

LEVER CHARLES JAMES

THE CONFESSIONS OF
HARRY LORREQUER —
VOLUME 5

Charles Lever

**The Confessions of Harry
Lorrequer — Volume 5**

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CHAPTER XXIX. CAPTAIN TREVANION'S ADVENTURE

As the day was now waning apace, and I was still unprovided with any one who could act as my second, I set out upon a search through the various large hotels in the neighbourhood, trusting that amid my numerous acquaintance I should be fortunate enough to find some of them at Paris. With a most anxious eye I scanned the lists of arrivals at the usual haunts of my countrymen, in the Rue Rivoli, and the Place Vendome, but without success; there were long catalogues of "Milors," with their "couriers," but not one name known to me in the number.

I repaired to Galignani's library, which, though crowded as ever with English, did not present to me one familiar face. From thence I turned into the Palais Royale, and at last, completely jaded by walking, and sick from disappointment, I sat down upon a bench in the Tuilleries Garden.

I had scarcely been there many minutes when a gentleman accosted me in English, saying, "May I ask if this be your property?" showing, at the same time, a pocket-book which I had inadvertently dropped in pulling out my handkerchief. As I thanked him for his attention, and was about to turn away, I perceived that he continued to look very steadily at me. At length he said,

"I think I am not mistaken; I have the pleasure to see Mr. Lorrequer, who may perhaps recollect my name, Trevanion of the 43rd. The last time we met was at Malta."

"Oh, I remember perfectly. Indeed I should be very ungrateful if I did not; for to your kind offices there I am indebted for my life. You must surely recollect the street row at the 'Caserne?'"

"Yes; that was a rather brisk affair while it lasted; but, pray, how long are you here?"

"Merely a few days; and most anxious am I to leave as soon as possible; for, independently of pressing reasons to wish myself elsewhere, I have had nothing but trouble and worry since my arrival, and at this instant am involved in a duel, without the slightest cause that I can discover, and, what is still worse, without the aid of a single friend to undertake the requisite negotiation for me."

"If my services can in any way assist —"

"Oh, my dear captain, this is really so great a favour that I cannot say how much I thank you."

"Say nothing whatever, but rest quite assured that I am completely at your disposal; for although we are not very old friends, yet I have heard so much of you from some of ours, that I feel as if we had been long acquainted."

This was an immense piece of good fortune to me; for, of all the persons I knew, he was the most suited to aid me at this moment. In addition to a thorough knowledge of the continent and its habits, he spoke French fluently, and had been the most renomme authority in the duello to a large military acquaintance; joining to a consummate tact and cleverness in his diplomacy, a temper that never permitted itself to be ruffled, and a most unexceptionable reputation for courage. In a word, to have had Trevanion for your second, was not only to have secured odds in your favour, but, still better, to have obtained the certainty that, let the affair take what turn it might, you were sure of coming out of it with credit. He was the only man I have ever met, who had much mixed himself in transactions of this nature, and yet never, by any chance, had degenerated into the fire-eater; more quiet, unassuming manners it was impossible to meet with, and, in the various anecdotes I have heard of him, I have always traced a degree of forbearance, that men of less known bravery might not venture to practise. At the same time, when once roused by any thing like premeditated insult —

or pre-determined affront — he became almost ungovernable, and it would be safer to beard the lion in his den than cross his path. Among the many stories, and there were a great many current in his regiment concerning him, there was one so singularly characteristic of the man, that, as I have passingly mentioned his name here, I may as well relate it; at the same time premising that, as it is well known, I may only be repeating an often-heard tale to many of my readers.

When the regiment to which Trevanion belonged became part of the army of occupation in Paris, he was left at Versailles seriously ill from the effects of a sabre-wound he received at Waterloo, and from which his recovery at first was exceedingly doubtful. At the end of several weeks, however, he became out of danger, and was able to receive the visits of his brother officers, whenever they were fortunate enough to obtain a day's leave of absence, to run down and see him. From them he learned that one of his oldest friends in the regiment had fallen in a duel, during the time of his illness, and that two other officers were dangerously wounded — one of whom was not expected to survive. When he inquired as to the reasons of these many disasters, he was informed that since the entrance of the allies into Paris, the French officers, boiling with rage and indignation at their recent defeat, and smarting under the hourly disgrace which the presence of their conquerors suggested, sought out, by every means in their power, opportunities of insult; but always so artfully contrived as to render the opposite party the challenger, thus reserving to themselves the choice of weapons. When therefore it is borne in mind that the French are the most expert swordsmen in Europe, little doubt can exist as to the issue of these combats; and, in fact, scarcely a morning passed without three or four English or Prussian officers being carried through the Barriere de l'Etoile, if not dead, at least seriously wounded, and condemned to carry with them through life the inflictions of a sanguinary and savage spirit of revenge.

