandfather, Master Tom," said the old man, slowly, "twenty-one years before you were born! I carried his bag down to Court the day he defended Neal O' Gorman for high treason, and I was with him the morning he shot Luke Dillon at Castle Knock; and this I 'll say and stand to, there 's not a man in Ireland, high or low, knows the Chief Baron better than myself."

"It must be a great comfort to you both," said Tom; but his sister had laid her hand on his mouth and made the words unintelligible.

"You'll say to Mr. Mills, Nicholas," said she, in her most coaxing way, "that I did not write, because I preferred sending my message by *you*, who could explain why I particularly wanted

him this evening."

"I'll go, Miss Lucy, resarving the point, as they say in the law, – resarving the point! because I don't give in that what you're doin' is right; and when the master comes home, I'm not goin' to defend it."

"We must bear up under that calamity as well as we can," said the young man, insolently; but Nicholas never looked towards or seemed to hear him.

"A barn-a-brack is better than a spongecake, because if there 's some of it left it does n't get stale, and one-and-six-pence will be enough; and I suppose you don't need a lamp?"

"Well, Nicholas, I must say, I think it would be better; and two candles on the small table, and two on the piano."

"Why don't you mentiou a fiddler?" said he, bitterly. "If it's a ball, there ought to be music?"

Unable to control himself longer, young Lendrick wrenched open the sash-door, and walked out into the lawn.

"The devil such a family for temper from this to Bantry!" said Nicholas; "and here's the company comin' already, or I 'm mistaken. There 's a boat makin' for the landing-place with two men in the stern."

Lucy implored him once more to lose no time on his errand, and hastened away to make some change in her dress to receive the strangers. Meanwhile Tom, having seen the boat, walked down to the shore to meet his friends.

Both Sir Brook and Trafford were enthusiastic in their praises

of the spot. Its natural beauty was indeed great, but taste and culture had rendered it a marvel of elegance and refinement. Not merely were the trees grouped with reference to foliage and tint, but the flower-beds were so arranged that the laws of color should be respected, and thus these plats of perfume were not less luxuriously rich in odor than they were captivating as pictures.

"It is all the governor's own doing," said Tom, proudly, "and he is continually changing the disposition of the plants. He says variety is a law of the natural world, and it is our duty to imitate it. Here comes my sister, gentlemen."

As though set in a beautiful frame, the lovely girl stood for an instant in the porch, where drooping honeysuckles and the tangled branches of a vine hung around her, and then came courteously to meet and welcome them.

"I am in ecstasy with all I see here, Miss Lendrick," said Sir Brook. "Old traveller that I am, I scarcely know where I have ever seen such a combination of beauty."

"Papa will be delighted to hear this," said she, with a pleasant smile; "it is the flattery he loves best."

"I 'm always saying we could keep up a salmon-weir on the river for a tithe of what these carnations and primroses cost us," said Tom.

"Why, sir, if you had been in Eden you 'd have made it a market garden," said the old man.

"If the governor was a Duke of Devonshire, all these-caprices might be pardonable; but my theory is, roast-beef before roses."

While young Lendrick attached himself to Trafford, and took him here and there to show him the grounds, Sir Brook walked beside Lucy, who did the honors of the place with a most charming courtesy.

"I am almost ashamed, sir," said she, as they turned towards the house, "to have asked you to see such humble objects as these to which we attach value, for my brother tells me you are a great traveller; but it is just possible you have met in your journeys others who, like us, lived so much out of the world that they fancied they had the prettiest spot in it for their own."

"You must not ask me what I think of all I have seen: here, Miss Lendrick, till my enthusiasm calms down;" and his look of admiration, so palpably addressed to herself, sent a flush to her cheek. "A man's belongings are his history," said Sir Brook, quickly turning the conversation into an easier channel: "show me his study, his stable, his garden; let me see his hat, his cane, the volume he thrusts into his pocket, and I 'll make you an indifferent good guess about his daily doings."

"Tell me of papa's. Come here, Tom," cried she, as the two young men came towards her, "and listen to a bit of divination."

"Nay, I never promised a lecture. I offered a confidence," said he, in a half whisper; but she went on: "Sir Brook says that he reads people pretty much as Cuvier pronounced on a mastodon, by some small minute detail that pertained to them. Here's Tom's cigar-case," said she, taking it from his pocket; "what do you infer from that, sir?"

"That he smokes the most execrable tobacco."

"But can you say why?" asked Tom, with a sly twinkle of his eye.

"Probably for the same reason I do myself," said Sir Brook, producing a very cheap cigar.

"Oh, that's a veritable Cuban compared to one of mine," cried Tom; "and by way of making my future life miserable, here has been Mr. Trafford filling my pocket with real havannahs, giving me a taste for luxuries I ought never to have known of."

"Know everything, sir, go everywhere, see all that the world can show you; the wider a man's experiences the larger his nature and the more open his heart," said Foss-brooke, boldly.

"I like the theory," said Trafford to Miss Lendrick; "do you?"

"Sir Brook never meant it for women, I fancy," said she, in a low tone; but the old man overheard her, and said: "You are right. The guide ought to know every part of the mountain; the traveller need only know the path."

"Here comes a guide who is satisfied with very short excursions," cried Tom, laughing; "this is our parson, Dr. Mills."

The little, mellow-looking, well-cared-for person who now joined them was a perfect type of old-bachelorhood, in its aspect of not unpleasant selfishness. Everything about him was neat, orderly, and appropriate; and though you saw at a glance it was all for himself and his own enjoyment it was provided, his good manners and courtesy were ever ready to extend its benefits to others; and a certain genial look he wore, and a manner that

nature had gifted him with, did him right good service in life, and made him pass for "an excellent fellow, though not much of a parson."

He was of use now, if only that by his presence Lucy felt more at ease, not to say that his violoncello, which always remained at the Nest, made a pleasant accompaniment when she played, and that he sang with much taste some of those lyrics which arc as much linked to Ireland by poetry as by music.

"I wish he was our chaplain, – by Jove I do!" whispered Trafford to Lendrick; "he's the jolliest fellow of his cloth I have ever met."

"And such a cook," muttered the other.

"A cook!"

"Ay, a cook. I 'll make him ask us to dinner, and you 'll tell me if you ever ate fish as he gives it, or tasted macaroni as dressed by him. I have a salmon for you, doctor, a ten-pound fish. I wish it were bigger! but it is in splendid order."

"Did you set it?" asked the parson, eagerly.

"What does he mean by set it?" whispered Trafford.

"Setting means plunging it in very hot water soon after killing it, to preserve and harden the 'curd.' Yes; and I took your hint about the arbutus leaves, too, doctor. I covered it all up with them."

"You are a teachable youth, and shall be rewarded. Come and eat him to-morrow. Dare I hope that these gentlemen are disengaged, and will honor my poor parsonage? Will you favor

me with your company at five o'clock, sir?"

Sir Brook bowed, and accepted the invitation with pleasure.

"And you, sir?"

"Only too happy," said Trafford.

"Lucy, my dear, you must be one of us."

"Oh, I could not; it is impossible, doctor, – you know it is."

"I know nothing of the kind."

"Papa away, – not to speak of his never encouraging us to leave home," muttered she, in a whisper.

"I accept no excuses, Lucy; such a rare opportunity may not occur to me in a hurry. Mrs. Brennan, my housekeeper, will be so proud to see you, that I 'm not sure she 'll not treat these gentlemen to her brandy peaches, – a delicacy, I feel bound to say, she has never conceded to any one less than the bishop of the diocese."

"Don't ask me, doctor. I know that papa – "

But he broke in, saying, – "'You know I 'm your priest, and your conscience is mine;' and besides, I really do want to see how the parsonage will look with a lady at the top of the table: who knows what it may lead to?"

"Come, Lucy, that's the nearest thing to a proposal I 've heard for some time. You really must go now," said Tom.

"Papa will not like it," whispered she in his ear.

"Then he'll have to settle the matter with me, Lucy," said the doctor, "for it was I who overruled you."

"Don't look to me, Miss Lendrick, to sustain you in your

refusal," said Sir Brook, as the young girl turned towards him. "I have the strongest interest in seeing the doctor successful."

If Trafford said nothing, the glance he gave her more than backed the old man's speech, and she turned away half vexed, half pleased, puzzled how to act, and flattered at the same time by an amount of attention so new to her and so strange. Still she could not bring herself to promise she would go, and wished them all good-night at last, without a pledge.

"Of course she will," muttered Tom in the doctor's ear. "She's afraid of the governor; but I know he'll not be displeased, – you may reckon on her."

CHAPTER V. THE PICNIC ON HOLY ISLAND

From the day that Sir Brook made the acquaintance of Tom Lendrick and his sister, he determined he would "pitch his tent," as he called it, for some time at Killaloe. They had, so to say, captivated the old man. The young fellow, by his frank, open, manly nature, his ardent love of sport in every shape, his invariable good-humor, and more than all these, by the unaffected simplicity of his character, had strongly interested him; while Lucy had made a far deeper impression by her gentleness, her refinement, an elegance in deportment that no teaching ever gives, and, along with these, a mind stored with thought and reflectiveness. Let us, however, be just to each, and own that her beauty and the marvellous fascination of her smile gave her, even in that old man's eyes, an irresistible charm. It was a very long bygone, but he had once been in love, and the faint flicker of the memory had yet survived in his heart. It was just as likely Lucy bore no resemblance to her he had loved, but he fancied she did, – he imagined that she was her very image. That was the smile, the glance, the tone, the gesture which once had set his heart a-throbbing, and the illusion threw around her an immense fascination.

She liked him too. Through all the strange incongruities of his

character, his restless love of adventure and excitement, there ran a gentle liking for quiet pleasures. He loved scenery passionately, and with a painter's taste for color and form; he loved poetry, which he read with a wondrous charm of voice and intonation. Nor was it without its peculiar power, this homage of an old, old man, who rendered her the attentive service of a devoted admirer.

There is very subtle flattery in the obsequious devotion of age to youth. It is, at least, an honest worship, an unselfish offering, and in this way the object of it may well feel proud of its tribute.

From the vicar, Dr. Mills, Fossbrooke had learned the chief events of Dr. Lendrick's history, of his estrangement from his father, his fastidious retirement from the world, and, last of all, his narrow fortune, apparently now growing narrower, since within the last year he had withdrawn his son from the University on the score of its expense.

A gold-medallist and a scholar, Dr. Lendrick would have eagerly coveted such honors for his son. It was, probably, the one triumph in life he would have set most store by, but Tom was one not made for collegiate successes. He had abilities, but they were not teachable qualities; he could pick up a certain amount of almost anything, – he could learn nothing. He could carry away from a chance conversation an amount of knowledge it had cost the talkers years to acquire, and yet set him down regularly to work book-fashion, and either from want of energy, or concentration, or of that strong will which masters difficulties

just as a full current carries all before it – whichever of these was his defect, – he arose from his task wearied, worn, but unadvanced.

When, therefore, his father would speak, as he sometimes did, in confidence to the vicar, in a tone of depression about Tom's deficiencies, the honest parson would feel perfectly lost in amazement at what he meant. To his eyes Tom Lendrick was a wonder, a prodigy. There was not a theme he could not talk on, and talk well too. "It was but the other day he told the chief engineer of the Shannon Company more about the geological formation of the river-basin than all his staff knew. Ay, and what's stranger," added the vicar, "he understands the whole Colenso controversy better than I do myself." It is just possible that in the last panegyric there was nothing of exaggeration or excess. "And with all that, sir, his father goes on brooding over his neglected education, and foreshadowing the worst results from his ignorance."

"He is a fine fellow," said Fossbrooke, "but not to be compared with his sister."

"Not for mere looks, perhaps, nor for a graceful manner, and a winning address; but who would think of ranking Lucy's abilities with her brother's?"

"Not I," said Fossbrooke, boldly, "for I place hers far and away above them."

A sly twinkle of the parson's eye showed to what class of advantages he ascribed the other's preference; but he said no

more, and the controversy ended.

Every morning found Sir Brook at the "Swan's Nest." He was fond of gardening, and had consummate taste in laying out ground, so that many pleasant surprises had been prepared for Dr. Lendrick's return. He drew, too, with great skill, and Lucy made considerable progress under his teaching; and as they grew more intimate, and she was not ashamed of the confession that she delighted in the Georgics of Virgil, they read whole hours together of those picturesque descriptions of rural life and its occupations, which are as true to nature at this hour as on the day they were written.

