GEORGE MEREDITH

CELT AND SAXON. COMPLETE

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Celt and Saxon – Complete:

Содержание

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CHAPTER I. WHEREIN AN EXCURSION IS MADE IN A CELTIC MIND

A young Irish gentleman of the numerous clan O'Donnells, and a Patrick, hardly a distinction of him until we know him, had bound himself, by purchase of a railway-ticket, to travel direct to the borders of North Wales, on a visit to a notable landowner of those marches, the Squire Adister, whose family-seat was where the hills begin to lift and spy into the heart of black mountains. Examining his ticket with an apparent curiosity, the son of a greener island debated whether it would not be better for him to follow his inclinations, now that he had gone so far as to pay for the journey, and stay. But his inclinations were also subject to question, upon his considering that he had expended pounds English for the privilege of making the journey in this very train. He asked himself earnestly what was the nature of the power which forced him to do it—a bad genius or a good: and it seemed to him a sort of answer, inasmuch as it silenced the contending parties, that he had been the victim of an impetus. True; still his

present position involved a certain outlay of money simply, not at all his bondage to the instrument it had procured for him, and that was true; nevertheless, to buy a ticket to shy it away is an incident so uncommon, that if we can but pause to dwell on the singularity of the act, we are unlikely to abjure our fellowship with them who would not be guilty of it; and therefore, by the aid of his reflections and a remainder of the impetus, Mr. Patrick O'Donnell stepped into a carriage of the train like any ordinary English traveller, between whom and his destination there is an agreement to meet if they can.

It is an experience of hesitating minds, be they Saxon or others, that when we have submitted our persons to the charge of public companies, immediately, as if the renouncing of our independence into their hands had given us a taste of a will of our own, we are eager for the performance of their contract to do what we are only half inclined to; the train cannot go fast enough to please us, though we could excuse it for breaking down; stoppages at stations are impertinences, and the delivery of us at last on the platform is an astonishment, for it is not we who have done it—we have not even desired it. To be imperfectly in accord with the velocity precipitating us upon a certain point, is to be going without our heads, which have so much the habit of supposing it must be whither we intend, when we go in a determined manner, that a doubt of it distracts the understanding—decapitates us; suddenly to alight, moreover, and find ourselves dropped at the heels of flying Time, like

an unconsidered bundle, is anything but a reconstruction of the edifice. The natural revelry of the blood in speed suffers a violent shock, not to speak of our notion of being left behind, quite isolated and unsound. Or, if you insist, the condition shall be said to belong exclusively to Celtic nature, seeing that it had been drawn directly from a scion of one of those tribes.

Young Patrick jumped from the train as headless as good St. Denis. He was a juvenile thinker, and to discover himself here, where he both wished and wished not to be, now deeming the negative sternly in the ascendant, flicked his imagination with awe of the influence of the railway service upon the destinies of man. Settling a mental debate about a backward flight, he drove across the land so foreign to his eyes and affections, and breasted a strong tide of wishes that it were in a contrary direction. He would rather have looked upon the desert under a sand-storm, or upon a London suburb yet he looked thirstingly. Each variation of landscape of the curved highway offered him in a moment decisive features: he fitted them to a story he knew: the whole circle was animated by a couple of pale mounted figures beneath no happy light. For this was the air once breathed by Adiante Adister, his elder brother Philip's love and lost love: here she had been to Philip flame along the hill-ridges, his rose-world in the dust-world, the saintly in his earthly. And how had she rewarded him for that reverential love of her? She had forborne to kill him. The bitter sylph of the mountain lures men to climb till she winds them in vapour and leaves them groping, innocent

of the red crags below. The delicate thing had not picked his bones: Patrick admitted it; he had seen his brother hale and stout not long back. But oh! she was merciless, she was a witch. If ever queen-witch was, she was the crowned one!

For a personal proof, now: he had her all round him in a strange district though he had never cast eye on her. Yonder bare hill she came racing up with a plume in the wind: she was over the long brown moor, look where he would: and vividly was she beside the hurrying beck where it made edges and chattered white. He had not seen, he could not imagine her face: angelic dashed with demon beauty, was his idea of the woman, and there is little of a portrait in that; but he was of a world where the elemental is more individual than the concrete, and unconceived of sight she was a recognised presence for the green-island brain of a youth whose manner of hating was to conjure her spirit from the air and let fly his own in pursuit of her.

It has to be stated that the object of the youngster's expedition to Earlsfont was perfectly simple in his mind, however much it went against his nature to perform it. He came for the purpose of obtaining Miss Adister's Continental address; to gather what he could of her from her relatives, and then forthwith to proceed in search of her, that he might plead with her on behalf of his brother Philip, after a four years' division of the lovers. Could anything be simpler? He had familiarised himself with the thought of his advocacy during those four years. His reluctance to come would have been accountable to the Adisters by a sentiment

of shame at his family's dealings with theirs: in fact, a military captain of the O'Donnells had in old days played the adventurer and charmed a maid of a certain age into yielding her hand to him; and the lady was the squire of Earlsfont's only sister: she possessed funded property. Shortly after the union, as one that has achieved the goal of enterprise, the gallant officer retired from the service nor did north-western England put much to his credit the declaration of his wife's pronouncing him to be the best of husbands. She naturally said it of him in eulogy; his own relatives accepted it in some contempt, mixed with a relish of his hospitality: his wife's were constant in citing his gain by the marriage. Could he possibly have been less than that? they exclaimed. An excellent husband, who might easily have been less than that, he was the most devoted of cousins, and the liberal expenditure of his native eloquence for the furtherance of Philip's love-suit was the principal cause of the misfortune, if misfortune it could subsequently be called to lose an Adiante.

The Adister family were not gifted to read into the heart of a young man of a fanciful turn. Patrick had not a thought of shame devolving on him from a kinsman that had shot at a mark and hit it. Who sees the shame of taking an apple from a garden of the Hesperides? And as England cultivates those golden, if sometimes wrinkled, fruits, it would have seemed to him, in thinking about it, an entirely lucky thing for the finder; while a question of blood would have fired his veins to rival heat of self-assertion, very loftily towering: there were Kings in Ireland: cry

for one of them in Uladh and you will hear his name, and he has descendants yet! But the youth was not disposed unnecessarily to blazon his princeliness. He kept it in modest reserve, as common gentlemen keep their physical strength. His reluctance to look on Earlsfont sprang from the same source as unacknowledged craving to see the place, which had precipitated him thus far upon his road: he had a horror of scenes where a faithless girl had betrayed her lover. Love was his visionary temple, and his idea of love was the solitary light in it, painfully susceptible to coldair currents from the stories of love abroad over the world. Faithlessness he conceived to be obnoxious to nature; it stained the earth and was excommunicated; there could be no pardon of the crime, barely any for repentance. He conceived it in the feminine; for men are not those holy creatures whose conduct strikes on the soul with direct edge: a faithless man is but a general villain or funny monster, a subject rejected of poets, taking no hue in the flat chronicle of history: but a faithless woman, how shall we speak of her! Women, sacredly endowed with beauty and the wonderful vibrating note about the very mention of them, are criminal to hideousness when they betray. Cry, False! on them, and there is an instant echo of bleeding males in many circles, like the poor quavering flute-howl of transformed beasts, which at some remembering touch bewail their higher state. Those women are sovereignly attractive, too, loathsomely. Therein you may detect the fiend.