While Trevanion listened to this sad recital, and scarcely did a day come without adding to the long catalogue of disasters, he at once perceived that the quiet deportment and unassuming demeanour which so strongly characterise the English officer, were construed by their French opponents into evidences of want of courage, and saw that to so systematic a plan for slaughter no common remedy could be applied, and that some "coup d'etat" was absolutely necessary, to put it down once and for ever.

In the history of these sanguinary rencontres, one name was continually recurring, generally as the principal, sometimes the instigator of the quarrel. This was an officer of a chasseur regiment, who had the reputation of being the best swordsman in the whole French army, and was no less distinguished for his "skill at fence," than his uncompromising hatred of the British, with whom alone, of all the allied forces, he was ever known to come in contact. So celebrated was the "Capitaine Augustin Gendemar" for his pursuits, that it was well known at that time in Paris that he was the president of a duelling club, associated for the express and avowed object of provoking to insult, and as certainly dooming to death every English officer upon whom they could fasten a quarrel.

The Cafe Philidor, at that period in the Rue Vivienne, was the rendezvous of this reputable faction, and here "le Capitaine" reigned supreme, receiving accounts of the various "affairs" which were transacting — counselling and plotting for the future. His ascendancy among his countrymen was perfectly undisputed, and being possessed of great muscular strength, with that peculiarly "farouche" exterior, without which courage is nothing in France, he was in every way calculated for the infamous leadership he assumed.

It was, unfortunately, to this same cafe, being situated in what was called the English quarter, that the officers of the 43rd regiment were in the habit of resorting, totally unaware of the plots by which they were surrounded, and quite unsuspecting the tangled web of deliberate and cold-blooded assassination in which they were involved, and here took place the quarrel, the result of which was the death of Trevanion's friend, a young officer of great promise, and universally beloved in his regiment.

As Trevanion listened to these accounts, his impatience became daily greater, that his weak state should prevent his being among his brother officers, when his advice and assistance were so

imperatively required, and where, amid all the solicitude for his perfect recovery, he could not but perceive they ardently wished for him.

The day at last arrived, and restored to something like his former self, Trevanion once more appeared in the mess-room of his regiment. Amid the many sincere and hearty congratulations on his recovered looks, were not a few half-expressed hints that he might not go much out into the world for some little time to come. To these friendly admonitions Trevanion replied by a good-humoured laugh, and a ready assurance that he understood the intended kindness, and felt in no wise disposed to be invalided again. "In fact," said he, "I have come up here to enjoy life a little, not to risque it; but, among the sights of your gay capital, I must certainly have a peep at your famed captain, of whom I have heard too much not to feel an interest in him."

Notwithstanding the many objections to this, made with a view to delay his visit to the Philidor to a later period, it was at length agreed, that they should all repair to the cafe that evening, but upon the express understanding that every cause of quarrel should be strictly avoided, and that their stay should be merely sufficient to satisfy Trevanion's curiosity as to the personnel of the renomme captain.

It was rather before the usual hour of the cafe's filling, that a number of English officers, among whom was Trevanion, entered the "salon" of the "Philidor;" having determined not to attract any unusual attention, they broke into little knots and parties of threes and fours, and dispersed through the room, where they either sipped their coffee or played at dominoes, then, as now, the staple resource of a French cafe.

The clock over the "comptoir" struck eight, and, at the same instant, a waiter made his appearance, carrying a small table, which he placed beside the fire, and, having trimmed a lamp, and placed a large fauteuil before it, was about to withdraw, when Trevanion, whose curiosity was roused by the singularity of these arrangements, determined upon asking for whose comfort they were intended. The waiter stared for a moment at the question, with an air as if doubting the seriousness of him who put it, and at last replied — "Pour Monsieur le Capitaine, je crois," with a certain tone of significance upon the latter words.

"Le Capitaine! but what captain?" said he, carelessly; "for I am a captain, and that gentleman there — and there, too, is another," at the same instant throwing himself listlessly into the well-cushioned chair, and stretching out his legs at full length upon the hearth.

The look of horror which this quiet proceeding on his part, elicited from the poor waiter, so astonished him that he could not help saying — "is there any thing the matter with you, my friend; are you ill?"

"No, monsieur, not ill; nothing the matter with me; but you, sir; oh, you, sir, pray come away."

"Me," said Trevanion; "me! why, my good man, I was never better in my life; so now just bring me my coffee and the Moniteur, if you have it; there, don't stare that way, but do as I bid you."

There was something in the assured tone of these few words that either overawed or repressed every rising feeling of the waiter, for his interrogator; for, silently handing his coffee and the newspaper, he left the room; not, however, without bestowing a parting glance so full of terror and dismay that our friend was obliged to smile at it. All this was the work of a few minutes, and not until the noise of new arrivals had attracted the attention of his brother officers, did they perceive where he had installed himself, and to what danger he was thus, as they supposed, unwittingly exposed.