Perhaps the old man fancied that it was he who had suggested this intense appreciation of the poet. It is just possible that the young girl believed that she had reclaimed a wild, erratic, eccentric nature, and brought him back ta the love of simple pleasures and a purer source of enjoyment. Whichever way the truth inclined, each was happy, each contented. And how fond are we all, of every age, of playing the missionary, of setting off into the savage districts of our neighbors' natures and combating their false idols, their superstitions and strange rites! The least adventurous and the least imaginative have these little outbursts of conversion, and all are more or less propagandists.

It was one morning, a bright and glorious one too, that, while Tom and Lucy were yet at breakfast, Sir Brook arrived and entered the breakfast-room.

"What a day for a gray hackle, in that dark pool under the

larch-trees!" cried Tom, as he saw him.

"What a day for a long walk to Mount Laurel!" said Lucy. "You said, t'other morning, you wanted cloud effects on the upper lake. I 'll show you splendid ones to-day."

"I 'll promise you a full basket before four o'clock," broke in Tom.

"I 'll promise you a full sketch-book," said Lucy, with one of her sweetest smiles.

"And I 'm going to refuse both; for I have a plan of my own, and a plan not to be gainsaid."

"I know it, You want us to go to work on that fish-pond. I'm certain it's that."

"No, Tom; it's the catalogue, – the weary catalogue that he told me, as a punishment for not being able to find Machiavelli's comedies last week, he 'd make me sit down to on the first lovely morning that came."

"Better that than those dreary Georgics which remind one of school, and the third form. But what 's your plan, Sir Brook? We have thought of all the projects that can terrify us, and you look as if it ought to be a terror."

"Mine is a plan for pleasure, and pleasure only; so pack up at once and get ready. Trafford arrived this morning."

"Where is he? I am so glad! Where's Trafford?" cried Tom, delighted.

"I have despatched him with the vicar and two well-filled hampers to Holy Island, where I mean that we shall all picnic.

There ‘s my plan.”

“And a jolly plan too! I adhere unconditionally.”

“And you, Lucy, what do you say?” asked Sir Brook, as the young girl stood with a look of some indecision and embarrassment.

“I don’t say that it’s not a very pleasant project, but – ”

“But what, Lucy? Where ‘s the but?”

She whispered a few words in his ear, and he cried out: “Is n’t this too bad? She tells me Nicholas does not like all this gayety; that Nicholas disapproves of our mode of life.”

“No, Tom; I only said Nicholas thinks that papa would not like it.”

“Couldn’t we see Nicholas? Couldn’t we have a commission to examine Nicholas?” asked Sir Brook, laughingly.

“I ‘ll not be on it, that ‘s all I know; for I should finish by chucking the witness into the Shannon. Come along, Lucy; don’t let us lose this glorious morning. I ‘ll get some lines and hooks together. Be sure you ‘re ready when I come back.”

As the door closed after him, Sir Brook drew near to Lucy, where she stood in an attitude of doubt and hesitation. “I mustn’t risk your good opinion of me rashly. If you really dislike this excursion, I will give it up,” said he, in a low, gentle voice.

“Dislike it? No; far from it. I suspect I would enjoy it more than any of you. My reluctance was simply on the ground that all this is so unlike the life we have been leading hitherto. Papa will surely disapprove of it. Oh, there comes Nicholas with a letter!”

cried she, opening the sash-window. “Give it to me; it is from papa.”

She broke the seal hurriedly, and ran rapidly over the lines. “Oh, yes! I will go now, and go with delight too. It is full of good news. He is to see grandpapa, if not to-morrow, the day after. He hopes all will be well. Papa knows your name, Sir Brook. He says, ‘Ask your friend Sir Brook if he be any relative of a Sir Brook Foss-brooke who rescued Captain Langton some forty years ago from a Neapolitan prison. The print-shops were filled with his likeness when I was a boy.’ Was he one of your family?” inquired she, looking at him.

“I am the man,” said he, calmly and coldly. “Langton was sentenced to the galleys for life for having struck the Count d’Aconi across the face with his glove; and the Count was nephew to the King. They had him at Capri working in chains, and I landed with my yacht’s crew and liberated him.”

“What a daring thing to do!”

“Not so daring as you fancy. The guard was surprised, and fled. It was only when reinforced that they showed fight. Our toughest enemies were the galley-slaves, who, when they discovered that we never meant to liberate them, attacked us with stones. This scar on my temple is a memorial of the affair.”

“And Langton, what became of him?”

“He is now Lord Burrowfield. He gave me two fingers to shake the last time I met him at the Travellers’.”

“Oh, don’t say that! Oh, don’t tell me of such ingratitude!”

"My dear child, people usually regard gratitude as a debt which, once acknowledged, is acquitted; and perhaps they are right. It makes all intercourse freer and less trammelled."

"Here comes Tom. May I tell him this story, or will you tell him yourself?"

"Not either, my dear Lucy. Your brother's blood is over-hot as it is. Let him not have any promptings to such exploits as these."

"But may I tell papa?"

"Just as well not, Lucy. There were scores of wild things attributed to me in those days. He may possibly remember some of them, and begin to suspect that his daughter might be in better company."

"How was it that you never told me of this exploit?" asked she, looking, not without admiration, at the hard stern features before her.

"My dear child, egotism is the besetting sin of old people, and even the most cautious lapse into it occasionally. Set me once a-talking of myself, all my prudence, all my reserve vanishes; so that, as a measure of safety for my friends and myself too, I avoid the theme when I can. There! Tom is beckoning to us. Let us go to him at once."

Holy Island, or Inishcaltra, to give it its Irish name, is a wild spot, with little remarkable about it, save the ruins of seven churches and a curious well of fabulous depth. It was, however, a favorite spot with the vicar, whose taste in localities was somehow always associated with some feature of festivity, the

great merit of the present spot being that you could dine without any molestation from beggars. In such estimation, indeed, did he hold the class, that he seriously believed their craving importunity to be one of the chief reasons of dyspepsia, and was profoundly convinced that the presence of Lazarus at his gate counterbalanced many of the goods which fortune had bestowed upon Dives.

"Here we dine in real comfort," said he, as he seated himself under the shelter of an ivy-covered wall, with a wide reach of the lake at his feet.

"When I come back from California with that million or two," said Tom, "I 'll build a cottage here, where we can all come and dine continually."

"Let us keep the anniversary of the present day as a sort of foundation era," said the vicar.

"I like everything that promises pleasure," said Sir Brook, "but I like to stipulate that we do not draw too long a bill on Fortune. Think how long a year is. This time twelvemonth, for example, you, my dear doctor, may be a bishop, and not over inclined to these harmless levities. Tom there will be, as he hints, gold-crushing, at the end of the earth. Trafford, not improbably, ruling some rajah's kingdom in the far East. Of your destiny, fair Lucy, brightest of all, it is not for me to speak. Of my own it is not worth speaking."

"Nolo episcopari," said the vicar; "pass me the Madeira."

"You forget, perhaps, that is the phrase for accepting the

mitre," said Sir Brook, laughing. "Bishops, like belles, say 'No' when they mean 'Yes.'"

"And who told you that belles did?" broke in Lucy. "I am in a sad minority here, but I stand up for my sex."

"I repeat a popular prejudice, fair lady."

"And Lucy will not have it that belles are as illogical as bishops? I see I was right in refusing the bench," said the vicar.

"What bright boon of Fortune is Trafford meditating the rejection of?" said Sir Brook; and the young fellow's cheek grew crimson as he tried to laugh off the reply.

"Who made this salad?" cried Tom.

"It was I; who dares to question it?" said Lucy. "The doctor has helped himself twice to it, and that test I take to be a certificate to character."

"I used to have some skill in dressing a salad, but I have foregone the practice for many a day; my culinary gift got me sent out of Austria in twenty-four hours. Oh, it 's nothing that deserves the name of a story," said Sir Brook, as the others looked at him for an explanation. "It was as long ago as the year 1806. Sir Robert Adair had been our minister at Vienna, when, a rupture taking place between the two Governments, he was recalled. He did not, however, return to England, but continued to live as a private citizen at Vienna. Strangely enough, from the moment that our embassy ceased to be recognized by the Government, our countrymen became objects of especial civility. I myself, amongst the rest, was the *bien-venu* in some of the great houses,

and even invited by Count Cobourg Cohari to those *déjeuners* which he gave with such splendor at Maria Hülfe.

"At one of these, as a dish of salad was handed round, instead of eating it, like the others, I proceeded to make a very complicated dressing for it on my plate, calling for various condiments, and seasoning my mess in a most refined and ingenious manner. No sooner had I given the finishing touch to my great achievement than the Grand-Duchess Sophia, who it seems had watched the whole performance, sent a servant round to beg that I would send her my plate. She accompanied the request with a little bow and a smile whose charm I can still recall. Whatever the reason, before I awoke next morning, an agent of the police entered my room and informed me my passports were made out for Dresden, and that his orders were to give me the pleasure of his society till I crossed the frontier. There was no minister, no envoy to appeal to, and nothing left but to comply. They said 'Go,' and I went."

"And all for a dish of salad!" cried the vicar.

"All for the bright eyes of an archduchess, rather," broke in Lucy, laughing.

The old man's grateful smile at the compliment to his gallantry showed how, even in a heart so world-worn, the vanity of youth survived.

"I declare it was very hard," said Tom, – "precious hard."

"If you mean to give up the salad, so think I too," cried the vicar.

"I 'll be shot if I 'd have gone," broke in Trafford.

"You'd probably have been shot if you had stayed," replied Tom.

"There are things we submit to in life, not because the penalty of resistance affrights us, but because we half acquiesce in their justice. You, for instance, Trafford, are well pleased to be here on leave, and enjoy yourself, as I take it, considerably; and yet the call of duty – some very commonplace duty, perhaps – would make you return tomorrow in all haste."

"Of course it would," said Lucy.

"I 'm not so sure of it," murmured Trafford, sullenly; "I 'd rather go into close arrest for a week than I 'd lose this day here."

"Bravo! here's your health, Lionel," cried Tom. "I do like to hear a fellow say he is willing to pay the cost of what pleases him."

"I must preach wholesome doctrine, my young friends," broke in the vicar. "Now that we have dined well, I would like to say aword on abstinence."

"You mean to take no coffee, doctor, then?" asked Lucy, laughing.

"That I do, my sweet child, – coffee and a pipe, too, for I know you are tolerant of tobacco."

"I hope she is," said Tom, "or she 'd have a poor time of it in the house with me."

"I 'll put no coercion upon my tastes on this occasion, for I 'll take a stroll through the ruins, and leave you to your wine,"

said she, rising.

They protested, in a mass, against her going. "We cannot lock the door, Lucy, *de facto*," said Sir Brook, "but we do it figuratively."

"And in that case I make my escape by the window," said she, springing through an old lancet-shaped orifice in the Abbey wall.

"There goes down the sun and leaves us but a gray twilight," said Sir Brook, mournfully, as he looked after her. "If there were only enough beauty on earth, I verily believe we might dispense with parsons."

"Push me over the bird's-eye, and let me nourish myself till your millennium comes," said the vicar.

"What a charming girl she is! her very beauty fades away before the graceful attraction of her manner!" whispered Sir Brook to the doctor.

"Oh, if you but knew her as I do! If you but knew how, sacrificing all the springtime of her bright youth, she has never had a thought save to make herself the companion of her poor father, – a sad, depressed, sorrow-struck man, only rescued from despair by that companionship! I tell you, sir, there is more courage in submitting one's self to the nature of another than in facing a battery."

Sir Brook grasped the parson's hand and shook it cordially. The action spoke more than any words. "And the brother, doctor, – what say you of the brother?" whispered he.

"One of those that the old adage says 'either makes a spoon or

spoils the horn.' That 's Master Tom there."

Low as the words were uttered, they caught the sharp ears of him they spoke of, and with a laughing eye he cried out, "What 's that evil prediction you 're uttering about me, doctor?"

"I am just telling Sir Brook here that it's pure head or tail how you turn out. There's stuff in you to make a hero, but it's just as likely you 'll stop short at a highwayman."

"I think I could guess which of the two would best suit the age we live in," said Tom, gayly. "Are we to have another bottle of that Madeira, for I suspect I see the doctor putting up the corkscrew?"

"You are to have no more wine than what's before you till you land me at the quay of Killaloe. When temperance means safety as well as forbearance, it's one of the first of virtues."

The vicar, indeed, soon grew impatient to depart. Fine as the evening was then, it might change. There was a feeling, too, not of damp, but chilliness; at all events, he was averse to being on the water late; and as he was the great promoter of these little convivial gatherings, his word was law.