Our moralist had for some time been glancing at a broad,

handsome old country mansion on the top of a wooded hill backed by a swarm of mountain heads all purple-dark under clouds flying thick to shallow, as from a brush of sepia. The dim silver of half-lighted lakewater shot along below the terrace. He knew the kind of sky, having oftener seen that than any other, and he knew the house before it was named to him and he had flung a discolouring thought across it. He contemplated it placably and studiously, perhaps because the shower-folding armies of the fields above likened its shadowed stillness to that of his Irish home. There had this woman lived! At the name of Earlsfont she became this witch, snake, deception. Earlsfont was the title and summary of her black story: the reverberation of the word shook up all the chapters to pour out their poison.

CHAPTER II. MR. ADISTER

Mr. Patrick O'Donnell drove up to the gates of Earlsfont notwithstanding these emotions, upon which light matter it is the habit of men of his blood too much to brood; though it is for our better future to have a capacity for them, and the insensible race is the oxenish.

But if he did so when alone, the second man residing in the Celt put that fellow by and at once assumed the social character on his being requested to follow his card into Mr. Adister's library. He took his impression of the hall that had heard her voice, the stairs she had descended, the door she had passed through, and the globes she had perchance laid hand on, and the old mappemonde, and the severely-shining orderly regiment of books breathing of her whether she had opened them or not, as he bowed to his host, and in reply to, 'So, sir! I am glad to see you,' said swimmingly that Earlsfont was the first house he had visited in this country: and the scenery reminded him of his part of Ireland: and on landing at Holyhead he had gone off straight to the metropolis by appointment to meet his brother Philip, just returned from Canada a full captain, who heartily despatched his compliments and respects, and hoped to hear of perfect health in this quarter of the world. And Captain Con the same, and he was very flourishing.

Patrick's opening speech concluded on the sound of a short

laugh coming from Mr. Adister.

It struck the young Irishman's ear as injurious and scornful in relation to Captain Con; but the remark ensuing calmed him:

'He has no children.'

'No, sir; Captain Con wasn't born to increase the number of our clan,' Patrick rejoined; and thought: By heaven! I get a likeness of her out of you, with a dash of the mother mayhap somewhere. This was his Puck-manner of pulling a girdle round about from what was foremost in his head to the secret of his host's quiet observation; for, guessing that such features as he beheld would be slumped on a handsome family, he was led by the splendid severity of their lines to perceive an illimitable pride in the man likely to punish him in his offspring, who would inherit that as well; so, as is the way with the livelier races, whether they seize first or second the matter or the spirit of what they hear, the vivid indulgence of his own ideas helped him to catch the right meaning by the tail, and he was enlightened upon a domestic unhappiness, although Mr. Adister had not spoken miserably. The 'dash of the mother' was thrown in to make Adiante, softer, and leave a loophole for her relenting.

The master of Earlsfont stood for a promise of beauty in his issue, requiring to be softened at the mouth and along the brows, even in men. He was tall, and had clear Greek outlines: the lips were locked metal, thin as edges of steel, and his eyes, when he directed them on the person he addressed or the person speaking, were as little varied by motion of the lids as eyeballs of a stone

bust. If they expressed more, because they were not sculptured eyes, it was the expression of his high and frigid nature rather than any of the diversities pertaining to sentiment and shades of meaning.

'You have had the bequest of an estate,' Mr. Adister said, to compliment him by touching on his affairs.

'A small one; not a quarter of a county,' said Patrick.

'Productive, sir?'

"Tis a tramp of discovery, sir, to where bog ends and cultivation begins.'

'Bequeathed to you exclusively over the head of your elder brother, I understand.'

Patrick nodded assent. 'But my purse is Philip's, and my house, and my horses.'

'Not bequeathed by a member of your family?'

'By a distant cousin, chancing to have been one of my godmothers.'

'Women do these things,' Mr. Adister said, not in perfect approbation of their doings.

'And I think too, it might have gone to the elder,' Patrick replied to his tone.

'It is not your intention to be an idle gentleman?'

'No, nor a vagrant Irishman, sir.'

'You propose to sit down over there?'

'When I've more brains to be of service to them and the land, I do.'

Mr. Adister pulled the arm of his chair. 'The professions are crammed. An Irish gentleman owning land might do worse. I am in favour of some degree of military training for all gentlemen. You hunt?'

Patrick's look was, 'Give me a chance'; and Mr. Adister continued: 'Good runs are to be had here; you shall try them. You are something of a shot, I suppose. We hear of gentlemen now who neither hunt nor shoot. You fence?'

'That's to say, I've had lessons in the art.'

'I am not aware that there is now an art of fencing taught in Ireland.'

'Nor am I,' said Patrick; 'though there's no knowing what goes on in the cabins.'

Mr. Adister appeared to acquiesce. Observations of sly import went by him like the whispering wind.

'Your priests should know,' he said.

To this Patrick thought it well not to reply. After a pause between them, he referred to the fencing.

'I was taught by a Parisian master of the art, sir.'

'You have been to Paris?'

'I was educated in Paris.'

'How? Ah!' Mr. Adister corrected himself in the higher notes of recollection. 'I think I have heard something of a Jesuit seminary.'

'The Fathers did me the service to knock all I know into me, and call it education, by courtesy,' said Patrick, basking in the

unobscured frown of his host.

'Then you are accustomed to speak French?' The interrogation was put to extract some balm from the circumstance.

Patrick tried his art of fence with the absurdity by saying: 'All but like a native.'

'These Jesuits taught you the use of the foils?'

'They allowed me the privilege of learning, sir.'

After meditation, Mr. Adister said: 'You don't dance?' He said it speculating on the' kind of gentleman produced in Paris by the disciples of Loyola.

'Pardon me, sir, you hit on another of my accomplishments.'