It was now, however, too late for remonstrance; for already several French officers had noticed the circumstance, and by their interchange of looks and signs, openly evinced their satisfaction at it, and their delight at the catastrophe which seemed inevitable to the luckless Englishman.

In perfect misery at what they conceived their own fault, in not apprising him of the sacred character of that place, they stood silently looking at him as he continued to sip his coffee, apparently unconscious of every thing and person about him.

There was now a more than ordinary silence in the cafe, which at all times was remarkable for the quiet and noiseless demeanour of its frequenters, when the door was flung open by the ready

waiter, and the Capitaine Augustin Gendemar entered. He was a large, squarely-built man, with a most savage expression of countenance, which a bushy beard and shaggy overhanging moustache served successfully to assist; his eyes were shaded by deep, projecting brows, and long eyebrows slanting over them, and increasing their look of piercing sharpness; there was in his whole air and demeanour that certain French air of swaggering bullyism, which ever remained in those who, having risen from the ranks, maintained the look of ruffianly defiance which gave their early character for courage peculiar merit.

To the friendly salutations of his countrymen he returned the slightest and coldest acknowledgments, throwing a glance of disdain around him as he wended his way to his accustomed place beside the fire; this he did with as much of noise and swagger as he could well contrive; his sabre and sabretasch clanking behind, his spurs jangling, and his heavy step, made purposely heavier to draw upon him the notice and attention he sought for. Trevanion alone testified no consciousness of his entrance, and appeared totally engrossed by the columns of his newspaper, from which he never lifted his eyes for an instant. Le Capitaine at length reached the fire-place, when, no sooner did he behold his accustomed seat in the possession of another, than he absolutely started back with surprise and anger.

What might have been his first impulse it is hard to say, for, as the blood rushed to his face and forehead, he clenched his hands firmly, and seemed for an instant, as he eyed the stranger, like a tiger about to spring upon its victim; this was but for a second, for turning rapidly round towards his party, he gave them a look of peculiar meaning, showing two rows of white teeth, with a grin which seemed to say, "I have taken my line;" and he had done so. He now ordered the waiter, in a voice of thunder, to bring him a chair, this he took roughly from him, and placed, with a crash, upon the floor, exactly opposite that of Trevanion, and still so near as scarcely to permit of his sitting down upon it. The noisy vehemence of this action at last appeared to have roused Trevanion's attention, for he now, for the first time, looked up from his paper, and quietly regarded his vis-a-vis. There could not in the world be a stronger contrast to the bland look and courteous expression of Trevanion's handsome features, than the savage scowl of the enraged Frenchman, in whose features the strong and ill-repressed workings of passion were twitching and distorting every lineament and line; indeed no words could ever convey one half so forcibly as did that look, insult — open, palpable, deep, determined insult.

Trevanion, whose eyes had been merely for a moment lifted from his paper, again fell, and he appeared to take no notice whatever of the extraordinary proximity of the Frenchman, still less of the savage and insulting character of his looks.

Le Capitaine, having thus failed to bring on the eclairsissement he sought for, proceeded to accomplish it by other means; for, taking the lamp, by the light of which Trevanion was still reading, he placed it at his side of the table, and at the same instant stretching across his arm, he plucked the newspaper from his hand, giving at the same moment a glance of triumph towards the bystanders, as though he would say, "you see what he must submit to." Words cannot describe the astonishment of the British officers, as they beheld Trevanion, under this gross and open insult, content himself by a slight smile and half bow, as if returning a courtesy, and then throw his eyes downward, as if engaged in deep thought, while the triumphant sneer of the French, at this unaccountable conduct, was absolutely maddening to them to endure.

But their patience was destined to submit to stronger proof, for at this instant le Capitaine stretched forth one enormous leg, cased in his massive jack-boot, and with a crash deposited the heel upon the foot of their friend Trevanion. At length he is roused, thought they, for a slight flush of crimson flitted across his cheek, and his upper lip trembled with a quick spasmodic twitching; but both these signs were over in a second, and his features were as calm and unmoved as before, and his only appearance of consciousness of the affront, was given by his drawing back his chair and placing his legs beneath it, as for protection.

This last insult, and the tame forbearance with which it was submitted to, produced all their opposite effects upon the by-standers, and looks of ungovernable rage and derisive contempt were every moment interchanging; indeed, were it not for the all-absorbing interest which the two great actors in the scene had concentrated upon themselves, the two parties must have come at once into open conflict.