It is not easy to explain how it happened that Trafford sat beside Lucy. Perhaps the trim of the boat required it; certainly, however, nothing required that the vicar, who sat next Lucy on the other side, should fall fast asleep almost as soon as he set foot on board. Meanwhile Sir Brook and Tom had engaged in an animated discussion as to the possibility of settling in Ireland as a man settles in some lone island in the Pacific, teaching the

natives a few of the needs of civilization and picking up a few convenient ways of theirs in turn, Sir Brook warming with the theme so far as to exclaim at last, "If I only had a few of those thousands left me which I lost, squandered, or gave away, I 'd try the scheme, and you should be my lieutenant, Tom."

It was one of those projects, very pleasant in their way, where men can mingle the serious with the ludicrous, where actual wisdom may go hand in hand with downright absurdity; and so did they both understand it, mingling, the very sagest reflections with projects the wildest and most eccentric. Their life, as they sketched it, was to be almost savage in freedom, untrammelled by all the tiresome conventionalities of the outer world, and at the same time offering such an example of contentedness and comfort as to shame the condition of all without the Pale.

They agreed that the vicar must join them; he should be their Bishop. He might grumble a little at first about the want of hot plates or finger-glasses, but he would soon fall into their ways, and some native squaw would console him for the loss of Mrs. Brennan's housekeeping gifts.

And Trafford and Lucy all this time, – what did they talk of? Did they, too, imagine a future and plan out a life-road in company? Far too timid for that, – they lingered over the past, each asking some trait of the other's childhood, eager to hear any little incident which might mark character or indicate temper. And at last they came down to the present, – to the very hour they lived in, and laughingly wondered at the intimacy that had

grown up between them. “Only twelve days to-morrow since we first met,” said Lucy, and her color rose as she said it, “and here we are talking away as if – as if – ”

“As if what?” cried he, only by an effort suppressing her name as it rose to his lips.

“As if we knew each other for years. To me it seems the strangest thing in the world, – I who have never had friendships or companionships. To you, I have no doubt, it is common enough.”

“But it is not,” cried he, eagerly. “Such fortune never befell me before. I have gone a good deal into life, – seen scores of people in country-houses and the like; but I never met any one before I could speak to of myself, – I mean, that I had courage to tell – not that, exactly – but that I wanted them to know I was n’t so bad a fellow – so reckless or so heartless as people thought me.”

“And is that the character you bear?” said she, with, though not visible to him, a faint smile on her mouth.

“I think it’s what my family would say of me, – I mean now, for once on a time I was a favorite at home.”

“And why are you not still?”

“Because I was extravagant; because I went into debt; because I got very easily into scrapes, and very badly out of them, – not dishonorably, mind; the scrapes I speak of were money troubles, and they brought me into collision with my governor. That was how it came about I was sent over here. They meant as a punishment what has turned out the greatest happiness of my life.”

"How cold the water is!" said Lucy, as, taking off her glove, she suffered her hand to dip in the water beside the boat.

"Deliciously cold," said he, as, plunging in his hand, he managed, as though by accident, to touch hers. She drew it rapidly away, however, and then, to prevent the conversation returning to its former channel, said aloud: "What *are* you laughing over so heartily, Sir Brook? You and Tom appear to have fallen upon a mine of drollery. Do share it with us."

"You shall hear it all one of these days, Lucy. Jog the doctor's arm now and wake him up, for I see the lights at the boat-house, and we shall soon be on shore."

"And sorry I am for it," muttered Trafford, in a whisper; "I wish this night could be drawn out to years."

CHAPTER VI. WAITING ON

On the sixth day after Dr. Lendrick's arrival in Dublin – a fruitless journey so far as any hope of reconciliation was concerned – he resolved to return home. His friend Beattie, however, induced him to delay his departure to the-next day, clinging to some small hope from a few words-that had dropped from Sir William on that same morning. "Let me see you to-night, doctor; I have a note to show you which I could not to-day with all these people about me." Now, the people in question resolved themselves into one person, Lady Lendrick, who indeed bustled into the room and out of it, slammed doors and upset chairs in a fashion that might well have excused the exaggeration that converted her into a noun of multitude. A very warm altercation had occurred, too, in the doctor's presence with reference to some letter from India, which Lady Lendrick was urging Sir William to reply to, but which he firmly declared he would not answer.

"How I am to treat a man subject to such attacks of temper, so easily provoked, and so incessantly irritated, is not clear to me. At all events I will see him to-night, and hear what he has to say to me. I am sure it has no concern with this letter from India." With these words Beattie induced his friend to defer his journey for another day.

It was a long and anxious day to poor Lendrick. It was not

alone that he had to suffer the bitter disappointment of all his hopes of being received by his father and admitted to some gleam of future favor, but he had discovered that certain debts which he had believed long settled by the judge were still outstanding against him, Lady Lendrick having interfered to prevent their payment, while she assured the creditors that if they had patience Dr. Lendrick would one day or other be in a position to acquit them. Between two and three thousand pounds thus hung over him of indebtedness above all his calculations, and equally above all his ability to meet.

"We thought you knew all this, Dr. Lendrick," said Mr. Hack, Sir William's agent; "we imagined you were a party to the arrangement, understanding that you were reluctant to bring these debts under the Chief Baron's eyes, being moneys lent to your wife's relations."

"I believed that they were paid," was all his reply, for the story was a painful one of trust betrayed and confidence abused, and he did not desire to revive it. He had often been told that his stepmother was the real obstacle to all hope of reconciliation with his father, but that she had pushed her enmity to him to the extent of his ruin was more than he was prepared for. They had never met, but at one time letters had frequently passed between them. Hers were marvels of good wishes and kind intentions, dashed with certain melancholy reflections over some shadowy unknown something which had been the cause of his estrangement from his father, but which time and endurance

might not impossibly diminish the bitterness of, though with very little hope of leading to a more amicable relation. She would assume, besides, occasionally a kind of companionship in sorrow, and, as though the confession had burst from her unawares, avow that Sir William's temper was more than human nature was called upon to submit to, and that years only added to those violent outbursts of passion which made the existence of all around him a perpetual martyrdom. These always wound up with some sweet congratulations on "Tom's good fortune in his life of peaceful retirement," and the "tranquil pleasures of that charming spot of which every one tells me such wonders, and which the hope of visiting is one of my most entrancing daydreams." We give the passage textually, because it occurred without a change of a word thus in no less than five different letters.

This formal repetition of a phrase, and certain mistakes she made about the names of his children, first opened Lendrick's eyes as to the sincerity and affection of his correspondent, for he was the least suspicious of men, and regarded distrust as a disgrace to him who entertained it.

Over all these things now did he ponder during this long dreary day. He did not like to go out lest he should meet old acquaintances and be interrogated about his father, of whom he knew less than almost every one. He shunned the tone of compassionate interest men met him with, and he dreaded even the old faces that reminded him of the past. He could not read:

he tried, but could not. After a few minutes he found that his thoughts wandered off from the book and centred on his own concerns, till his head ached with the weary round of those difficulties which came ever back, and back, and back again undiminished, unrelieved, and unsolved. The embarrassments of life are not, like chess problems, to be resolved by a skilful combination: they are to be encountered by temper, by patience, by daring at one time, by submission at another, by a careful consideration of a man's own powers, and by a clear-sighted estimate of his neighbors; and all these exercised not beforehand, nor in retirement, but on the very field itself where the conflict is raging and the fight at its hottest.

It was late at night when Beattie returned home, and entered the study where Lendrick sat awaiting him. "I am very late, Tom," said he, as he threw himself into an arm-chair, like one fatigued and exhausted; "but it was impossible to get away. Never in all my life have I seen him so full of anecdote, so abounding in pleasant recollections, so ready-witted, and so brilliant. I declare to you that if I could but recite the things he said, or give them even with a faint semblance of the way he told them, it would be the most amusing page of bygone Irish history. It was a grand review of all the celebrated men whom he remembered in his youth, from the eccentric Lord Bristol, the Bishop of Down, to O'Connell and Shiel. Nor did his own self-estimate, high as it was, make the picture in which he figured less striking, nor less memorable his concluding words, as he said, 'These fellows are

all in history, Beattie, – every man of them. There are statues to them in our highways, and men visit the spots that gave them birth; and here am I, second to none of them. Trinity College and the Four Courts will tell you if I speak in vanity; and here am I; and the only question about me is, when I intend to vacate the bench, when it will be my good pleasure to resign – they are not particular which – my judgeship or my life. But, sir, I mean not to do either; I mean to live and protest against the inferiority of the men around me, and the ingratitude of the country that does not know how to appreciate the one man of eminence it possesses.' I assure you, Tom, vain and insolent as the speech was, as I listened I thought it was neither. There was a haughty dignity about him, to which his noble bead and his deep sonorous voice and his commanding look lent effect that overcame all thought of attributing to such a man any over-estimate of his powers."

"And this note that he wished to show you, – what was it?"

"Oh, the note was a few lines written in an adjoining room by Balfour, the Viceroy's secretary. It seems that his Excellency, finding all other seductions fail, thought of approaching your father through you."

"Through *me!* It was a bright inspiration."

"Yes; he sent Balfour to ask if the Chief Baron would feel gratified by the post of Hospital Inspector at the Cape being offered to you. It is worth eight hundred a year, and a house."

"Well, what answer did he give?" asked Lendrick, eagerly.

"He directed Balfour, who only saw Lady Lendrick, to reduce

the proposal to writing. I don't fancy that the accomplished young gentleman exactly liked the task, but he did not care to refuse, and so he sat down and wrote one of the worst notes I ever read."

"Worst – in what way?"

"In every way. It was scarcely intelligible, without a previous knowledge of its contents, and so worded as to imply that when the Chief Baron had acceded to the proposal, he had so bound himself in gratitude to the Government that all honorable retreat was closed to him. I wish you saw your father's face when he read it. 'Beattie,' said he, 'I have no right to say Tom must refuse this offer; but if he should do so, I will make the document you see there be read in the House, and my name is not William Lendrick if it do not cost them more than they are prepared for. Go now and consult your friend;' it was so he called you. 'If his wants are such that this place is of consequence to him, let him accept it. I shall not ask his reasons for whatever course he may take. *My* reply is already written, and to his Excellency in person.' This he said in a way to imply that its tone was one not remarkable for conciliation or courtesy.

"I thought the opportunity a favorable one to say that you were in town at the moment, that the accounts of his illness had brought you up, and that you were staying at my house.

"'The sooner will you be able to communicate with him, sir,' said he, haughtily."

"No more than that!"

"No more, except that he added, 'Remember, sir, his

acceptance or his refusal is to be his own act, not to be intimated in any way to me, nor to come through me.'"

"This is unnecessary harshness," said Lendrick, with a quivering lip; "there was no need to tell me how estranged we are from each other."

"I fancied I could detect a struggle with himself in all his sternness; and his hand trembled when I took it to say 'good-bye.' I was going to ask if you might not be permitted to see him, even for a brief moment; but I was afraid, lest in refusing he might make a reconciliation still more remote, and so I merely said, 'May I leave you those miniatures I showed you a few days ago? 'His answer was, 'You may leave them, sir.'

"As I came down to the hall, I met Lady Lendrick. She was in evening dress, going out, but had evidently waited to Catch me as I passed.

"'You find the Chief much better, don't you?' asked she. I bowed and assented.. 'And he will be better still,' added she, 'when all these anxieties are over.' She saw that I did not or would not apprehend her meaning, and added, 'I mean about this resignation, which, of course, you will advise him to. The Government are really behaving so very well, so liberal, and withal so delicate. If they had been our own people, I doubt if they would have shown anything like the same generosity.'

"'I have heard of nothing but the offer to Dr. Lendrick,' said I.

"She seemed confused, and moved on; and then recovering herself, said, 'And a most handsome offer it is. I hope he thinks

so.'

"With this we parted, and I believe now I have told you almost word for word everything that occurred concerning you."

"And what do *you* say to all this, Beattie?" asked Lendrick, in a half-sad tone.

"I say that if in your place, Tom, I would accept. It may be that the Chief Baron will interpose and say, Don't go; or it may be that your readiness to work for your bread should conciliate him; he has long had the impression that you are indisposed to exertion, and too fond of your own ease."

"I know it, – I know it; Lady Lendrick has intimated as much to me."

"At all events, you can make no mistake in entertaining the project; and certainly the offer is not to be despised."

"It is of him, and of him alone, I am thinking, Beattie. If he would let me see him, admit me once more on my old terms of affection, I would go anywhere, do anything that he counselled. Try, my dear friend, to bring this about; do your best for me, and remember I will subscribe to any terms, submit to anything, if he will only be reconciled to me."

"It will be hard if we cannot manage this somehow," said Beattie; "but now let us to bed. It is past two o'clock. Good-night, Tom; sleep well, and don't dream of the Cape or the Caffres."