'These Jesuits encourage dancing?'

'The square dance—short of the embracing: the valse is under interdict.'

Mr. Adister peered into his brows profoundly for a glimpse of the devilry in that exclusion of the valse.

What object had those people in encouraging the young fellow to be a perfect fencer and dancer, so that he should be of the school of the polite world, and yet subservient to them?

'Thanks to the Jesuits, then, you are almost a Parisian,' he remarked; provoking the retort:

'Thanks to them, I've stored a little, and Paris is to me as pure a place as four whitewashed walls:' Patrick added: 'without a shadow of a monk on them.' Perhaps it was thrown in for the comfort of mundane ears afflicted sorely, and no point of principle pertained to the slur on a monk.

Mr. Adister could have exclaimed, That shadow of the monk! had he been in an exclamatory mood. He said: 'They have not made a monk of you, then.'

Patrick was minded to explain how that the Jesuits are a religious order exercising worldly weapons. The lack of precise words admonished him of the virtue of silence, and he retreated —with a quiet negative: 'They have not.'

'Then, you are no Jesuit?' he was asked.

Thinking it scarcely required a response, he shrugged.

'You would not change your religion, sir?' said Mr. Adister in seeming anger.

Patrick thought he would have to rise: he half fancied himself summoned to change his religion or depart from the house.

'Not I,' said he.

'Not for the title of Prince?' he was further pressed, and he replied:

'I don't happen to have an ambition for the title of Prince.'

'Or any title!' interjected Mr. Adister, 'or whatever the devil can offer!—or,' he spoke more pointedly, 'for what fools call a brilliant marriage?'

'My religion?' Patrick now treated the question seriously and raised his head: 'I'd not suffer myself to be asked twice.'

The sceptical northern-blue eyes of his host dwelt on him with their full repellent stare.

The young Catholic gentleman expected he might hear a frenetic zealot roar out: Be off!

He was not immediately reassured by the words 'Dead or alive, then, you have a father!'

The spectacle of a state of excitement without a show of feeling was novel to Patrick. He began to see that he was not implicated in a wrath that referred to some great offender, and Mr. Adister soon confirmed his view by saying: 'You are no disgrace to your begetting, sir!'

With that he quitted his chair, and hospitably proposed to conduct his guest over the house and grounds.

CHAPTER III. CAROLINE

Men of the Adister family having taken to themselves brides of a very dusty pedigree from the Principality, there were curious rough heirlooms to be seen about the house, shields on the armoury walls and hunting-horns, and drinking-horns, and spears, and chain-belts bearing clasps of heads of beasts; old gold ornaments, torques, blue-stone necklaces, under glass-cases, were in the library; huge rings that must have given the wearers fearful fists; a shirt of coarse linen with a pale brown spot on the breast, like a fallen beech-leaf; and many sealed parchment-skins, very precious, for an inspection of which, as Patrick was bidden to understand, History humbly knocked at the Earlsfont hall-doors; and the proud muse made her transcripts of them kneeling. He would have been affected by these wonders had any relic of Adiante appeased his thirst. Or had there been one mention of her, it would have disengaged him from the incessant speculations regarding the daughter of the house, of whom not a word was uttered. No portrait of her was shown. Why was she absent from her home so long? where was she? How could her name be started? And was it she who was the sinner in her father's mind? But the idolatrous love between Adiante and her father was once a legend: they could not have been cut asunder. She had offered up her love of Philip as a sacrifice to it: Patrick recollected that, and now with a softer gloom on his

brooding he released her from the burden of his grand charge of unfaithfulness to the truest of lovers, by acknowledging that he was in the presence of the sole rival of his brother. Glorious girl that she was, her betrayal of Philip had nothing of a woman's base caprice to make it infamous: she had sacrificed him to her reading of duty; and that was duty to her father; and the point of duty was in this instance rather a sacred one. He heard voices murmur that she might be praised. He remonstrated with them, assuring them, as one who knew, that a woman's first duty is her duty to her lover; her parents are her second thought. Her lover, in the consideration of a real soul among the shifty creatures, is her husband; and have we not the word of heaven directing her to submit herself to him who is her husband before all others? That peerless Adiante had previously erred in the upper sphere where she received her condemnation, but such a sphere is ladder and ladder and silver ladder high above your hair-splitting pates, you children of earth, and it is not for you to act on the verdict in decrying her: rather 'tis for you to raise hymns of worship to a saint.

Thus did the ingenious Patrick change his ground and gain his argument with the celerity of one who wins a game by playing it without an adversary. Mr. Adister had sprung a new sense in him on the subject of the renunciation of the religion. No thought of a possible apostasy had ever occurred to the youth, and as he was aware that the difference of their faith had been the main cause of the division of Adiante and Philip, he could at least consent

to think well of her down here, that is, on our flat surface of earth. Up there, among the immortals, he was compelled to shake his head at her still, and more than sadly in certain moods of exaltation, reprovingly; though she interested him beyond all her sisterhood above, it had to be confessed.

They traversed a banqueting-hall hung with portraits, to two or three of which the master of Earlsfont carelessly pointed, for his guest to be interested in them or not as he might please. A reception-hall flung folding-doors on a grand drawing-room, where the fires in the grates went through the ceremony of warming nobody, and made a show of keeping the house alive. A modern steel cuirass, helmet and plume at a corner of the armoury reminded Mr. Adister to say that he had worn the uniform in his day. He cast an odd look at the old shell containing him when he was a brilliant youth. Patrick was marched on to Colonel Arthur's rooms, and to Captain David's, the sailor. Their father talked of his two sons. They appeared to satisfy him. If that was the case, they could hardly have thrown off their religion. Already Patrick had a dread of naming the daughter. An idea struck him that she might be the person who had been guilty of it over there on the Continent. What if she had done it, upon a review of her treatment of her lover, and gone into a convent to wait for Philip to come and claim her?—saying, 'Philip, I've put the knife to my father's love of me; love me double'; and so she just half swoons, enough to show how the dear angel looks in her sleep: a trick of kindness these heavenly women have, that

we heathen may get a peep of their secret rose-enfolded selves; and dream 's no word, nor drunken, for the blessed mischief it works with us.

Supposing it so, it accounted for everything: for her absence, and her father's abstention from a mention of her, and the pretty good sort of welcome Patrick had received; for as yet it was unknown that she did it all for an O'Donnell.