The clock of the cafe struck nine, the hour at which Gendemar always retired, so calling to the waiter for his petit verre of brandy, he placed his newspaper upon the table, and putting both his elbows upon it, and his chin upon his hands, he stared full in Trevanion's face, with a look of the most derisive triumph, meant to crown the achievement of the evening. To this, as to all his former insults, Trevanion appeared still insensible, and merely regarded him with his never — changing half smile; the petite verre arrived; le Capitaine took it in his hand, and, with a nod of most insulting familiarity, saluted Trevanion, adding with a loud voice, so as to be heard on every side — "a votre courage, Anglais." He had scarcely swallowed the liqueur when Trevanion rose slowly from his chair, displaying to the astonished gaze of the Frenchman the immense proportions and gigantic frame of a man well known as the largest officer in the British army; with one stride he was beside the chair of the Frenchman, and with the speed of lightening he seized his nose by one hand, while with the other he grasped his lower jaw, and, wrenching open his mouth with the strength of an ogre, he spat down his throat.

So sudden was the movement, that before ten seconds had elapsed, all was over, and the Frenchman rushed from the room, holding the fragments of his jaw-bone, (for it was fractured!) And followed by his countrymen, who, from that hour, deserted the Cafe Philidor, nor was there ever any mention of the famous captain during the stay of the regiment in Paris.

CHAPTER XXX. DIFFICULTIES

While we walked together towards Meurice, I explained to Trevanion the position in which I stood; and having detailed, at full length, the fracas at the Salon, and the imprisonment of O'Leary, entreated his assistance in behalf of him, as well as to free me from some of my many embarrassments.

It was strange enough — though at first so pre-occupied was I with other thoughts, that I paid but little attention to it — that no part of my eventful evening seemed to make so strong an impression on him as my mention of having seen my cousin Guy, and heard from him of the death of my uncle. At this portion of my story he smiled, with so much significance of meaning, that I could not help asking his reason.

"It is always an unpleasant task, Mr. Lorrequer, to speak in any way, however delicately, in a tone of disparagement of a man's relatives; and, therefore, as we are not long enough acquainted — "

"But pray," said I, "waive that consideration, and only remember the position in which I now am. If you know any thing of this business, I entreat you to tell me — I promise to take whatever you may be disposed to communicate, in the same good part it is intended."

"Well, then, I believe you are right; but, first, let me ask you, how do you know of your uncle's death; for I have reason to doubt it?"

"From Guy; he told me himself."

"When did you see him, and where?"

"Why, I have just told you; I saw him last night at the Salon."

"And you could not be mistaken?"

"Impossible! Besides, he wrote to me a note which I received this morning — here it is."

"Hem — ha. Well, are you satisfied that this is his handwriting?" said Trevanion, as he perused the note slowly twice over.

"Why, of course — but stop — you are right; it is not his hand, nor do I know the writing, now that you direct my attention to it. But what can that mean? You, surely, do not suppose that I have mistaken any one for him; for, independent of all else, his knowledge of my family, and my uncle's affairs, would quite disprove that."

"This is really a complex affair," said Trevanion, musingly. "How long may it be since you saw your cousin — before last night, I mean?"

"Several years; above six, certainly."

"Oh, it is quite possible, then," said Trevanion, musingly; "do you know, Mr. Lorrequer, this affair seems much more puzzling to me than to you, and for this plain reason — I am disposed to think you never saw your cousin last night."

"Why, confound it, there is one circumstance that I think may satisfy you on that head. You will not deny that I saw some one, who very much resembled him; and certainly, as he lent me above three thousand franks to play with at the table, it looks rather more like his act than that of a perfect stranger."

"Have you got the money?" asked Trevanion dryly.

"Yes," said I; "but certainly you are the most unbelieving of mortals, and I am quite happy that I have yet in my possession two of the billets de banque, for, I suppose, without them, you would scarcely credit me." I here opened my pocket-book, and produced the notes.

He took them, examined them attentively for an instant, held them between him and the light, refolded them, and, having placed them in my pocket-book, said — "I thought as much — they are forgeries."

"Hold!" said I, "my cousin Guy, whatever wildness he may have committed, is yet totally incapable of — "

"I never said the contrary, replied Trevanion, in the same dry tone as before.

"Then what can you mean, for I see no alternative between that and totally discrediting the evidence of my senses?"