CHAPTER VII. THE FOUNTAIN OF HONOR

That ancient and incongruous pile which goes by the name of the Castle in Dublin, and to which Irishmen very generally look as the well from which all honors and places flow, is not remarkable for either the splendor or space it affords to the inmates beneath its roof. Upheld by a great prestige perhaps, as in the case of certain distinguished people, who affect a humble exterior and very simple belongings, it may deem that its own transcendent importance has no need of accessories. Certainly the ugliness of its outside is in noway unbalanced by the meanness within; and even the very highest of those who claim its hospitality are lodged in no-princely fashion.

In a corner of the old red brick quadrangle, to the right of the state entrance, in a small room whose two narrow windows looked into a lane, sat a very well-dressed young-gentleman at a writing-table. Short, and disposed to roundness in face as well as figure, Mr. Cholmondely Balfour scarcely responded in appearance to his imposing name. Nature had not been as bountiful, perhaps, as Fortune; for while he was rich, well born, and considerably gifted in abilities, his features were unmistakably common and vulgar, and all the aids of dress could not atone for the meanness in his general look. Had he simply

accepted his image as a thing to be quietly borne and submitted to, the case might not have been so very bad; but he took it as something to be corrected, changed, and ameliorated, and the result was a perpetual struggle to make the most ordinary traits and commonplace features appear the impress of one on whom Nature had written gentleman. It would have been no easy task to have imposed on him in a question of his duty. He was the private secretary of the Viceroy, who was his maternal uncle. It would have been a tough task to have misled or deceived him in any matter open to his intelligence to examine; but upon this theme there was not the inventor of a hair-wash, a skin-paste, a whisker-dye, or a pearl-powder that might not have led him captive. A bishop might have found difficulty in getting audience of him, – a barber might have entered unannounced; and while the lieutenant of a county sat waiting in the antechamber, the tailor, with a new waistcoat pattern, walked boldly into the august presence. Entering life by that *petite porte* of politics, an Irish office, he had conceived a very humble estimate of the people amongst whom he was placed. Regarding his extradition from Whitehall and its precincts as a sort of probationary banishment, he felt, however, its necessity; and as naval men are accredited with two years of service for every one year on the coast of Africa, Mr. Balfour was aware that a grateful Government could equally recognize the devotion of him who gave some of the years of his youth to the Fernando Po of statecraft.

This impression, being rarely personal in its consequences,

was not of much moment; but it was conjoined with a more serious error, which was to imagine that all rule and governance in Ireland should be carried on with a Machiavellian subtlety. The people, he had heard, were quick-witted; he must therefore out-manoeuvre them. Jobbery had been, he was told, the ruin of Ireland; he would show its inefficiency by the superior skill with which he could wield its weapon. To be sure his office was a very minor one, its influence very restricted, but Mr. Balfour was ambitious; he was a Viceroy's nephew; he had sat for months in the House, from which he had been turned out on a petition. He had therefore social advantages to build on, abilities to display, and wrongs to avenge; and as a man too late for the train speculates during the day how far on his road he might have been by this time or by that, so did Mr. Balfour continually keep reminding himself how, but for that confounded petition, he might now have been a Treasury this or a Board of Trade that, – a corporal, in fact, in that great army whose commissioned officers are amongst the highest in Europe.

Let us now present him to our reader, as he lay back in his chair, and by a hand-bell summoned his messenger.

"I say, Watkins, when Clancey calls about those trousers show him in, and send some one over to the packet-office about the phosphorus blacking; you know we are on the last jar of it. If the Solicitor-General should come – "

"He is here, sir; he has been waiting these twenty minutes. I told him you were with his Excellency."

"So I was, – so I always am," said he, throwing a half-smoked cigar into the fire. "Admit him."

A pale, care-worn, anxious-looking man, whose face was not without traces of annoyance at the length of time he had been kept waiting, now entered and sat down.

"Just where we were yesterday, Pemberton," said Balfour, as he rose and stood with his back to the fire, the tails of his gorgeous dressing-gown hanging over his arms. "Intractable as he ever was; he won't die, and he won't resign."

"His friends say he is perfectly willing to resign if you agree to his terms."

"That may be possible; the question is, What are his terms? Have you a precedent of a Chief Baron being raised to the peerage?"

"It's not, as I understand, the peerage he insists on; he inclines to a moneyed arrangement."

"We are too poor, Pemberton, – we are too poor. There's a deep gap in our customs this quarter. It's reduction we must think of, not outlay."

"If the changes *are* to be made," said the other, with a tone of impatience, "I certainly ought to be told at once, or I shall have no time left for my canvass."

"An Irish borough, Pemberton, – an Irish borough requires so little," said Balfour, with a compassionate smile.

"Such is not the opinion over here, sir," said Pemberton, stiffly; "and I might even suggest some caution in saying it."

"Caution is the badge of all our tribe," said Balfour, with a burlesque gravity. "By the way, Pemberton, his Excellency is greatly disappointed at the issue of these Cork trials; why did n't you hang these fellows?"

"Juries can no more be coerced here than in England; they brought them in not guilty."

"We know all that, and we ask you why? There certainly was little room for doubt in the evidence."

"When you have lived longer in Ireland, Mr. Balfour, you will learn that there are other considerations in a trial than the testimony of the witnesses."

"That's exactly what I said to his Excellency; and I remarked, 'If Pemberton comes into the House, he must prepare for a sharp attack about these trials.'"

"And it is exactly to ascertain if I am to enter Parliament that I have come here to-day," said the other, angrily.

"Bring me the grateful tidings that the Lord Chief Baron has joined his illustrious predecessors in that distinguished court, I 'll answer you in five minutes."

"Beattie declares he is better this morning. He says that he has in all probability years of life before him."

"There 's nothing so hard to kill as a judge, except it be an archbishop. I believe a sedentary life does it; they say if a fellow will sit still and never move he may live to any age."

Pemberton took an impatient turn up and down the room, and then wheeling about directly in front of Balfour, said, "If

his Excellency knew, perhaps, that I do not want the House of Commons – "

"Not want the House, – not wish to be in Parliament?"

"Certainly not. If I enter the House, it is as a law-officer of the Crown; personally it is no object to me."

"I'll not tell him that, Pem. I'll keep your secret safe, for I tell you frankly it would ruin you to reveal it."

"It's no secret, sir; you may proclaim it, – you may publish it in the 'Gazette,' But really we are wasting much valuable time here. It is now two o'clock, and I must go down to Court. I have only to say that if no arrangement be come to before this time to-morrow – " He stopped short. Another word might have committed him, but he pulled up in time.

"Well, what then?" asked Balfour, with a half smile.

"I have heard you pride yourself, Mr. Balfour," said the other, recovering, "on your skill in nice negotiation; why not try what you could do with the Chief Baron?"

"Are there women in the family?" said Balfour, caressing his moustache.

"No; only his wife."

"I 've seen her," said he, contemptuously.

"He quarrelled with his only son, and has not spoken to him, I believe, for nigh thirty years, and the poor fellow is struggling on as a country doctor somewhere in the west."

"What if we were to propose to do something for him? Men are often not averse to see those assisted whom their own pride

refuses to help."

"I scarcely suspect you 'll acquire his gratitude that way."

"We don't want his gratitude, we want his place. I declare I think the idea a good one. There's a thing now at the Cape, an inspectorship of something, – Hottentots or hospitals, I forget which. His Excellency asked to have the gift of it; what if we were to appoint this man?"

"Make the crier of his Court a Commissioner in Chancery, and Baron Lendrick will be more obliged to you," said Pemberton, with a sneer. "He is about the least forgiving man I ever knew or heard of."

"Where is this son of his to be found?"

"I saw him yesterday walking with Dr. Beattie. I have no doubt Beattie knows his address. But let me warn you once more against the inutility of the step you would take. I doubt if the old Judge would as much as thank you."

Balfour turned round to the glass and smiled sweetly at himself, as though to say that he had heard of some one who knew how to make these negotiations successful, – a fellow of infinite readiness, a clever fellow, but withal one whose good looks and distinguished air left even his talents in the background.

"I think I 'll call and see the Chief Baron myself," said he. "His Excellency sends twice a day to inquire, and I 'll take the opportunity to make him a visit, – that is, if he will receive me."

"It is doubtful. At all events, let me give you one hint for your guidance. Neither let drop Mr. Attorney's name nor mine in your

conversation; avoid the mention of any one whose career might be influenced by the Baron's retirement; and talk of him less as a human being than as an institution that is destined to endure as long as the British constitution."

"I wish it was a woman – if it was only a woman I had to deal with, the whole affair might be deemed settled."

"If you should be able to do anything before the mail goes out to-night, perhaps you will inform me," said Pem-berton, as he bowed and left the room. "And these are the men they send over here to administer the country!" muttered he, as he descended the stairs, – "such are the intelligences that are to rule Ireland! Was it Voltaire who said there was nothing so inscrutable in all the ways of Providence as the miserable smallness of those creatures to whom the destiny of nations was committed?"

Ruminating over this, he hastened on to a *nisi prius* case.

CHAPTER VIII. A PUZZLING COMMISSION

As Colonel Cave re-entered his quarters after morning parade in the Royal Barracks of Dublin, he found the following letter, which the post had just delivered. It was headed "Strictly Private," with three dashes under the words.

"Holt-Trafford.

"My dear Colonel Cave, – Sir Hugh is confined to bed with a severe attack of gout, – the doctors call it flying gout. He suffers greatly, and his nerves are in a state of irritation that makes all attempt at writing impossible. This will be my apology for obtruding upon you, though, perhaps, the cause in which I write might serve for excuse. We are in the deepest anxiety about Lionel. You are already aware how heavily his extravagance has cost us. His play-debts amounted to above ten thousand pounds, and all the cleverness of Mr. Joel has not been able to compromise with the tradespeople for less than as much more; nor are we yet done with demands from various quarters. It is not, however, of these that I desire to speak. Your kind offer to take him into your own regiment, and exercise the watchful supervision of a parent, has relieved us of much anxiety, and his own sincere affection for you is the strongest assurance we can have that the step has been a wise one. Our present uneasiness has

however a deeper source than mere pecuniary embarrassment. The boy – he is very little more than a boy in years – has fallen in love, and gravely writes to his father for consent that he may marry. I assure you the shock brought back all Sir Hugh's most severe symptoms; and his left eye was attacked with an inflammation such as Dr. Gole says he never saw equalled. So far as the incoherency of his letter will permit us to guess, the girl is a person in a very humble condition of life, the daughter of a country doctor, of course without family or fortune. That he made her acquaintance by an accident, as he informs us, is also a reason to suppose that they are not people in society. The name, as well as I can decipher it, is Lendrich or Hendrich, – neither very distinguished!

"Now, my dear Colonel, even to a second son, such an alliance would be perfectly intolerable, – totally at variance with all his father's plans for him, and inconsistent with the station he should occupy. But there are other considerations, – too sad ones, too melancholy indeed to be spoken of, except where the best interests of a family are to be regarded, which press upon us here. The last accounts of George from Madeira leave us scarcely a hope. The climate, from which so much was expected, has done nothing. The season has been unhappily most severe, and the doctors agree in declaring that the malady has not yielded in any respect. You will see, therefore, what a change any day may accomplish in Lionel's prospects, and how doubly important it is that he should contract no ties inconsistent with a station of

no mean importance. Not that these considerations would weigh with Lionel in the least: he was always headstrong, rash, and self-willed; and if he were, or fancied that he were, bound in honor to do a thing, I know well that all persuasions would be unavailing to prevent him. I cannot believe, however, that matters can have gone so far here. This acquaintanceship must be of the very shortest; and however designing and crafty such people may be, there will surely be some means of showing them that their designs are impracticable, and of a nature only to bring disappointment and disgrace upon themselves. That Sir Hugh would give his consent is totally out of the question, – a thing not to be thought of for a moment; indeed I may tell you in confidence that his first thought on reading L.'s letter was to carry out a project to which George had already consented, and by which the entail should be cut off, and our third son, Harry, in that case would inherit. This will show you to what extent his indignation would carry him.

"Now what is to be done? for, really, it is but time lost in deploring when prompt action alone can save us. Do you know, or do you know any one who does know, these Hendrichs or Lendrichs – who are they, what are they? Are they people to whom I could write myself, or are they in that rank in life which would enable us to make some sort of compromise? Again, could you in anyway obtain L.'s confidence, and make him open his heart to you *first?* This is the more essential, because the moment he hears of anything like coercion or pressure, his whole

spirit will rise in resistance, and he will be totally unmanageable. You have perhaps more influence over him than any one else, and even your influence he would resent if he suspected any dominance.