These being his reflections, he at once accepted a view of her that so agreeably quieted his perplexity, and he leapt out of his tangle into the happy open spaces where the romantic things of life are as natural as the sun that rises and sets. There you imagine what you will; you live what you imagine. An Adiante meets her lover another Adiante, the phantom likeness of her, similar to the finger-tips, hovers to a meeting with some one whose heart shakes your manful frame at but a thought of it. But this other Adiante is altogether a secondary conception, barely descried, and chased by you that she may interpret the mystical nature of the happiness of those two, close-linked to eternity, in advance. You would learn it, if she would expound it; you are ready to learn it, for the sake of knowledge; and if you link yourself to her and do as those two are doing, it is chiefly in a spirit of imitation, in sympathy with the darting couple ahead....

Meanwhile he conversed, and seemed, to a gentleman unaware of the vaporous activities of his brain, a young fellow of a certain practical sense.

'We have not much to teach you in: horseflesh,' Mr. Adister

said, quitting the stables to proceed to the gardens.

'We must look alive to keep up our breed, sir,' said Patrick. 'We're breeding too fine: and soon we shan't be able to horse our troopers. I call that the land for horses where the cavalry's well-mounted on a native breed.'

'You have your brother's notions of cavalry, have you!'

'I leave it to Philip to boast what cavalry can do on the field. He knows: but he knows that troopers must be mounted: and we're fineing more and more from bone: with the sales to foreigners! and the only chance of their not beating us is that they'll be so good as follow our bad example. Prussia's well horsed, and for the work it's intended to do, the Austrian light cavalry's a model. So I'm told. I'll see for myself. Then we sit our horses too heavy. The Saxon trooper runs headlong to flesh. 'Tis the beer that fattens and swells him. Properly to speak, we've no light cavalry. The French are studying it, and when they take to studying, they come to the fore. I'll pay a visit to their breeding establishments. We've no studying here, and not a scrap of system that I see. All the country seems armed for bullying the facts, till the periodical panic arrives, and then it 's for lying flat and roaring—and we'll drop the curtain, if you please.'

'You say we,' returned Mr. Adister. 'I hear you launched at us English by the captain, your cousin, who has apparently yet to learn that we are one people.'

'We 're held together and a trifle intermixed; I fancy it's we with him and with me when we're talking of army or navy,' said

Patrick. 'But Captain Con's a bit of a politician: a poor business, when there's nothing to be done.'

'A very poor business!' Mr. Adister rejoined,

'If you'd have the goodness to kindle his enthusiasm, he'd be for the first person plural, with his cap in the air,' said Patrick.

'I detest enthusiasm.

'You're not obliged to adore it to give it a wakener.

'Pray, what does that mean?'

Patrick cast about to reply to the formal challenge for an explanation.

He began on it as it surged up to him: 'Well, sir, the country that's got hold of us, if we 're not to get loose. We don't count many millions in Europe, and there's no shame in submitting to force majeure, if a stand was once made; and we're mixed up, 'tis true, well or ill; and we're stronger, both of us, united than tearing to strips: and so, there, for the past! so long as we can set our eyes upon something to admire, instead of a bundle squatting fat on a pile of possessions and vowing she won't budge; and taking kicks from a big foot across the Atlantic, and shaking bayonets out of her mob-cap for a little one's cock of the eye at her: and she's all for the fleshpots, and calls the rest of mankind fools because they're not the same: and so long as she can trim her ribands and have her hot toast and tea, with a suspicion of a dram in it, she doesn't mind how heavy she sits: nor that 's not the point, nor 's the land question, nor the potato crop, if only she wore the right sort of face to look at, with a bit of brightness about it, to show

an idea inside striking alight from the day that's not yet nodding at us, as the tops of big mountains do: or if she were only braced and gallant, and cried, Ready, though I haven't much outlook! We'd be satisfied with her for a handsome figure. I don't know whether we wouldn't be satisfied with her for politeness in her manners. We'd like her better for a spice of devotion to alight higher up in politics and religion. But the key of the difficulty's a sparkle of enthusiasm. It's part business, and the greater part sentiment. We want a rousing in the heart of us; or else we'd be pleased with her for sitting so as not to overlap us entirely: we'd feel more at home, and behold her more respectfully. We'd see the policy of an honourable union, and be joined to you by more than a telegraphic cable. That's Captain Con, I think, and many like him.'

Patrick finished his airy sketch of the Irish case in a key signifying that he might be one among the many, but unobtrusive.

'Stick to horses!' observed Mr. Adister.

It was pronounced as the termination to sheer maundering.

Patrick talked on the uppermost topic for the remainder of their stroll.

He noticed that his host occasionally allowed himself to say, 'You Irish': and he reflected that the saying, 'You English,' had been hinted as an offence.

He forgot to think that he had possibly provoked this alienation in a scornfully proud spirit. The language of metaphor was to Mr. Adister fool's froth. He conceded the use of it to

the Irish and the Welsh as a right that stamped them for what they were by adopting it; and they might look on a country as a 'she,' if it amused them: so long as they were not recalcitrant, they were to be tolerated, they were a part of us; doubtless the nether part, yet not the less a part for which we are bound to exercise a specially considerate care, or else we suffer, for we are sensitive there: this is justice but the indications by fiddle-faddle verbiage of anything objectionable to the whole in the part aroused an irritability that speedily endued him with the sense of sanity opposing lunacy; when, not having a wide command of the undecorated plain speech which enjoyed his approval, he withdrew into the entrenchments of contempt.

Patrick heard enough to let him understand why the lord of Earlsfont and Captain Con were not on the best of terms. Once or twice he had a twinge or suspicion of a sting from the tone of his host, though he was not political and was of a mood to pity the poor gentleman's melancholy state of solitariness, with all his children absent, his wife dead, only a niece, a young lady of twenty, to lend an air of grace and warmth to his home.

She was a Caroline, and as he had never taken a liking to a Caroline, he classed her in the tribe of Carolines. To a Kathleen, an Eveleen, a Nora, or a Bessy, or an Alicia, he would have bowed more cordially on his introduction to her, for these were names with portraits and vistas beyond, that shook leaves of recollection of the happiest of life—the sweet things dreamed undesiringly in opening youth. A Caroline awakened no soft association of

fancies, no mysterious heaven and earth. The others had variously tinted skies above them; their features wooed the dream, led it on as the wooded glen leads the eye till we are deep in richness. Nor would he have throbbed had one of any of his favourite names appeared in the place of Caroline Adister. They had not moved his heart, they had only stirred the sources of wonder. An Eveleen had carried him farthest to imagine the splendours of an Adiante, and the announcement of the coming of an Eveleen would perchance have sped a little wild fire, to which what the world calls curiosity is frozenly akin, through his veins.