"Perhaps I can suggest a middle course," said Trevanion; "lend me, therefore, a patient hearing for a few moments, and I may be able to throw some light upon this difficult matter. You may never have heard that there is, in this same city of Paris, a person so extremely like your cousin Guy, that his most intimate friends have daily mistaken one for the other, and this mistake has the more often been made, from the circumstances of their both being in the habit of frequenting the same class in society, where, knowing and walking with the same people, the difficulty of discriminating has been greatly increased. This individual, who has too many aliases for one to know which to particularise him by, is one of that numerous order of beings whom a high state of civilization is always engendering and throwing up on the surface of society; he is a man of low birth and mean connexions, but gifted with most taking manners and an unexceptionable address and appearance; these advantages, and the possession of apparently independent means, have opened to him the access to a certain set of people, who are well known and well received in society, and obtained for him, what he prizes much more, the admission into several clubs where high play is carried on. In this mixed assemblage, which sporting habits and gambling, (that grand leveller of all distinctions,) have brought together, this man and your cousin Guy met frequently, and, from the constant allusion to the wonderful resemblance between them, your eccentric cousin, who, I must say, was never too select in his acquaintances, frequently amused himself by practical jokes upon their friends, which served still more to nurture the intimacy between them; and from this habit, Mr. Dudley Morewood, for such is his latest patronymic, must have enjoyed frequent opportunities of hearing much of your family and relations, a species of information he never neglected, though at the moment it might appear not so immediately applicable to his purposes. Now, this man, who knows of every new English arrival in Paris, with as much certainty as the police itself, would at once be aware of your being here, and having learned from Guy how little intercourse there had been of late years between you, would not let slip an opportunity of availing himself of the likeness, if any thing could thereby turn to his profit."

"Stop," cried I; "you have opened my eyes completely, for now I remember that, as I continued to win last night, this man, who was playing hazard at another table, constantly borrowed from me, but always in gold, invariably refusing the billets de banque as too high for his game."

"There his object was clear enough; for besides obtaining your gold, he made you the means of disseminating his false billets de banque."

"So that I have been actually playing and winning upon this fellow's forgeries," said I; "and am perhaps at this very instant inscribed in the 'Livre noir' of the police, as a most accomplished swindler; but what could be the intention of his note of this morning?"

"As to that," said Trevanion, "it is hard to say; one thing you may assuredly rely upon — it is not an unnecessary epistle, whatever be its object; he never wastes his powder when the game flies too high; so we must only wait patiently for the unravelment of his plans, satisfied that we, at least, know something. What most surprises me is, his venturing, at present, to appear in public; for it is not above two months since an escapade of his attracted so much attention of the play world here, that he was obliged to leave, and it was supposed that he would never return to Paris."

"One piece of good fortune there is at least," said I, "which, I can safely say repays me for any and all the annoyance this unhappy affair may cause me; it is, that my poor old uncle is still alive and well. Not all my anticipated pleasures, in newly acquired wealth, could have afforded me the same gratification that this fact does, for, although never so much his favourite as my cousin, yet the sense of protection — the feeling of confidence, which is inseparable from the degree of relationship between us — standing, as he has ever done, in the light of a father to me, is infinitely

more pleasurable than the possession of riches, which must ever suggest to me, the recollection of a kind friend lost to me for ever. But so many thoughts press on me — so many effects of this affair are staring me in the face — I really know not which way to turn, nor can I even collect my ideas sufficiently, to determine what is first to be done."

"Leave all that to me," said Trevanion; "it is a tangled web, but I think I can unravel it; meanwhile, where does the Militaire reside? for, among all your pressing engagements, this affair with the Frenchman must come off first; and for this reason, although you are not really obliged to give him satisfaction, by his merely producing your card, and insisting that you are to be responsible for the misdeeds of any one who might show it as his own address, yet I look upon it as a most fortunate thing, while charges so heavy may be at this moment hanging over your head, as the proceedings of last night involve, that you have a public opportunity of meeting an antagonist in the field — thereby evincing no fear of publicity, nor any intention of absconding; for be assured, that the police are at this moment in possession of what has occurred, and from the fracas which followed, are well disposed to regard the whole as a concerted scheme to seize upon the property of the banque, a not uncommon wind-up here after luck fails. My advice is therefore, meet the man at once; I shall take care that the prefect is informed that you have been imposed upon by a person passing himself off as your relative, and enter bail for your appearance, whenever you are called upon; that being done, we shall have time for a moment's respite to look around us, and consider the other bearings of this difficult business."

"Here, then, is the card of address," said I; "Eugene Dejoncourt Capitaine de Cavalerie, No. 8, Chausse D'Antin."

"Dejoncourt! why, confound it, this is not so pleasant; he is about the best shot in Paris, and a very steady swordsman besides, I don't like this."

"But you forget he is the friend, not the principal here."

"The more good fortune yours," said Trevanion, drily; "for I acknowledge I should not give much for your chance at twenty paces opposite his pistol; then who is the other?"

"Le Baron d'Haulpenne," said I, "and his name is all that I know of him; his very appearance is unknown to me."

"I believe I am acquainted with him," said Trevanion; "but here we are at Meurice. Now I shall just write a few lines to a legal friend, who will manage to liberate Mr. O'Leary, whose services we shall need, two persons are usual on each side in this country, and then, 'a l'ouvrage.'"

The note written and despatched; Trevanion jumped into a cab, and set out for the Chausse D'Antin; leaving me to think over, as well as I could, the mass of trouble and confusion that twenty-four hours of life in Paris had involved me in.