"I am madly impatient to hear what you will suggest. Will it be to see these people, to reason with them, to explain to them the fruitlessness of what they are doing? Will it be to talk to the girl herself?

"My first thought was to send for Lionel, as his father was so ill, but on consideration I felt that a meeting between them might be the thing of all others to be avoided. Indeed, in Sir Hugh's present temper, I dare not think of the consequences.

"Might it be advisable to get Lionel attached to some foreign station? If so, I am sure I could manage it – only, would he go? there 's the question, – would he go? I am writing in such distress of mind, and so hurriedly too, that I really do not know what I have set down and what I have omitted. I trust, however, there is enough of this sad case before you to enable you to counsel me, or, what is much better, act for me. I wish I could send you L.'s letter, but Sir Hugh has put it away, and I cannot lay my hand on it. Its purport, however, was to obtain authority from us to approach this girl's relations as a suitor, and to show that his intentions were known to and concurred in by his family. The only gleam of hope in the epistle was his saying, 'I have not the slightest reason to believe she would accept me, but the approval of my friends will certainly give me the best chance.'

"Now, my dear Colonel, compassionate my anxiety, and write to me at once – something – anything. Write such a letter as Sir Hugh may see; and if you have anything secret or confidential, enclose it as a separate slip. Was it not unfortunate that we refused that Indian appointment for him? All this misery might have been averted. You may imagine how Sir Hugh feels this conduct the more bitterly, coming, as I may say, on the back of all his late indiscretions.

"Remember, finally, happen what may, this project must not go on. It is a question of the boy's whole future and life. To defy his father is to disinherit himself; and it is not impossible that this might be the most effectual argument you could employ with these people who now seek to entangle him.

"I have certainly no reason to love Ireland. It was there that my cousin Cornwallis married that dreadful creature who is now suing him for cruelty, and exposing the family throughout England.

"Sir Hugh gave directions last week about lodging the purchase-money for his company, but he wrote a few lines to Cox's last night – to what purport I cannot say – not impossibly to countermand it. What affliction all this is!"

As Colonel Cave read over this letter for a second time, he was not without misgivings about the even small share to which he had contributed in this difficulty. It was evidently during the short leave he had granted that this acquaintanceship had been formed; and Fossbrooke's companionship was the very last thing

in the world to deter a young and ardent fellow from anything high-flown or romantic. "I ought never to have thrown them together," muttered he, as he walked his room in doubt and deliberation.

He rang his bell and sent for the adjutant. "Where 's Trafford?" asked he.

"You gave him three days' leave yesterday, sir. He's gone down to that fishing-village where he went before."

"Confound the place! Send for him at once – telegraph. No – let us see – his leave is up to-morrow?"

"The next day at ten he was to report."

"His father is ill, – an attack of gout," muttered the Colonel, to give some color to his agitated manner. "But it is better, perhaps, not to alarm him. The seizure seems passing off."

"He said something about asking for a longer term; he wants a fortnight, I think. The season is just beginning now."

"He shall not have it, sir. Take good care to warn him not to apply. It will breed discontent in the regiment to see a young fellow who has not been a year with us obtain a leave every ten or fifteen days."

"If it were any other than Trafford, there would be plenty of grumbling. But he is such a favorite!"

"I don't know that a worse accident could befall any man. Many a fine fellow has been taught selfishness by the over-estimate others have formed of him. See that you keep him to his duty, and that he is to look for no favoritism."

The Colonel did not well know why he said this, nor did he stop to think what might come of it. It smacked, to his mind, however, of something prompt, active, and energetic.

His next move was to write a short note to Lady Trafford, acknowledging hers, and saying that, Lionel being absent, – he did not add where, – nothing could be done till he should see him. "To-morrow – next day at farthest – I will report progress. I cannot believe the case to be so serious as you suppose; at all events, count upon me."

"Stay!" cried he to the adjutant, who stood in the window awaiting further instructions; "on second thoughts, do telegraph. Say, 'Return at once.' This will prepare him for something."

CHAPTER IX. A BREAKFAST AT THE VICARAGE

On the day after the picnic Sir Brook went by invitation to breakfast with the vicar.

"When a man asks you to dinner," said Fossbrooke, "he generally wants you to talk; when he asks you to breakfast, he wants to talk to you."

Whatever be the truth of this adage generally, it certainly-had its application in the present case. The vicar wanted very much to talk to Sir Brook.

As they sat, therefore, over their coffee and devilled kidneys, chatting over the late excursion and hinting at another, the vicar suddenly said: "By the way, I want you to tell me something of the young fellow who was one of us yesterday. Tobin, our doctor here, who is a perfect commission-agent for scandal, says he is the greatest scamp going; that about eight or ten months ago the 'Times' was full of his exploits in bankruptcy; that his liabilities were tens of thousands, – assets *nil*. In a word, that, notwithstanding his frank, honest look, and his unaffected manner, he is the most accomplished scapegrace of the age."

"And how much of this do you believe?" asked Sir Brook, as he helped himself to coffee.

"That is not so easy to reply to; but I tell you, if you ask me,

that I 'd rather not believe one word of it."

"Nor need you. His Colonel told me something about the young fellow's difficulties; he himself related the rest. He went most recklessly into debt; betted largely on races, and lost; lent freely, and lost; raised at ruinous interest, and renewed at still more ruinous; but his father has paid every shilling of it out of that fortune which one day was to have come to him, so that Lionel's thirty thousand pounds is now about eight thousand. I have put the whole story into the fewest possible words, but that's the substance of it."

"And has it cured him of extravagance?"

"Of course it has not. How should it? *You* have lived some more years in the world than he has, and I a good many more than *you*, and will you tell me that time has cured either of us of any of our old shortcomings? *Non sum quails eram* means, I can't be as wild as I used to be."

"No, no; I won't agree to that. I protest most strongly against the doctrine. Many men are wiser through experience, and, consequently, better."

"I sincerely believe I knew the world better at four-and-twenty than I know it now. The reason why we are less often deceived in after than in early life is not that we are more crafty or more keen-eyed. It is simply because we risk less. Let us hazard as much at sixty as we once did at six-and-twenty, and we 'll lose as heavily."

The vicar paused a few moments over the other's words, and

then said, “To come back to this young man, I half suspect he has formed an attachment to Lucy, and that he is doing his utmost to succeed in her favor.”

“And is there anything wrong in that, doctor?”

“Not positively wrong; but there is what may lead to a great deal of unhappiness. Who is to say how Trafford’s family would like the connection? Who is to answer for Lendrick’s approval of Trafford?”

“You induce me to make a confidence I have no right to impart; but I rely so implicitly on your discretion. I will tell you what was intrusted to me as a secret: Trafford has already written to his father to ask his consent.”

“Without speaking to Lendrick? without even being sure of Lucy’s?”

“Yes, without knowing anything of either; but on my advice he has first asked his father’s permission to pay his addresses to the young lady. His position with his family is peculiar; he is a younger son, but not exactly as free as most younger sons feel to act for themselves. I cannot now explain this more fully, but it is enough if you understand that he is entirely dependent on his father. When I came to know this, and when I saw that he was becoming desperately in love, I insisted on this appeal to his friends before he either entangled Lucy in a promise, or even made any declaration himself. He showed me the letter before he posted it. It was all I could wish. It is not a very easy task for a young fellow to tell his father he ‘s in love; but he, in the very

frankness of his nature, acquitted himself well and manfully."

"And what answer has he received?"

"None as yet. Two posts have passed. He might have heard through either of them; but no letter has come, and he is feverishly uneasy and anxious."

The vicar was silent, but a grave motion of his head implied doubt and fear.

"Yes," said Sir Brook, answering the gesture, – "yes, I agree with you. The Traffords are great folk in their own country. Trafford was a strong place in Saxon times. They have pride enough for all this blood, and wealth enough for both pride and blood."

"They 'd find their match in Lendrick, quiet and simple as he seems," said the vicar.

"Which makes the matter worse. Who is to give way? Who is to *céder le pas?*"

"I am not so sure I should have advised that letter. I am inclined to think I would have counselled more time, more consideration. Fathers and mothers are prudently averse to these loves at first sight, and they are merciless in dealing with what they deem a mere passing sentiment."

"Better that than suffer him to engage the girl's affections, and then learn that he must either desert her or marry her against the feeling of his family. Let us have a stroll in the garden. I have made you one confidence; I will now make you another."

They lit their cigars, and strolled out into a long alley fenced

on one side by a tall dense hedge of laurels, and flanked on the other by a low wall, over which the view took in the wide reach of the river and the distant mountains of Scariff and Meelick.

"Was not that where we picnicked yesterday?" asked Sir Brook, pointing to an island in the distance.

"No; you cannot see Holy Island from this."

Sir Brook smoked on for some minutes without a word; at last, with a sort of abruptness, he said, "She was so like her, not only in face and figure, but her manner; the very tone of her voice was like; and then that half-caressing, half-timid way she has in conversation, and, more than all, the sly quietness with which she caps you when you fancy that the smart success is all your own."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of another Lucy," said Sir Brook, with a deep melancholy. "Heaven grant that the resemblance follow them not in their lives as in their features! It was that likeness, however, which first attracted me towards Miss Lendrick. The first moment I saw her it overcame me; as I grew to know her better, it almost confused me, and made me jumble in your hearing things of long ago with the present. Time and space were both forgotten, and I found my mind straying away to scenes in the Himalaya with those I shall never see more. It was thus that, one day carried away by this delusion, I chanced to call her Lucy, and she laughingly begged me not to retract it, but so to call her always." For some minutes he was silent, and then resumed: "I don't know if you ever heard of a Colonel Frank Dillon, who

served on Napier's staff in Scinde. Fiery Frank was his nickname among his comrades, but it only applied to him on the field of battle, and with an enemy in front. Then he was indeed fiery, – the excitement rose to almost madness, and led him to acts of almost incredible daring. At Meanee he was nearly cut to pieces, and as he lay wounded, and to all appearance dying, he received a lance-wound through the chest that the surgeon declared must prove fatal. He lived, however, for eight months after, – he lived long enough to reach the Himalayas, where his daughter, an only child, joined him from England. On her way out she became acquainted with a young officer, who was coming out as aide-de-camp to the Governor-General. They were constantly thrown together on the journey, and his attentions to her soon showed the sentiments he had conceived for her. In fact, very soon after Lucy had joined her father, Captain Sewell appeared 'in the Hills' to make a formal demand of her in marriage.

"I was there at the time, and I remember well poor Dillon's expression of disappointment after the first meeting with him. His daughter's enthusiastic description of his looks, his manner, his abilities, his qualities generally, had perhaps prepared him for too much. Indeed, Lucy's own intense admiration for the soldierlike character of her father's features assisted the mistake; for, as Dillon said, 'There must be a dash of the *sabreur* in the fellow that will win Lucy.' I came into Dillon's room immediately after the first interview. The instant I caught his eye I read what was going on in his brain. 'Sit down here, Brook,' cried he, 'sit

in my chair here;' and he arose painfully as he spoke. 'I'll show you the man.' With this he hobbled over to a table where his cap lay, and, placing it rakishly on one side of his head, he stuck his eyeglass in one eye, and, with a hand in his trousers-pocket, lounged forward towards where I sat, saying, 'How d' ye do, Colonel? Wound doing better, I hope. The breezy climate up here soon set you up.' 'Familiar enough this, sir,' cried Dillon, in his own stern voice; 'but without time to breathe, as it were, – before almost I had exchanged a greeting with him, – he entered upon the object of his journey. I scarcely heard a word he said; I knew its purport, – I could mark the theme, – but no more. It was not the fellow himself that filled my mind; my whole thoughts were upon my daughter, and I went on repeating to myself, "Good heavens! is this Lucy's choice? Am I in a trance? Is it this contemptible cur (for he was a cur, sir) that has won the affections of my darling, high-hearted, generous girl? Is the romantic spirit that I have so loved to see in her to bear no better fruit than this? Does the fellow realize to her mind the hero that fills men's thoughts?" I was so overcome, so excited, so confused, Brook, that I begged him to leave me for a while, that one of my attacks of pain was coming on, and that I should not be able to converse farther He said something about trying one of his cheroots, – some impertinence or other, I forget what; but he left me, and I, who never knew a touch of girlish weakness in my life, who when a child had no mood of softness in my nature, – I felt the tears trickling along my cheeks, and my eyes dimmed

with them.' My poor friend," continued Fossbrooke, "could not go on; his emotions mastered him, and he sat with his head buried between his hands and in silence. At last he said, 'She 'll not give him up, Brook; I have spoken to her, – she actually loves him. Good heavens!' he cried, 'how little do we know about our children's hearts! how far astray are we as to the natures that have grown up beside us, imbibing, as we thought, our hopes, our wishes, and our prejudices! We awake some day to discover that some other influence has crept in to undo our teachings, and that the fidelity on which we would have staked our lives has changed allegiance.'