Mr. Adister had spoken of his niece Caroline. A lacquey, receiving orders from his master, mentioned Miss Adister. There was but one Miss Adister for Patrick. Against reason, he was raised to anticipate the possible beholding of her, and Caroline's entrance into the drawing-room brought him to the ground. Disappointment is a poor term for the descent from an immoderate height, but the acknowledgment that we have shot up irrationally reconciles even unphilosophical youth to the necessity of the fall, though we must continue sensible of a shock. She was the Miss Adister; and how, and why? No one else accompanied them on their march to the dinner-table. Patrick pursued his double task of hunting his thousand speculations and conversing fluently, so that it is not astonishing if, when he retired to his room, the impression made on him by this young Caroline was inefficient to distinguish her from the horde of her baptismal sisters. And she had a pleasant face: he was able

to see that, and some individuality in the look of it, the next morning; and then he remembered the niceness of her manners. He supposed her to have been educated where the interfusion of a natural liveliness with a veiling retenue gives the title of lady. She had enjoyed the advantage of having an estimable French lady for her governess, she informed him, as they sauntered together on the terrace.

'A Protestant, of course,' Patrick spoke as he thought.

'Madame Dugue is a Catholic of Catholics, and the most honourable of women.'

'That I'll believe; and wasn't for proselytisms,' said he.

'Oh, no: she was faithful to her trust.'

'Save for the grand example!'

'That,' said Caroline, 'one could strive to imitate without embracing her faith.'

'There's my mind clear as print!' Patrick exclaimed. 'The Faith of my fathers! and any pattern you like for my conduct, if it's a good one.'

Caroline hesitated before she said: 'You have noticed my Uncle Adister's prepossession; I mean, his extreme sensitiveness on that subject.'

'He blazed on me, and he seemed to end by a sort of approval.'

She sighed. 'He has had cause for great unhappiness.'

'Is it the colonel, or the captain? Forgive me!'

Her head shook.

'Is it she? Is it his daughter? I must ask!'

'You have not heard?'

Oh! then, I guessed it,' cried Patrick, with a flash of pride in his arrowy sagacity. 'Not a word have I heard, but I thought it out for myself; because I love my brother, I fancy. And now, if you'll be so good, Miss Caroline, let me beg, it's just the address, or the city, or the country—where she is, can you tell me?—just whereabouts! You're surprised: but I want her address, to be off, to see her; I'm anxious to speak to her. It's anywhere she may be in a ring, only show me the ring, I'll find her, for I've a load; and there's nothing like that for sending you straight, though it's in the dark; it acts like an instinct. But you know the clear address, and won't let me be running blindfold. She's on the Continent and has been a long time, and it was the capital of Austria, which is a Catholic country, and they've Irish blood in the service there, or they had. I could drop on my knees to you!'

The declaration was fortunately hushed by a supplicating ardour, or Mr. Adister would have looked more surprised than his niece. He stepped out of the library window as they were passing, and, evidently with a mind occupied by his own affairs, held up an opened letter for Caroline's perusal. She took a view of the handwriting.

'Any others?' she said.

'You will consider that one enough for the day,' was his answer.

Patrick descended the terrace and strolled by the waterside, grieved at their having bad news, and vexed with himself for

being a stranger, unable to console them.

Half an hour later they were all three riding to the market-town, where Mr. Adister paid a fruitless call on his lawyer.

'And never is at home! never was known to be at home when wanted!' he said, springing back to the saddle.

Caroline murmured some soothing words. They had a perverse effect.

'His partner! yes, his partner is at home, but I do not communicate upon personal business with his partner; and by and by there will be, I suppose, a third partner. I might as well deposit my family history in the hands of a club. His partner is always visible. It is my belief that Camminy has taken a partner that he may act the independent gentleman at his leisure. I, meantime, must continue to be the mark for these letters. I shall expect soon to hear myself abused as the positive cause of the loss of a Crown!'

'Mr. Camminy will probably appear at the dinner hour,' said Caroline.

'Claret attracts him: I wish I could say as much of duty,' rejoined her uncle.

Patrick managed to restrain a bubbling remark on the respective charms of claret and duty, tempting though the occasion was for him to throw in a conversational word or two.

He was rewarded for listening devoutly.

Mr. Adister burst out again: 'And why not come over here to settle this transaction herself?—provided that I am spared the

presence of her Schinderhannes! She could very well come. I have now received three letters bearing on this matter within as many months. Down to the sale of her hereditary jewels! I profess no astonishment. The jewels may well go too, if Crydney and Welvas are to go. Disrooted body and soul!—for a moonshine title!—a gaming-table foreign knave!—Known for a knave!—A young gentlewoman?—a wild Welsh…!'

Caroline put her horse to a canter, and the exclamations ended, leaving Patrick to shuffle them together and read the riddle they presented, and toss them to the wind, that they might be blown back on him by the powers of air in an intelligible form.

CHAPTER IV. THE PRINCESS

Dinner, and a little piano-music and a song closed an evening that was not dull to Patrick in spite of prolonged silences. The quiet course of things within the house appeared to him to have a listening ear for big events outside. He dreaded a single step in the wrong direction, and therefore forbore to hang on any of his conjectures; for he might perchance be unjust to the blessedest heroine on the surface of the earth—a truly awful thought! Yet her name would no longer bear the speaking of it to himself. It conjured up a smoky moon under confounding eclipse.

Who was Schinderhannes?

Mr. Adister had said, her Schinderhannes.

Patrick merely wished to be informed who the man was, and whether he had a title, and was much of a knave: and particularly Patrick would have liked to be informed of the fellow's religion. But asking was not easy.

It was not possible. And there was a barrel of powder to lay a fiery head on, for a pillow!

To confess that he had not the courage to inquire was as good as an acknowledgment that he knew too much for an innocent questioner. And what did he know? His brother Philip's fair angel forbade him to open the door upon what he knew. He took a peep through fancy's keyhole, and delighted himself to think that he had seen nothing.

After a turbulent night with Schinderhannes, who let him go no earlier than the opening of a December day, Patrick hied away to one of the dusky nooks by the lake for a bracing plunge. He attributed to his desire for it the strange deadness of the atmosphere, and his incapacity to get an idea out of anything he looked on: he had not a sensation of cold till the stinging element gripped him. It is the finest school for the cure of dreamers; two minutes of stout watery battle, with the enemy close all round, laughing, but not the less inveterate, convinced him that, in winter at least, we have only to jump out of our clothes to feel the reality of things in a trice. The dip was sharpening; he could say that his prescription was good for him; his craving to get an idea ceased with it absolutely, and he stood in far better trim to meet his redoubtable adversary of overnight; but the rascal was a bandit and had robbed him of his purse; that was a positive fact; his vision had gone; he felt himself poor and empty and rejoicing in the keenness of his hunger for breakfast, singularly lean. A youth despoiled of his Vision and made sensible by the activity of his physical state that he is a common machine, is eager for meat, for excess of whatsoever you may offer him; he is on the highroad of recklessness, and had it been the bottle instead of Caroline's coffee-cup, Patrick would soon have received a priming for a delivery of views upon the sex, and upon love, and the fools known as lovers, acrid enough to win the applause of cynics.