CHAPTER XXXI. EXPLANATION

It was past seven o'clock when Trevanion made his appearance, accompanied by O'Leary; and having in few words informed me that a meeting was fixed for the following morning, near St. Cloud, proposed that we should go to dinner at Verey's, after which we should have plenty of time to discuss the various steps to be taken. As we were leaving the hotel for this purpose, a waiter requested of me to permit Mr. Meurice to speak a few words to me; which, having agreed to, I entered the little bureau where this Czar of hotels sits enthroned, and what was my surprise to learn the request he had to prefer, was nothing less than that I would so far oblige him as to vacate the room I possessed in the hotel, adding that my compliance would confer upon him the power to accommodate a "milor" who had written for apartments, and was coming with a large suite of servants. Suspecting that some rumour of the late affair at Frescati might have influenced my friend Meurice in this unusual demand, I abruptly refused, and was about to turn away, when he, perhaps guessing that I had not believed his statements, handed me an open letter, saying, "You see, sir, this is the letter; and, as I am so pressed for spare room, I must now refuse the writer."

As my eye glanced at the writing, I started back with amazement to perceive it was in my cousin Guy's hand, requesting that apartments might be retained for Sir Guy Lorrequer, my uncle, who was to arrive in Paris by the end of the week. If any doubt had remained on my mind as to the deception I had been duped by, this would completely have dispelled it, but I had long before been convinced of the trick, and only wondered how the false Guy — Mr. Dudley Morewood — had contrived to present himself to me so opportunely, and by what means, in so short a space of time, he had become acquainted with my personal appearance.

As I mentioned this circumstance of the letter to Trevanion, he could not conceal his satisfaction at his sagacity in unravelling the mystery, while this new intelligence confirmed the justness and accuracy of all his explanations.

While we walked along towards the Palais Royale, Trevanion endeavoured not very successfully, to explain to my friend O'Leary, the nature of the trick which had been practised, promising, at another time, some revelations concerning the accomplished individual who had planned it, which, in boldness and daring, eclipsed even this.

Any one who in waking has had the confused memory of a dream in which events have been so mingled and mixed as to present no uniform narrative, but only a mass of strange and incongruous occurrences, without object or connexion, may form some notion of the state of restless excitement my brain suffered from, as the many and conflicting ideas my late adventures suggested, presented themselves to my mind in rapid succession.

The glare, the noise, and the clatter of a French cafe are certainly not the agents most in request for restoring a man to the enjoyment of his erring faculties; and, if I felt addled and confused before, I had scarcely passed the threshold of Verey's when I became absolutely like one in a trance. The large salon was more than usually crowded, and it was with difficulty that we obtained a place at a table where some other English were seated, among whom I recognised by lately made acquaintance, Mr. Edward Bingham.

Excepting a cup of coffee I had taken nothing the entire day, and so completely did my anxieties of different kinds subdue all appetite, that the most recherche viands of this well-known restaurant did not in the least tempt me. The champagne alone had any attraction for me; and, seduced by the icy coldness of the wine, I drank copiously. This was all that was wanting to complete the maddening confusion of my brain, and the effect was instantaneous; the lights danced before my eyes; the lustres whirled round; and, as the scattered fragments of conversations, on either side met my ear, I was

able to form some not very inaccurate conception of what insanity may be. Politics and literature, Mexican bonds and Noblet's legs, Pates de perdreaux and the quarantine laws, the extreme gauche and the "Bains Chinois," Victor Hugo and rouge et noir, had formed a species of grand ballet d'action in my fevered brain, and I was perfectly beside myself; occasionally, too, I would revert to my own concerns, although I was scarcely able to follow up any train of thought for more than a few seconds together, and totally inadequate to distinguish the false from the true. I continued to confound the counterfeit with my cousin, and wonder how my poor uncle, for whom I was about to put on the deepest mourning, could possibly think of driving me out of my lodgings. Of my duel for the morning, I had the most shadowy recollection, and could not perfectly comprehend whether it was O'Leary or I was the principal, and indeed cared but little. In this happy state of independent existence I must have passed a considerable time, and as my total silence when spoken to, or my irrelevant answers, appeared to have tired out my companions, they left me to the uninterrupted enjoyment of my own pleasant imaginings.

"Do you hear, Lorrequer," at last said Trevanion; "are you asleep, my dear friend? This gentleman has been good enough to invite us to breakfast to-morrow at St. Cloud."

I looked up, and was just able to recognise the well-trimmed moustache of Mr. Edward Bingham, as he stood mumbling something before me. "St. Cloud — what of St. Cloud?" said I.

"We have something in that quarter to-morrow."

"What is it, O'Leary? Can we go?"

"Oh! certainly — our engagement's an early one."