"He talked to me long in this strain, and I saw that the effects of this blow to all his hopes had made themselves deeply felt on his chance of recovery. It only needed a great shock to depress him to make his case hopeless. Within two months after his daughter's arrival he was no more.

"I became Lucy's guardian. Poor Dillon gave me the entire control over her future fortune, and left me to occupy towards her the place he had himself held. I believe that next to her father I held the best place in her affections, – of such affections, I mean, as are accorded to a parent. I was her godfather, and from her earliest infancy she had learned to love me. The reserve – it was positive coldness – with which Dillon had always treated Sewell had caused a certain distance, for the first time in their lives, between the father and daughter. She thought, naturally enough, that her father was unjust; that, unaccustomed to the new tone

of manners which had grown up amongst young men, – their greater ease, their less rigid observance of ceremonial, their more liberal self-indulgence, – he was unfairly severe upon her lover. She was annoyed, too, that Sewells attempts to conciliate the old man should have turned out such complete failures. But none of these prejudices extended to me, and she counted much on the good understanding that she expected to find grow up between us.

"If I could have prevented the marriage, I would. I learned many things of the man that I disliked. There is no worse sign of a man than to be at the same time a man of pleasure and friendless. These he was, – he was foremost in every plan of amusement and dissipation, and yet none liked him. Vain fellows get quizzed for their vanity, and selfish men laughed at for their selfishness, and close men for their avarice; but there is a combination of vanity, egotism, small craftiness, and self-preservation in certain fellows that is totally repugnant to all companionship. Their lives are a series of petty successes, not owing to any superior ability or greater boldness of daring, but to a studious outlook for small opportunities. They are ever alive to know the 'right man,' to be invited to the 'right house,' to say the 'right thing.' Never linked with whatever is in disgrace or misfortune, they are always found backing the winning horse, if not riding him.

"Such men as these, so long as the world goes well with them, and events turn out fortunately, are regarded simply as sharp, shrewd fellows, with a keen eye to their own interests. When,

however, the weight of any misfortune comes, when the time arrives that they have to bear up against the hard pressure of life, these fellows come forth in their true colors, swindlers and cheats.

"Such was he. Finding that I was determined to settle the small fortune her father had left her inalienably on herself, he defeated me by a private marriage. He then launched out into a life of extravagance to which their means bore no proportion. I was a rich man in those days, and knew nothing better to do with my money than assist the daughter of my oldest friend. The gallant Captain did not balk my good intentions. He first accepted, he then borrowed, and last of all he forged my name. I paid the bills and saved him, not for his sake, I need not tell you, but for hers, who threw herself at my feet, and implored me not to see them ruined. Even this act of hers he turned to profit. He wrote to me to say that he knew his wife had been to my house, that he had long nurtured suspicions against me, – I that was many years older than her own father, – that for the future he desired all acquaintance should cease between us, and that I should not again cross his threshold.

"By what persuasions or by what menaces he led his wife to the step, I do not know; but she passed me when we met without a recognition. This was the hardest blow of all. I tried to write her a letter; but after a score of attempts I gave it up, and left the place.

"I never saw her for eight years. I wish I had not seen her then.

I am an old, hardened man of the world, one whom life has taught all its lessons to in the sternest fashion. I have been so baffled and beaten, and thrown back by all my attempts to think well of the world, that nothing short of a dogged resolution not to desert my colors has rescued me from a cold misanthropy; and yet, till I saw, I did not believe there was a new pang of misery my heart had not tasted. What? it is incredible, – surely that is not she who once was Lucy Dillon, – that bold-faced woman with lustrous eyes and rouged cheeks, – brilliant, indeed, and beautiful, but not the beauty that is allied to the thought of virtue, – whose every look is a wile, whose every action is entanglement. She was leaning on a great man's arm, and in the smile she gave him told me how she knew to purchase such distinctions. He noticed me, and shook my hand as I passed. I heard him tell her who I was; and I heard her say that I had been a hanger-on, a sort of dependant of her father's, but she never liked me! I tried to laugh, but the pain was too deep. I came away, and saw her no more."

He ceased speaking, and for some time they walked along side by side without a word. At last he broke out: "Don't believe the people who say that men are taught by anything they experience in life. Outwardly they may affect it. They may assume this or that manner. The heart cannot play the hypocrite, and no frequency of disaster diminishes the smart. The wondrous resemblance Miss Lendrick bears to Lucy Dillon renews to my memory the bright days of her early beauty, when her poor father would call her to sit down at his feet and read to him, that he

might gaze at will on her, weaving whole histories of future happiness and joy for her. 'Is it not like sunshine in the room to see her, Brook?' would he whisper to me. 'I only heard her voice as she passed under my window this morning, and I forgot some dark thought that was troubling me.' And there was no exaggeration in this. The sweet music of her tones "vibrated so softly on the ear, they soothed the sense, just as we feel soothed by the gentle ripple of a stream.

"All these times come back to me since I have been here, and I cannot tell you how the very sorrow that is associated with them has its power over me. Every one knows with what attachment the heart will cling to some little spot in a far-away land that reminds one of a loved place at home, – how we delight to bring back old memories, and how we even like to name old names, to cheat ourselves back into the past. So it is that I feel when I see this girl. The other Lucy was once as my daughter; so, too, do I regard her, and with this comes that dreadful sorrow I have told you of, giving my interest in her an intensity unspeakable. When I saw Trafford's attention to her, the only thing I thought of was how unlike he was to him who won the other Lucy. His frank, unaffected bearing, his fine, manly trustfulness, the very opposite to the other's qualities, made me his friend at once. When I say friend, I mean well-wisher, for my friendship now bears no other fruit. Time was when it was otherwise."

"What is it, William?" cried the vicar, as his servant came hurriedly forward.

"There 's a gentleman in the drawing-room, sir, wants to see Sir Brook Fossbrooke."

"Have I your leave?" said the old man, bowing low. "I 'll join you here immediately."

Within a few moments he was back again. "It was Trafford. He has just got a telegram to call him to his regiment. He suspects something has gone wrong; and seeing his agitation, I offered to go back with him. We start within an hour."

CHAPTER X. LENDRICK RECOUNTS HIS VISIT TO TOWN

The vicar having some business to transact in Limerick, agreed to go that far with Sir Brook and Trafford, and accompanied them to the railroad to see them off.

A down train from Dublin arrived as they were waiting, and a passenger, descending, hastily hurried after the vicar, and seized his hand. The vicar, in evident delight, forgot his other friends for a moment, and became deeply interested in the new-comer. "We must say good-bye, doctor," said Fossbrooke; "here comes our train."

"A thousand pardons, my dear Sir Brook. The unlooked-for arrival of my friend here – but I believe you don't know him. Lendrick, come here, I want to present you to Sir Brook Fossbrooke. Captain Trafford, Dr. Lendrick."

"I hope these gentlemen are not departing," said Lendrick, with the constraint of a bashful man.

"It is our misfortune to do so," said Sir Brook; "but I have passed too many happy hours in this neighborhood not to come back to it as soon as I can."

"I hope we shall see you. I hope I may have an opportunity of thanking you, Sir Brook."

"Dublin! Dublin! Dublin! get in, gentlemen: first class, this

way, sir," screamed a guard, amidst a thundering rumble, a scream, and a hiss. All other words were drowned, and with a cordial shake-hands the new friends parted.

"Is the younger man his son?" asked Lendrick; "I did not catch the name?"

"No; he's Trafford, a son of Sir Hugh Trafford, – a Lincolnshire man, isn't he?"

"I don't know. It was of the other I was thinking. I felt it so strange to see a man of whom when a boy I used to hear so much. I have an old print somewhere of two over-dressed 'Bloods,' as they were called in those days, with immense whiskers, styled 'Fossy and Fussy,' meaning Sir Brook and the Baron Geramb, a German friend and follower of the Prince."

"I suspect a good deal changed since that day, in person as well as purse," said the vicar, sadly.

"Indeed! I heard of his having inherited some immense fortune."

"So he did, and squandered every shilling of it."

"And the chicks are well, you tell me?" said Lendrick, whose voice softened as he talked of home and his children.

"Could n't be better. We had a little picnic on Holy Island yesterday, and only wanted yourself to have been perfectly happy. Lucy was for refusing at first."

"Why so?"

"Some notion she had that you would n't like it. Some idea about not doing in your absence anything that was not usual when

you are here."

"She is such a true girl, so loyal," said Lendrick, proudly.

"Well, I take the treason on my shoulders. I made her come. It was a delightful day, and we drank your health in as good a glass of Madeira as ever ripened in the sun. Now for your own news?"

"First let us get on the road. I am impatient to be back at home again. Have you your car here?"

"All is ready, and waiting for you at the gate."

As they drove briskly along, Lendrick gave the vicar a detailed account of his visit to Dublin. Passing over the first days, of which the reader already has heard something, we take up the story from the day on which Lendrick learned that his father would see him.

"My mind was so full of myself, doctor," said he, "of all the consequences which had followed from my father's anger with me, that I had no thought of anything else till I entered the room where he was. Then, however, as I saw him propped up with pillows in a deep chair, his face pale, his eyes colorless, and his head swathed up in a bandage after leeching, my heart sickened, alike with sorrow and shame at my great selfishness.

"I had been warned by Beattie on no account to let any show of feeling or emotion escape me, to be as cool and collected as possible, and in fact, he said, to behave as though I had seen him the day before.

"'Leave the room, Poynder,' said he to his man, 'and suffer no one to knock at the door – mind, not even to knock – till I

ring my bell.' He waited till the man withdrew, and then in a very gentle voice said, 'How are you, Tom? I can't give you my right hand, – the rebellious member has ceased to know me!' I thought I should choke as the words met me; I don't remember what I said, but I took my chair and sat down beside him.

"'I thought you might have been too much agitated, Tom, but otherwise I should have wished to have had your advice along with Beattie. I believe, on the whole, however, he has treated me well.'

"I assured him that none could have done more skilfully.

"The skill of the doctor with an old patient is the skill of an architect with an old wall. He must not breach it, or it will tumble to pieces.

"'Beattie is very able, sir,' said I.

"'No man is able,' replied he, quickly, 'when the question is to repair the wastes of time and years. Draw that curtain, and let me look at you. No; stand yonder, where the light is stronger. What! is it my eyes deceive me, – is your hair white?'

"'It has been so eight years, sir.'

"'And I had not a gray hair till my seventy-second year, – not one. I told Beattie, t' other day, that the race of the strong was dying out. Good heavens, how old you look! Would any one believe in seeing us that you could be my son?'

"'I feel perhaps even more than I look it, sir.'

"'I could swear you did. You are the very stamp of those fellows who plead guilty – "Guilty, my Lord; we throw ourselves

on the mercy of the court." I don't know how the great judgment-seat regards these pleas, – with *me* they meet only scorn. Give me the man who says, "Try me, test me." Drop that curtain, and draw the screen across the fire. Speak lower, too, my dear,' said he, in a weak soft voice; 'you suffer yourself to grow excited, and you excite me.'

"'I will be more cautious, sir,' said I.

"'What are these drops he is giving me? They have an acrid sweet taste.'

"'Aconite, sir; a weak solution.'

"'They say that our laws never forgot feudalism, but I declare I believe medicine has never been able to ignore alchemy: drop me out twenty, I see that your hand does not shake. Strange thought, is it not, to feel that a little phial like that could make a new Baron of the Exchequer? You have heard, I suppose, of the attempts – the indecent attempts – to induce me to resign. You have heard what they say of my age. They quote the registry of my baptism, as though it were the date of a conviction. I have yet to learn that the years a man has devoted to his country's service are counts in the indictment against his character. Age has been less merciful to me than to my fellows, – it has neither made me deaf to rancor nor blind to ingratitude. I told the Lord-Lieutenant so yesterday.'

"'You saw him then, sir?' asked I.

"'Yes, he was gracious enough to call here; he sent his secretary to ask if I would receive a visit from him. I thought that a little more tact might have been expected from a man in

his station, – it is the common gift of those in high places. I perceive,' added he, after a pause, 'you don't see what I mean. It is this: royalties, or mock royalties, for they are the same in this, condescend to these visits as deathbed attentions. They come to us with their courtesies as the priest comes with his holy cruet, only when they have the assurance that we are beyond recovery. His Excellency ought to have felt that the man to whom he proposed this attention was not one to misunderstand its significance.'

"'Did he remain long, sir?'

"'Two hours and forty minutes. I measured it by my watch.'

"'Was the fatigue not too much for you?'