Boasting was the best relief that a young man not without modesty could find. Mr. Adister complimented him on the

robustness of his habits, and Patrick 'would like to hear of the temptation that could keep him from his morning swim.'

Caroline's needle-thrust was provoked:

'Would not Arctic weather deter you, Mr. O'Donnell?' He hummed, and her eyes filled with the sparkle.

'Short of Arctic,' he had to say. 'But a gallop, after an Arctic bath, would soon spin the blood-upon an Esquimaux dog, of course,' he pursued, to anticipate his critic's remark on the absence of horses, with a bow.

She smiled, accepting the mental alertness he fastened on her.

We must perforce be critics of these tear-away wits; which are, moreover, so threadbare to conceal the character! Caroline led him to vaunt his riding and his shooting, and a certain time passed before she perceived that though he responded naturally to her first sly attacks, his gross exaggerations upon them had not been the triumph of absurdity she supposed herself to have evoked.

Her wish was to divert her uncle. Patrick discerned the intention and aided her.

'As for entertainment,' he said, in answer to Mr. Adister's courteous regrets that he would have to be a prisoner in the house until his legal adviser thought proper to appear, 'I'll be perfectly happy if Miss Caroline will give me as much of her company as she can spare. It 's amusing to be shot at too, by a lady who 's a good marksman! And birds and hares are always willing to wait for us; they keep better alive. I forgot to say that I can sing.'

‘Then I was in the presence of a connoisseur last night,’ said Caroline. Mr. Adister consulted his watch and the mantelpiece clock for a minute of difference between them, remarking that he was a prisoner indeed, and for the whole day, unless Camminy should decide to come. ‘There is the library,’ he said, ‘if you care for books; the best books on agriculture will be found there. You can make your choice in the stables, if you would like to explore the country. I am detained here by a man who seems to think my business of less importance than his pleasures. And it is not my business; it is very much the reverse but I am compelled to undertake it as my own, when I abhor the business. It is hard for me to speak of it, much more to act a part in it.’

‘Perhaps,’ Caroline interposed hurriedly, ‘Mr. O’Donnell would not be unwilling to begin the day with some duets?’

Patrick eagerly put on his shame-face to accept her invitation, protesting that his boldness was entirely due to his delight in music.

‘But I’ve heard,’ said he, ‘that the best fortification for the exercise of the a voice is hearty eating, so I ‘ll pay court again to that game-pie. I’m one with the pigs for truffles.’

His host thanked him for spreading the contagion of good appetite, and followed his example. Robust habits and heartiness were signs with him of a conscience at peace, and he thought the Jesuits particularly forbearing in the amount of harm they had done to this young man. So they were still at table when Mr. Camminy was announced and ushered in.

The man of law murmured an excuse or two; he knew his client's eye, and how to thaw it.

'No, Miss Adister, I have not breakfasted,' he said, taking the chair placed for him. 'I was all day yesterday at Windlemont, engaged in assisting to settle the succession. Where estates are not entailed!'

'The expectations of the family are undisciplined and certain not to be satisfied,' Mr. Adister carried on the broken sentence. 'That house will fall! However, you have lost no time this morning.—Mr. Patrick O'Donnell.'

Mr. Camminy bowed busily somewhere in the direction between Patrick and the sideboard.

'Our lawyers have us inside out, like our physicians,' Mr. Adister resumed, talking to blunt his impatience for a private discussion with his own.

'Surgery's a little in their practice too, we think in Ireland,' said Patrick.

Mr. Camminy assented: 'No doubt.' He was hungry, and enjoyed the look of the table, but the look of his client chilled the prospect, considered in its genial appearance as a feast of stages; having luminous extension; so, to ease his client's mind, he ventured to say: 'I thought it might be urgent.'

'It is urgent,' was the answer.

'Ah: foreign? domestic?'

A frown replied.

Caroline, in haste to have her duties over, that she might

escape the dreaded outburst, pressed another cup of tea on Mr. Camminy and groaned to see him fill his plate. She tried to start a topic with Patrick.

'The princess is well, I hope?' Mr. Camminy asked in the voice of discretion. 'It concerns her Highness?'

'It concerns my daughter and her inheritance from her mad grandmother!' Mr. Adister rejoined loudly; and he continued like a retreating thunder: 'A princess with a title as empty as a skull! At best a princess of swamps, and swine that fight for acorns, and men that fight for swine!'

Patrick caught a glance from Caroline, and the pair rose together.

'They did that in our mountains a couple of thousand years ago,' said Mr. Camminy, 'and the cause was not so bad, to judge by this ham. Men must fight: the law is only a quieter field for them.'

'And a fatter for the ravens,' Patrick joined in softly, as if carrying on a song.

'Have at us, Mr. O'Donnell! I'm ashamed of my appetite, Miss Adister, but the morning's drive must be my excuse, and I'm bounden to you for not forcing me to detain you. Yes, I can finish breakfast at my leisure, and talk of business, which is never particularly interesting to ladies—though,' Mr. Camminy turned to her uncle, 'I know Miss Adister has a head for it.'

Patrick hummed a bar or two of an air, to hint of his being fanatico per la musica, as a pretext for their departure.

‘If you’ll deign to give me a lesson,’ said he, as Caroline came away from pressing her lips to her uncle’s forehead.

‘I may discover that I am about to receive one,’ said she.

They quitted the room together.

Mr. Camminy had seen another Miss Adister duetting with a young Irishman and an O’Donnell, with lamentable results to that union of voices, and he permitted himself to be a little astonished at his respected client’s defective memory or indifference to the admonition of identical circumstances.

CHAPTER V. AT THE PIANO, CHIEFLY WITHOUT MUSIC

Barely had the door shut behind them when Patrick let his heart out: 'The princess?' He had a famished look, and Caroline glided along swiftly with her head bent, like one musing; his tone alarmed her; she lent him her ear, that she might get some understanding of his excitement, suddenly as it seemed to have come on him; but he was all in his hungry interrogation, and as she reached her piano and raised the lid, she saw it on tiptoe straining for her answer.

'I thought you were aware of my cousin's marriage.'