"We shall accept your polite invitation with pleasure" —

Here he stooped over, and whispered something in my ear; what, I cannot say, but I know that my reply, now equally lost to me, produced a hearty fit of laughing to my two friends.

My next recollection is, finding myself in a crowded loge at the theatre. It seems that O'Leary had acceded to a proposal from some of the other party to accompany them to the Porte St. Martin, where Mrs. Bingham and her daughter had engaged a box. Amid all the confusion which troubled thoughts and wine produced in me, I could not help perceiving a studied politeness and attention on the part of Mr. Edward Bingham towards me; and my first sobering reflection came, on finding that a place was reserved for me beside Miss Bingham, into which, by some contrivance I can in no wise explain, I found myself almost immediately installed. To all the excitements of champagne and punch, let the attractions of a French ballet be added, and, with a singularly pretty companion at your side, to whom you have already made sufficient advances to be aware that you are no longer indifferent to her, and I venture to predict, that it is much more likely your conversation will incline to flirting than political economy; and, moreover, that you make more progress during the performance of one single pas de deux upon the stage, than you have hitherto done in ten morning calls, with an unexceptionable whisker and the best fitting gloves in Paris. Alas! alas! it is only the rich man that ever wins at rouge et noir. The well-insured Indiaman, with her cargo of millions, comes safe into port; while the whole venture of some hardy veteran of the wave, founders within sight of his native shore. So is it ever; where success would be all and every thing, it never comes — but only be indifferent or regardless, and fortune is at your feet, suing and imploring your acceptance of her favours. What would I not have given for one half of that solicitude now so kindly expressed in my favour by Miss Bingham, if syllabled by the lips of Lady Jane Callonby — how would my heart have throbbed for one light smile from one, while I ungratefully basked in the openly avowed preference of the other. These were my first thoughts — what were the succeeding ones?

"Comment elle est belle," said a Frenchwoman, turning round in the box next to us, and directing at the same moment the eyes of a moustached hero upon my fair companion.

What a turn to my thoughts did this unexpected ejaculation give rise to! I now began to consider her more attentively, and certainly concurred fully in the Frenchwoman's verdict. I had never seen her look half so well before. The great fault in her features, which were most classically regular, lay in

the monotony and uniform character of their expression. Now this was quite changed. Her cheek was slightly flushed, and her eyes more brilliant than ever; while her slightly parted lips gave a degree of speaking earnestness to her expression, that made her perfectly beautiful.

Whether it was from this cause I cannot say, but I certainly never felt so suddenly decided in my life from one course to its very opposite, as I now did to make myself aimable to my lovely companion. And here, I fear, I must acknowledge, in the honesty of these confessional details, that vanity had also its share in the decision. To be the admitted and preferred suitor of the prettiest woman in company, is generally a strong inducement to fall desperately in love with her, independently of other temptations for so doing.

How far my successes tallied with my good intentions in this respect, I cannot now say. I only remember, that more than once O'Leary whispered to me something like a caution of some sort or other; but Emily's encouraging smiles and still more encouraging speeches had far more effect upon me than all the eloquence of the united service, had it been engaged in my behalf, would have effected. Mrs. Bingham, too — who, to do her justice, seemed but little cognisant of our proceedings — from time to time evinced that species of motherly satisfaction which very young men rejoice much in, and older ones are considerably alarmed at.

The play over O'Leary charged himself with the protection of madam, while I enveloped Emily in her cachmere, and drew her arm within my own. What my hand had to do with her's I know not; it remains one of the unexplained difficulties of that eventful evening. I have, it is true, a hazy recollection of pressing some very taper and delicately formed finger — and remember, too, the pain I felt next morning on awaking, by the pressure of a too tight ring, which had, by some strange accident, found its way to my finger, for which its size was but ill adapted.

"You will join us at supper, I hope," said Mrs. Bingham, as Trevanion handed her to her carriage. "Mr. Lorrequer, Mr. O'Leary, we shall expect you."

I was about to promise to do so, when Trevanion, suddenly interrupted me, saying that he had already accepted an invitation, which would, unfortunately, prevent us; and having hastily wished the ladies good night, hurried me away so abruptly, that I had not a moment given for even one parting look at the fair Emily.

"Why, Trevanion," said I, "what invitation are you dreaming of? I, for one, should have been delighted to have gone home with the Bingham's."

"So I perceived," said Trevanion, gravely; "and it was for that precise reason I so firmly refused what, individually, I should have been most happy to accept."

"Then, pray, have the goodness to explain."

"It is easily done. You have already, in recounting your manifold embarrassments, told me enough of these people, to let me see that they intend you should marry among them; and, indeed, you have gone quite far enough to encourage such an expectation. Your present excited state has led you sufficiently far this evening, and I could not answer for your not proposing in all form before the supper was over; therefore, I had no other course open to me than positively to refuse Mrs. Bingham's invitation. But here we are now at the 'Cadran rouge;' we shall have our lobster and a glass of Moselle, and then to bed, for we must not forget that we are to be at St. Cloud by seven."