"'Of course it was; I fainted before he got to his carriage. He twice rose to go away, but on each occasion I had something to say that induced him to sit down again. It was the whole case of Ireland we reviewed, – that is, I did. I deployed the six millions before him, and he took the salute. Yes, sir, education, religious animosities, land-tenure, drainage, emigration, secret societies, the rebel priest and the intolerant parson, even nationality and mendicant insolence, all marched past, and he took the salute! "And now, my Lord," said I, "it is the man who tells you these things, who has the courage to tell and the ability to display them, and it is this man for whose retirement your Ex-lency is so eager, that you have actually deigned to make him a visit, that he may carry away into the next world, perhaps, a pleasing memory of this; it is this man, I say, whom you propose to replace – and

by what, my Lord, and by whom? Will a mere lawyer, will any amount of *nisi prius* craft or precedent, give you the qualities you need on that bench, or that you need, sadly need, at this council-board? Go back, my Lord, and tell your colleagues of the Cabinet that Providence is more merciful than a Premier, and that the same overruling hand that has sustained me through this trial will uphold me, I trust, for years to serve my country, and save it for some time longer from your blundering legislation."

"'He stood up, sir, like a prisoner when under sentence; he stood up, sir, and as he bowed, I waved my adieu to him as though saying, You have heard me, and you are not to carry away from this place a hope, the faintest, that any change will come over the determination I have this day declared.

"'He went away, and I fainted. The exertion was too long sustained, too much for me. I believe, after all,' added he, with a smile, 'his Excellency bore it very little better. He told the Archbishop the same evening that he'd not go through another such morning for "the garter." Men in his station hear so little of truth that it revolts them like coarse diet. They 'd rather abstain altogether till forced by actual hunger to touch it. When they come to me, however, it is the only fare they will find before them.'

"There was a long pause after this," continued Lendrick. "I saw that the theme had greatly excited him, and I forbore to say a word, lest he should be led to resume it. 'Too old for the bench!' burst he out suddenly; 'my Lord, there are men who are never too

old, as there are those who are never too young. The oak is but a sapling when the pine is in decay. Is there that glut of intellect just now in England, are we so surfeited with ability that, to make room for the coming men, we, who have made our mark on the age, must retire into obscurity?' He tried to rise from his seat; his face was flushed, and his eyes flashing; he evidently forgot where he was, and with whom, for he sank back with a faint sigh, and said, 'Let us talk of it no more. Let us think of something else. Indeed, it was to talk of something else I desired to see you.' He went on, then, to say that he wished something could be done for me. His own means were, he said, sadly crippled; he spoke bitterly, resentfully, I thought. 'It is too long a story to enter on, and were it briefer, too disagreeable a one,' added he. 'I ought to be a rich man, and I am poor; I should be powerful, and I have no influence. All has gone ill with me.' After a silence, he continued, 'They have a place to offer you: the inspectorship, I think they call it, of hospitals at the Cape; it is worth, altogether, nigh a thousand a year, a thing not to be refused.'

"'The offer could only be made in compliment to you, sir; and if my acceptance were to compromise your position – '

"'Compromise *me!*' broke he in. 'I 'll take care it shall not. No man need instruct me in the art of self-defence, sir. Accept at once.'

"'I will do whatever you desire, sir,' was my answer.

"'Go out there yourself, alone, – at first, I mean. Let your boy continue his college career; the girl shall come to me.'

"'I have never been separated from my children, sir,' said I, almost trembling with anxiety.

"'Such separations are bearable,' added he, 'when it is duty dictates them, not disobedience.'

"He fixed his eyes sternly on me, and I trembled as I thought that the long score of years was at last come to the reckoning. He did not dwell on the theme, however, but in a tone of much gentler meaning, went on: 'It will be an act of mercy to let me see a loving face, to hear a tender voice. Your boy would be too rough for me.'

"'You would like him, sir. He is thoroughly truthful and honest.'

"'So he may, and yet be self-willed, be noisy, be over-redolent of that youth which age resents like outrage. Give me the girl, Tom; let her come here, and bestow some of those loving graces on the last hours of my life her looks show she should be rich in. For your sake she will be kind to me. Who knows what charm there may be in gentleness, even to a tiger-nature like mine? Ask her, at least, if she will make the sacrifice.'

"I knew not what to answer. If I could not endure the thought of parting from Lucy, yet it seemed equally impossible to refuse his entreaty, – old, friendless, and deserted as he was. I felt, besides, that my only hope of a real reconciliation with him lay through this road; deny him this, and it was clear he would never see me more. He said, too, it should only be for a season. I was to see how the place, the climate, suited for a residence. In a word,

every possible argument to reconcile me to the project rushed to my mind, and I at last said, 'Lucy shall decide, sir. I will set out for home at once, and you shall have her own answer.'

"'Uninfluenced, sir,' cried he, – 'mind that. If influence were to be used, I could perhaps tell her what might decide her at once; but I would not that pity should plead for me, till she should have seen if I be worth compassion! There is but one argument I will permit in my favor, – tell her that her picture has been my pleasantest companion these three long days. There it lies, always before me. Go now, and let me hear from you as soon as may be.' I arose, but somehow my agitation, do what I would, mastered me. It was so long since we had met! All the sorrows the long estrangement had cost me came to my mind, together with little touches of his kindness in long-past years, and I could not speak. 'Poor Tom! poor Tom!' said he, drawing me towards him; and he kissed me."

As Lendrick said this, emotion overcame him, and he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed bitterly. More than a mile of road was traversed before a word passed between them. "There they are, doctor! There 's Tom, there's Lucy! They are coming to meet me," cried he. "Good-bye, doctor; you 'll forgive me, I know, – goodbye;" and he sprang off the car as he spoke, while the vicar, respecting the sacredness of the joy, wheeled his horse round, and drove back towards the town.

CHAPTER XI. CAVE CONSULTS SIR BROOK

A few minutes after the Adjutant had informed Colonel Cave that Lieutenant Traflford had reported himself, Sir Brook entered the Colonel's quarters, eager to know what was the reason of the sudden recall of Traflford, and whether the regiment had been unexpectedly ordered for foreign service.

"No, no," said Cave, in some confusion. "We have had our turn of India and the Cape; they can't send us away again for some time. It was purely personal; it was, I may say, a private reason. You know," added he, with a slight smile, "I am acting as a sort of guardian to Trafford just now. His family sent him over to me, as to a reformatory."

"From everything I have seen of him, your office will be an easy one."

"Well, I suspect that, so far as mere wildness goes, – extravagance and that sort of thing, – he has had enough of it; but there are mistakes that a young fellow may make in life – mistakes in judgment – which will damage him more irreparably than all his derelictions against morality."

"That I deny, – totally, entirely deny. I know what you mean, – that is, I think I know what you mean; and if I guess aright, I am distinctly at issue with you on this matter."

"Perhaps I could convince you, notwithstanding. Here's a letter which I have no right to show you; it is marked 'Strictly confidential and private.' You shall read it, – nay, you must read it, – because you are exactly the man to be able to give advice on the matter. You like Traflford, and wish him well. Read that over carefully, and tell me what you would counsel."

Fossbrooke took out his spectacles, and, having seated himself comfortably, with his back to the light, began in leisurely fashion to peruse the letter. "It's his mother who writes," said he, turning to the signature, – "one of the most worldly women I ever met. She was a Lascelles. Don't you know how she married Trafford?"

"I don't remember, if I ever heard."

"It was her sister that Trafford wanted to marry, but she was ambitious to be a peeress; and as Bradbrook was in love with her, she told Sir Hugh, 'I have got a sister so like me nobody can distinguish between us. She 'd make an excellent wife for you. She rides far better than me, and she is n't half so extravagant. I 'll send for her.' She did so, and the whole thing was settled in a week."

"They have lived very happily together."

"Of course they have. They didn't 'go in,' as the speculators say, for enormous profits; they realized very fairly, and were satisfied. I wish her handwriting had been more cared for. What's this she says here about a subscription?"

"That 's supervision, – the supervision of a parent."

"Supervision of a fiddlestick! the fellow is six feet one inch

high, and seven-and-twenty years of age; he's quite beyond supervision. Ah! brought back all his father's gout, has he? When will people begin to admit that their own tempers have something to say to their maladies? I curse the cook who made the mulligatawny, but I forget that I ate two platefuls of it. So it's the doctor's daughter she objects to. I wish she saw her. I wish *you* saw her, Cave. You are an old frequenter of courts and drawing-rooms. I tell you you have seen nothing like this doctor's daughter since Laura Bedingfield was presented, and that was before your day."

"Every one has heard of the Beauty Bedingfield; but she was my mother's contemporary."

"Well, sir, her successors have not eclipsed her! This doctor's daughter, as your correspondent calls her, is the only rival of her that I have ever seen. As to wit and accomplishments, Laura could not compete with Lucy Lendrick."

"You know her, then?" asked the Colonel; and then added, "Tell me something about the family."

"With your leave, I will finish this letter first. Ah! here we have the whole secret. Lionel Trafford is likely to be that precious prize, an eldest son. Who could have thought that the law of entail could sway a mother's affections? 'Contract no ties inconsistent with his station.' This begins to be intolerable, Cave. I don't think I can go on."

"Yes, yes; read it through."

"She asks you if you know any one who knows these

Hendrichs or Lendrichs; tell her that you do; tell her that your friend is one of those men who have seen a good deal of life, heard more, too, than he has seen. She will understand that, and that his name is Sir Brook Fossbrooke, who, if needed, will think nothing of a journey over to Lincolnshire to afford her all the information she could wish for. Say this, Cave, and take my word for it, she will put very few more questions to you."

"That would be to avow I had already consulted with you. No, no; I must not do that."

"The wind-up of the epistle is charming. 'I have certainly no reason to love Ireland.' Poor Ireland! here is another infliction upon you. Let us hope you may never come to know that Lady Trafford cannot love you."

"Come, come, Fossbrooke, be just, be fair; there is nothing so very unreasonable in the anxiety of a mother that her son, who will have a good name and a large estate, should not share them both with a person beneath him."

"Why must she assume that this is the case, – why take it for granted that this girl must be beneath him? I tell you, sir, if a prince of the blood had fallen in love with her, it would be a reason to repeal the Royal Marriage Act."

"I declare, Fossbrooke, I shall begin to suspect that your own heart has not escaped scathless," said Cave, laughing.

The old man's face became crimson, but not with anger. As suddenly it grew pale; and in a voice of deep agitation he said, "When an old man like myself lays his homage at her feet, it is

not hard to believe how a young man might love her."

"How did you come to make this acquaintance?" said Cave, anxious to turn the conversation into a more familiar channel.

"We chanced to fail in with her brother on the river. We found him struggling with a fish far too large for his tackle, and which at last smashed his rod and got away. He showed not alone that he was a perfect angler, but that he was a fine-tempered fellow, who accepted his defeat manfully and well; he had even a good word for his enemy, sir, and it was that which attracted me. Trafford and he, young-men-like, soon understood each other; he came into our boat, lunched with us, and asked us home with him to tea. There 's the whole story. As to the intimacy that followed, it was mostly my own doing. I own to you I never so much as suspected that Trafford was smitten by her; he was always with her brother, scarcely at all in her company; and when he came to tell me he was in love, I asked him how he caught the malady, for I never saw him near the infection. Once that I knew of the matter, however, I made him write home to his family."

"It was by your advice, then, that he wrote that letter?"

"Certainly; I not only advised, I insisted on it, – I read it, too, before it was sent off. It was such a letter as, if I had been the young fellow's father, would have made me prouder than to hear he had got the thanks of Parliament."

"You and I, Fossbrooke, are old bachelors; we are scarcely able to say what we should have done if we had had sons."

"I am inclined to believe it would have made us better, not

worse," said Fossbrooke, gravely.

"At all events, as it was at your instigation this letter was written, I can't well suggest your name as an impartial person in the transaction, – I mean, as one who can be referred to for advice or information."