'Was I?' said Patrick, asking it of himself, for his conscience would not acknowledge an absolute ignorance. 'No: I fought it, I wouldn't have a blot on her be suspected. She's married! She's married to one of their princes!—married for a title!—and changed her religion! And Miss Adister, you're speaking of Adiante?'

'My cousin Adiante.'

'Well did I hate the name! I heard it first over in France. Our people wrote to me of her; and it's a name to set you thinking: Is she tender, or nothing like a woman,—a stone? And I put it to my best friend there, Father Clement, who's a scholar, up in everything, and he said it was a name with a pretty sound and

an ill meaning—far from tender; and a bad history too, for she was one of the forty-nine Danaides who killed their husbands for the sake of their father and was not likely to be the fiftieth, considering the name she bore. It was for her father's sake she as good as killed her lover, and the two Adiantes are like enough: they're as like as a pair of hands with daggers. So that was my brother Philip's luck! She's married! It's done; it's over, like death: no hope. And this time it's against her father; it's against her faith. There's the end of Philip! I could have prophesied it; I did; and when they broke, from her casting him off—true to her name! thought I. She cast him off, and she couldn't wait for him, and there's his heart broken. And I ready to glorify her for a saint! And now she must have loved the man, or his title, to change her religion. She gives him her soul! No praise to her for that: but mercy! what a love it must be. Or else it's a spell. But wasn't she rather one for flinging spells than melting? Except that we're all of us hit at last, and generally by our own weapon. But she loved Philip: she loved him down to shipwreck and drowning: she gave battle for him, and against her father; all the place here and the country's alive with their meetings and partings:—she can't have married! She wouldn't change her religion for her lover: how can she have done it for this prince? Why, it's to swear false oaths! —unless it's possible for a woman to slip out of herself and be another person after a death like that of a love like hers.'

Patrick stopped: the idea demanded a scrutiny.

'She's another person for me,' he said. 'Here's the worst I

ever imagined of her!—thousands of miles and pits of sulphur beyond the worst and the very worst! I thought her fickle, I thought her heartless, rather a black fairy, perched above us, not quite among the stars of heaven. I had my ideas. But never that she was a creature to jump herself down into a gulf and be lost for ever. She's gone, extinguished—there she is, under the penitent's hoodcap with eyeholes, before the faggots! and that's what she has married!—a burning torment, and none of the joys of martyrdom. Oh! I'm not awake. But I never dreamed of such a thing as this—not the hard, bare, lump-of-earth-fact:—and that's the only thing to tell me I'm not dreaming now.'

He subsided again; then deeply beseeching asked:

'Have you by chance a portrait of the gentleman, Miss Adister? Is there one anywhere?'

Caroline stood at her piano, turning over the leaves of a music-book, with a pressure on her eyelids. She was near upon being thrilled in spite of an astonishment almost petrifying: and she could nearly have smiled, so strange was his fraternal adoption, amounting to a vivification—of his brother's passion. He seemed quite naturally to impersonate Philip. She wondered, too, in the coolness of her alien blood, whether he was a character, or merely an Irish character. As to the unwontedness of the scene, Ireland was chargeable with that; and Ireland also, a little at his expense as a citizen of the polite world, relieved him of the extreme ridicule attached to his phrases and images.

She replied: 'We have no portrait.'

‘May I beg to know, have you seen him?’ said Patrick. Caroline shook her head.

‘Is there no telling what he is like, Miss Adister?’

‘He is not young.’

‘An old man!’

She had not said that, and she wished to defend her cousin from the charge of contracting such an alliance, but Patrick’s face had brightened out of a gloom of stupefaction; he assured her he was now ready to try his voice with hers, only she was to excuse a touch of hoarseness; he felt it slightly in his throat: and could he, she asked him, wonder at it after his morning’s bath?

He vindicated the saneness of the bath as well as he was able, showing himself at least a good reader of music. On the whole, he sang pleasantly, particularly French songs. She complimented him, with an emphasis on the French. He said, yes, he fancied he did best in French, and he had an idea of settling in France, if he found that he could not live quietly in his own country.

‘And becoming a Frenchman?’ said Caroline.

‘Why not?’ said he. ‘I ‘m more at home with French people; they’re mostly of my creed; they’re amiable, though they weren’t quite kind to poor Lally Tollendal. I like them. Yes, I love France, and when I’m called upon to fix myself, as I suppose I shall be some day, I shan’t have the bother over there that I should find here.’

She spoke reproachfully: ‘Have you no pride in the title of Englishman?’

'I 'm an Irishman.'

'We are one nation.'

'And it's one family where the dog is pulled by the collar.'

There was a retort on him: she saw, as it were, the box, but the lid would not open to assist her to it, and she let it go by, thinking in her patriotic derision, that to choose to be likened to the unwilling dog of the family was evidence of a want of saving pride.

Besides, she could not trust to the glibness of her tongue in a contest with a young gentleman to whom talking was as easy as breathing, even if sometimes his volubility exposed him to attack. A superior position was offered her by her being silent and critical. She stationed herself on it: still she was grieved to think of him as a renegade from his country, and she forced herself to say: 'Captain O'Donnell talks in that manner.'

'Captain Con is constitutionally discontented because he's a bard by nature, and without the right theme for his harp,' said Patrick. 'He has a notion of Erin as the unwilling bride of Mr. Bull, because her lord is not off in heroics enough to please her, and neglects her, and won't let her be mistress of her own household, and she can't forget that he once had the bad trick of beating her: she sees the marks. And you mayn't believe it, but the Captain's temper is to praise and exalt. It is. Irony in him is only eulogy standing on its head: a sort of an upside down; a perversion: that's our view of him at home. All he desires is to have us on the march, and he'd be perfectly happy marching,

never mind the banner, though a bit of green in it would put him in tune, of course. The banner of the Cid was green, Miss Adister: or else it's his pennon that was. And there's a quantity of our blood in Spain too. We've watered many lands.'

The poor young English lady's brain started wildly on the effort to be with him, and to understand whether she listened to humour or emotion: she reposed herself as well as she could in the contemplation of an electrically-flashing maze, where every line ran losing itself in another.

He added: 'Old Philip!' in a visible throb of pity for his brother; after the scrupulous dubitation between the banner and the pennon of the Cid!

It would have comforted her to laugh. She was closer upon tears, and without any reason for them in her heart.

Such a position brings the hesitancy which says that the sitting is at an end.

She feared, as she laid aside her music-books, that there would be more to come about Adiante, but he spared her. He bowed to her departing, and strolled off by himself.