"Ah! that is a good thought of yours about the lobster," said O'Leary; "and now, as you understand these matters, just order supper, and let us enjoy ourselves."

With all the accustomed despatch of a restaurant, a most appetizing petit souper made its speedy appearance; and although now perfectly divested of the high excitement which had hitherto possessed me, my spirits were excellent, and I never more relished our good fare and good fellowship.

After a full bumper to the health of the fair Emily had been proposed and drained by all three, Trevanion again explained how much more serious difficulty would result from any false step in that quarter than from all my other scrapes collectively.

This he represented so strongly, that for the first time I began to perceive the train of ill consequences that must inevitably result, and promised most faithfully to be guided by any counsel he might feel disposed to give me.

"Ah! what a pity," said O'Leary, "it is not my case. It's very little trouble it would cost any one to break off a match for me. I had always a most peculiar talent for those things.

"Indeed!" said Trevanion. "Pray, may we know your secret? for, perhaps, ere long we may have occasion for its employment."

"Tell it, by all means," said I.

"If I do," said O'Leary, "it will cost you a patient hearing; for my experiences are connected with two episodes in my early life, which, although not very amusing, are certainly instructive."

"Oh! by all means, let us hear them," said Trevanion; "for we have yet two bottles of chambertin left, and must finish them ere we part."

"Well, agreed," said O'Leary; "only, once for all, as what I am about to confide is strictly confidential, you must promise never even to allude to it hereafter in even the most remote manner, much less indulge in any unseemly mirth at what I shall relate."

Having pledged ourselves to secrecy and a becoming seriousness, O'Leary began his story as follows: —

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. O'LEARY'S FIRST LOVE

"It was during the vice-royalty of the late Duke of Richmond that the incidents I am about to mention took place. That was a few years since, and I was rather younger, and a little more particular about my dress than at present." Here the little man cast an eye of stoical satisfaction upon his uncouth habiliments, that nearly made us forget our compact, and laugh outright. "Well, in those wild and headstrong days of youthful ardour, I fell in love — desperately in love — and as always is, I believe, the case with our early experiments in that unfortunate passion, the object of my affection was in every way unsuited to me. She was a tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed maiden, with a romantic imagination, and a kind of a half-crazed poetic fervour, that often made me fear for her intellect. I'm a short, rather fat — I was always given this way" — here he patted a waistcoat that would fit Dame Lambert — "happy-minded little fellow, that liked my supper of oysters at the Pigeon-house, and my other creature-comforts, and hated every thing that excited or put one out of one's way, just as I would have hated a blister. Then, the devil would have it — for as certainly as marriages are made in heaven, flirtations have something to say to the other place — that I should fall most irretrievably in love with Lady Agnes Moreton. Bless my soul, it absolutely puts me in a perspiration this hot day, just to think over all I went through on her account; for, strange to say, the more I appeared to prosper in her good graces, the more did she exact on my part; the pursuit was like Jacob's ladder — if it did lead to heaven it was certainly an awfully long journey, and very hard on one's legs. There was not an amusement she could think of, no matter how unsuited to my tastes or my abilities, that she did not immediately take a violent fancy to; and then there was no escaping, and I was at once obliged to go with the tide, and heaven knows if it would not have carried me to my grave if it were not for the fortunate (I now call it) accident that broke off the affair for ever. One time she took a fancy for yachting, and all the dangles about her — and she always had a cordon of them — young aides-de-camp of her father the general, and idle hussars, in clanking sabertashes and most absurd mustachios — all approved of the taste, and so kept filling her mind with anecdotes of corsairs and smugglers, that at last nothing would satisfy her till I — I who always would rather have waited for low water, and waded the Liffey in all its black mud, than cross over in the ferry-boat, for fear of sickness — I was obliged to put an advertisement in the newspaper for a pleasure-boat, and, before three weeks, saw myself owner of a clinker-built schooner, of forty-eight tons, that by some mockery of fortune was called 'The Delight.' I wish you saw me, as you might have done every morning for about a month, as I stood on the Custom-house quay, giving orders for the outfit of the little craft. At first, as she bobbed and pitched with the flood-tide, I used to be a little giddy and rather qualmish, but at last I learned to look on without my head reeling. I began to fancy myself very much of a sailor, a delusion considerably encouraged by a huge P. jacket and a sou'-wester, both of which, though it was in the dog-days, Agnes insisted upon my wearing, saying I looked more like Dirk Hatteraick, who, I understood, was one of her favourite heroes in Walter Scott. In fact, after she suggested this, she and all her friends called me nothing but Dirk.

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