"Don't do so, sir, or I shall be tempted to say more than may be prudent. Have you never noticed, Cave, the effect that a doctor's presence produces in the society of those who usually consult him, – the reserve, – the awkwardness, – the constraint, – the apologetic tone for this or that little indiscretion, – the sitting in the draught or the extra glass of sherry? So is it, but in a far stronger degree, when an old man of the world like myself comes back amongst those he formerly lived with, – one who knew all their past history, how they succeeded here, how they failed there, – what led the great man of fashion to finish his days in a colony, and why the Court beauty married a bishop. Ah, sir, we are the physicians who have all these secrets in our keeping. It is ours to know what sorrow is covered by that smile, how that merry laugh has but smothered the sigh of a heavy heart. It is only when a man has lived to my age, with an unfailing memory too, that he knows the real hollowness of life, – all the combinations falsified, all the hopes blighted, – the clever fellows that have turned out failures, or worse than failures, – the lovely women that have made shipwreck through their beauty. It is not only, however, that he knows this, but he knows how craft and cunning have won where ability and frankness have

lost, – how intrigue and trick have done better than genius and integrity. With all this knowledge, sir, in their heads, and stout hearts within them, such men as myself have their utility in life. They are a sort of walking conscience that cannot be ignored. The railroad millionnaire talks less boastfully before him who knew him as an errand-boy; the *grande dame* is less superciliously insolent in the presence of one who remembered her in a very different character. Take my word for it, Cave, Nestor may have been a bit of a bore amongst the young Greeks of fashion, but he had his utility too."

"But how am I to answer this letter? What advice shall I give her?"

"Tell her frankly that you have made the inquiry she wished; that the young lady, who is as well born as her son, is without fortune, and if her personal qualities count for nothing, would be what the world would call a 'bad match.'"

"Yes, that sounds practicable. I think that will do."

"Tell her, also, that if she seriously desires that her son should continue in the way of that reformation he has so ardently followed for some time back, and especially so since he has made the acquaintance of this family, such a marriage as this would give her better reasons for confidence than all her most crafty devices in match-making and settlements."

"I don't think I can exactly tell her that," said Caver smiling.

"Tell her, then, that if this connection be not to her liking, to withdraw her son at once from this neighborhood before this girl

should come to care for him; for if she should, by heavens! he shall marry her, if every acre of the estate were to go to a cousin ten times removed!"

"Were not these people all strangers to you t' other day, Fossbrooke?" said Cave, in something like a tone of reprehension.

"So they were. I had never so much as heard of them; but she, this girl, has a claim upon my interest, founded on a resemblance so strong that when I see her, I live back again in the long past, and find myself in converse with the dearest friends I ever had. I vow to Heaven I never knew the bitterness of want of fortune till now! I never felt how powerless and insignificant poverty can make a man till I desired to contribute to this girl's happiness; and if I were not an old worthless wreck, – shattered and unseaworthy, – I 'd set to work to-morrow to refit and try to make a fortune to bestow on her."

If Cave was half disposed to banter the old man on what seemed little short of a devoted attachment, the agitation of Fossbrooke's manner – his trembling lip, his shaking voice, his changing color – all warned him to forbear, and abstain from what might well have proved a perilous freedom.

"You will dine with us at mess, Fossbrooke, won't you?"

"No; I shall return at once to Killaloe. I made Dr. Lendrick's acquaintance just as I started by the train. I want to see more of him. Besides, now that I know what was the emergency that called young Trafford up here, I have nothing to detain me."

"Shall you see him before you go?"

"Of course. I am going over to his quarters now."

"You will not mention our conversation?"

"Certainly not."

"I 'd like to show you my letter before I send it off. I 'd be glad to think it was what you recommended."

"Write what you feel to be a fair statement of the case, and if by any chance an inclination to partiality crosses you, let it be in favor of the young. Take my word for it, Cave, there is a selfishness in age that needs no ally. Stand by the sons; the fathers and mothers will take care of themselves. Good-bye."

CHAPTER XII. A GREAT MAN'S SCHOOLFELLOW

Whether it was that the Chief Baron had thrown off an attack which had long menaced him, and whose slow approaches had gradually impaired his strength and diminished his mental activity, or whether, as some of his "friends" suggested, that the old man's tenure of life had been renewed by the impertinences of the newspapers and the insolent attacks of political foes, – an explanation not by any means far-fetched, – whatever the cause, he came out of his illness with all the signs of renewed vigor, and with a degree of mental acuteness that he had not enjoyed for many years before.

"Beattie tells me that this attack has inserted another life in my lease," said he; "and I am glad of it. It is right that the men who speculated on my death should be reminded of the uncertainty of life by the negative proof. It is well, too, that there should be men long-lived enough to bridge over periods of mediocrity, and connect the triumphs of the past with the coming glories of the future. We are surely not destined to a perpetuity of Pendletons and Fitzgibbons?"

It was thus he discoursed to an old legal comrade, – who, less gifted and less fortunate, still wore his stuff gown, and pleaded for the outer bar, – poor old Billy Haire, the dreariest advocate,

and one of the honestest fellows that ever carried his bag into court. While nearly all of his contemporaries had risen to rank and eminence, Billy toiled on through life with small success, liked by his friends, respected by the world, but the terror of attorneys, who only saw in him the type of adverse decisions and unfavorable verdicts.

For forty-odd years had he lived a life that any but himself would have deemed martyrdom, – his law laughed at, his eloquence ridiculed, his manner mimicked, jeered at by the bench, quizzed by the bar, sneered at by the newspapers, every absurd story tagged to his name, every stupid blunder fathered on him, till at last, as it were, by the mere force of years, the world came to recognize the incomparable temper that no provocation had ever been able to irritate, the grand nature that rose above all resentment, and would think better of its fellows than these moods of spiteful wit or impertinent drollery might seem to entitle them to.

The old Judge liked him; he liked his manly simplicity of character, his truthfulness, and his honesty; but perhaps more than all these, did he like his dulness. It was so pleasant to him to pelt this poor heavy man with smart epigrams and pungent sarcasms on all that was doing in the world, and see the hopeless effort he made to follow him.

Billy, too, had another use; he alone, of all the Chief Baron's friends, could tell him what was the current gossip of the hall, – what men thought, or at least what they said of him. The genuine

simplicity of Haire's nature gave to his revelations a character so devoid of all spitefulness, – it was so evident that, in repeating, he never identified himself with his story that Lendrick would listen to words from him that, coming from another, his resentment would have repelled with indignation.

"And you tell me that the story now is, my whole attack was nothing but temper?" said the old Judge, as the two men walked slowly up and down on the grass lawn before the door.

"Not that exactly; but they say that constitutional irritability had much to say to it."

"It was, in fact, such a seizure as, with a man like yourself, would have been a mere nothing."

"Perhaps so."

"I am sure of it, sir; and what more do they say?"

"All sorts of things, which, of course, they know nothing about. Some have it that you refused the peerage, others that it was not offered."

"Ha!" said the old man, irritably, while a faint flush tinged his cheek.

"They say, too," continued Haire, "that when the Viceroy informed you that you were not to be made a peer, you said: 'Let the Crown look to it, then. The Revenue cases all come to my court; and so long as I sit there, they shall never have a verdict.'"

"You must have invented that yourself, Billy," said the Judge, with a droll malice in his eye. "Come, confess it is your own. It is *so* like you."

"No, on my honor," said the other, solemnly.

"Not that I would take it ill, Haire, if you had. When a man has a turn for epigram, his friends must extend their indulgence to the humor."

"I assure you, positively, it is not mine."

"That is quite enough; let us talk of something else. By the way, I have a letter to show you. I put it in my pocket this morning, to let you see it; but, first of all, I must show you the writer, – here she is." He drew forth a small miniature case, and, opening it, handed it to the other.

"What a handsome girl! downright beautiful!"

"My granddaughter, sir," said the old man, proudly.

"I declare, I never saw a lovelier face," said Haire. "She must be a rare cheat if she be not as good as she is beautiful. What a sweet mouth!"

"The brow is fine; there is a high intelligence about the eyes and the temples."

"It is the smile, that little lurking smile, that captivates me. What may her age be?"

"Something close on twenty. Now for her letter. Read that."

While Haire perused the letter, the old Judge sauntered away, looking from time to time at the miniature, and muttering some low inaudible words as he went.

"I don't think I understand it. I am at a loss to catch what she is drifting at," said Haire, as he finished the first side of the letter. "What is she so grateful for?"

"You think the case is one which calls for little gratitude, then. What a sarcastic mood you are in this morning, Haire!" said the Judge, with a malicious twinkle of the eye. "Still, there are young ladies in the world who would vouchsafe to bear me company in requital for being placed at the head of such a house as this."

"I can make nothing of it," said the other, hopelessly.

"The case is this," said the Judge, as he drew his arm within the other's. "Tom Lendrick has beeu offered a post of some value – some value to a man poor as he is – at the Cape. I have told him that his acceptance in no way involves me. I have told those who have offered the place that I stand aloof in the whole negotiation, – that in their advancement of my son they establish no claim upon *me*, I have even said I will know nothing whatever of the incident." He paused for some minutes, and then went on: "I have told Tom, however, if his circumstances were such as to dispose him to avail himself of this offer, that – until he assured himself that the place was one to his liking, that it gave a reasonable prospect of permanence, that the climate was salubrious, and the society not distasteful – I would take his daughter to live with me."

"He has a son, too, has n't he?"

"He has, sir, and he fain would have induced me to take *him* instead of the girl; but this I would not listen to. I have not nerves for the loud speech and boisterous vitality of a young fellow of four or five and twenty. His very vigor would be a standing insult to me, and the fellow would know it. When men come to my age,

they want a mild atmosphere in morals and manners, as well as in climate. My son's physiology has not taught him this, doctor though he be."

"I see, – I see it all now," said Haire; "and the girl, though sorry to be separated from her father, is gratified by the thought of becoming a tie between him and you."

"That is not in the record, sir," said the Judge, sternly. "Keep to your brief." He took the letter sharply from the other's hand as he spoke. "My granddaughter has not had much experience of life; but her woman's tact has told her that her real difficulty – her only one, perhaps – will be with Lady Lendrick. She cannot know that Lady Lendrick's authority in this house is nothing, – less than nothing. I would never have invited her to come here, had it been otherwise."

"Have you apprised Lady Lendrick of this arrangement?"

"No, sir; nor shall I. it shall be for you to do that 'officiously,' as the French say, to distinguish from what is called 'officially.' I mean you to call upon her and say, in the course of conversation, informally, accidentally, that Miss Lendrick's arrival at the Priory has been deferred, or that it is fixed for such a date, – in fact, sir, whatever your own nice tact may deem the neatest mode of alluding to the topic, leaving to her the reply. You understand me?"

"I 'm not so sure that I do."

"So much the better; your simplicity will be more inscrutable than your subtlety, Haire. I can deal with the one – the other

masters me."

"I declare frankly I don't like the mission. I was never, so to say, a favorite with her Ladyship."

"Neither was I, sir," said the other, with a peremptory loudness that was almost startling.

"Hadn't you better intimate it by a few lines in a note? Had n't you better say that, having seen your son during his late visit to town, and learnt his intention to accept a colonial appointment – "

"All this would be apologetic, sir, and must not be thought of. Don't you know, Haire, that every unnecessary affidavit is a flaw in a man's case? Go and see her; your very awkwardness will imply a secret, and she 'll be so well pleased with her acuteness in discovering the mystery, she 'll half forget its offence."

"Let me clearly understand what I' ve got to do. I 'm to tell her or to let her find out that you have been reconciled to your son Tom?"

"There is not a word of reconciliation, sir, in all your instructions. You are to limit yourself to the statement that touches my granddaughter."

"Very well; it will be so much the easier. I'm to say, then, that you have adopted her, and placed her at the head of your house; that she is to live here in all respects as its mistress?"

He paused; and as the Judge bowed a concurrence, he went on: "Of course you will allow me to add that I was never consulted; that you did not ask my opinion, and that I never gave one?"

"You are at liberty to, say all this."

"I would even say that I don't exactly see how the thing will work. A very young girl, with of course a limited experience of life, will have no common difficulties in dealing with a world so new and strange, particularly without the companionship of one of her own sex."

"I cannot promise to supply that want, but she shall see as much of *you* as possible." And the words were uttered with a blended courtesy and malice, of which he was perfect master. Poor Haire, however, only saw the complimentary part, and hurriedly pledged himself to be at Miss Lendrick's orders at all times.

"Come and let me show you how I mean to lodge her. I intend her to feel a perfect independence of me and my humors. We are to see each other from inclination, not constraint: I intend, sir that we should live on good terms; and as the Church will have nothing to say to the compact, it is possible it may succeed.

"These rooms are to be hers," said he, opening a door which offered a *vista* through several handsomely furnished rooms, all looking out upon a neatly kept flower-garden. "Lady Lendrick, I believe, had long since destined them for a son and daughter-in-law of hers, who are on their way home from India. The plan will be now all the more difficult of accomplishment."

"Which will not make my communication to her the pleasanter."

"But redound so much the more to the credit of your adroitness, Haire, if you succeed. Come over here this evening

and report progress." And with this he nodded an easy good-bye, and strolled down the garden.

"I don't envy Haire his brief in this case," muttered he. "He'll not have the 'court with him,' that's certain;" and he laughed spitefully to himself as he went.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.