CHAPTER VI. A CONSULTATION: WITH OPINIONS UPON WELSHWOMEN AND THE CAMBRIAN RACE

Later in the day she heard that he was out scouring the country on one of her uncle's horses. She had too many distressing matters to think of for so singular a young man to have any other place than that which is given to the fantastical in a troubled and serious mind. He danced there like the whimsy sunbeam of a shaken water below. What would be his opinion of Adiante if he knew of her determination to sell the two fair estates she inherited from a grandmother whom she had venerated; that she might furnish arms to her husband to carry out an audacious enterprise likely to involve both of them in blood and ruin? Would he not bound up aloft and quiver still more wildly? She respected, quaint though it was, his imaginative heat of feeling for Adiante sufficiently to associate him with her so far; and she lent him in fancy her own bewilderment and grief at her cousin's conduct, for the soothing that his exaggeration of them afforded her. She could almost hear his outcry.

The business of the hour demanded more of her than a seeking for refreshment. She had been invited to join the consultation

of her uncle with his lawyer. Mr. Adister tossed her another letter from Vienna, of that morning's delivery. She read it with composure. It became her task to pay no heed to his loss of patience, and induce him to acquiesce in his legal adviser's view which was, to temporise further, present an array of obstacles, and by all possible suggestions induce the princess to come over to England, where her father's influence with her would have a chance of being established again; and it might then be hoped that she, who had never when under sharp temptation acted disobediently to his wishes at home, and who certainly would not have dreamed of contracting the abhorred alliance had she been breathing the air of common sense peculiar to her native land, would see the prudence, if not the solemn obligation, of retaining to herself these family possessions. Caroline was urgent with her uncle to act on such good counsel. She marvelled at his opposition, though she detected the principal basis of it.

Mr. Adister had no ground of opposition but his own intemperateness. The Welsh grandmother's legacy of her estates to his girl, overlooking her brothers, Colonel Arthur and Captain David, had excessively vexed him, despite the strong feeling he entertained for Adiante; and not simply because of the blow he received in it unexpectedly from that old lady, as the last and heaviest of the long and open feud between them, but also, chiefly, that it outraged and did permanent injury to his ideas of the proper balance of the sexes. Between himself and Mrs. Winnion Rhys the condition of the balance had been a point

of vehement disputation, she insisting to have it finer up to equality, and he that the naturally lighter scale should continue to kick the beam. Behold now the consequence of the wilful Welshwoman's insanest of legacies! The estates were left to Adiante Adister for her sole use and benefit, making almost a man of her, and an unshackled man, owing no dues to posterity. Those estates in the hands of a woman are in the hands of her husband; and the husband a gambler and a knave, they are in the hands of the Jews—or gone to smoke. Let them go. A devilish malignity bequeathed them: let them go back to their infernal origin. And when they were gone, his girl would soon discover that there was no better place to come to than her home; she would come without an asking, and alone, and without much prospect of the intrusion of her infamous Hook-nose in pursuit of her at Earlsfont. The money wasted, the wife would be at peace. Here she would have leisure to repent of all the steps she had taken since that fatal one of the acceptance of the invitation to the Embassy at Vienna. Mr. Adister had warned her both against her going and against the influence of her friend Lady Wenchester, our Ambassadress there, another Welsh woman, with the weathervane head of her race. But the girl would accept, and it was not for him to hold out. It appeared to be written that the Welsh, particularly Welsh women, were destined to worry him up to the end of his days. Their women were a composition of wind and fire. They had no reason, nothing solid in their whole nature. Englishmen allied to them

had to learn that they were dealing with broomstick witches and irresponsible sprites. Irishwomen were models of propriety beside them: indeed Irishwomen might often be patterns to their English sisterhood. Mr. Adister described the Cambrian ladies as a kind of daughters of the Fata Morgana, only half human, and deceptive down to treachery, unless you had them fast by their spinning fancy. They called it being romantic. It was the ante-chamber of madness. Mad, was the word for them. You pleased them you knew not how, and just as little did you know how you displeased them. And you were long hence to be taught that in a certain past year, and a certain month, and on a certain day of the month, not forgetting the hour of the day to the minute of the hour, and attendant circumstances to swear loud witness to it, you had mortally offended them. And you receive your blow: you are sure to get it: the one passion of those women is for vengeance. They taste a wound from the lightest touch, and they nurse the venom for you. Possibly you may in their presence have had occasion to praise the military virtues of the builder of Carnarvon Castle. You are by and by pierced for it as hard as they can thrust. Or you have incidentally compared Welsh mutton with Southdown:—you have not highly esteemed their drunken Bards:—you have asked what the Welsh have done in the world; you are supposed to have slighted some person of their family—a tenth cousin!—anything turns their blood. Or you have once looked straight at them without speaking, and you discover years after that they have chosen to foist on you their idea of your

idea at the moment; and they have the astounding presumption to account this misreading of your look to the extent of a full justification, nothing short of righteous, for their treachery and your punishment! O those Welshwomen!

The much-suffering lord of Earlsfont stretched forth his open hand, palm upward, for a testifying instrument to the plain truth of his catalogue of charges. He closed it tight and smote the table. 'Like mother—and grandmother too—like daughter!' he said, and generalised again to preserve his dignity: 'They're aflame in an instant. You may see them quiet for years, but it smoulders. You dropped the spark, and they time the explosion.'

Caroline said to Mr. Camminy: 'You are sure you can give us the day?'

'All of it,' he replied, apologising for some show of restlessness. 'The fact is, Miss Adister, I married a lady from over the borders, and though I have never had to complain of her yet, she may have a finale in store. It's true that I love wild Wales.'

'And so do I' Caroline raised her eyes to imagined mountains.

'You will pardon me, Camminy,' said Mr. Adister.

The lawyer cracked his back to bow to the great gentleman so magnanimously humiliating himself. 'Sir! Sir!' he said. 'Yes, Welsh blood is queer blood, I own. They find it difficult to forgive; and trifles offend; and they are unhappily just as secretive as they are sensitive. The pangs we cause them, without our knowing it, must be horrible. They are born, it would seem, with more than the common allowance of kibes for treading on:

a severe misfortune for them. Now for their merits: they have poetry in them; they are valiant; they are hospitable to teach the Arab a lesson: I do believe their life is their friend's at need—seriously, they would lay it down for him: or the wherewithal, their money, their property, excepting the three-stringed harp of three generations back, worth now in current value sixpence halfpenny as a curiosity, or three farthings for firewood; that they'll keep against their own desire to heap on you everything they have—if they love you, and you at the same time have struck their imaginations. Offend them, however, and it's war, declared or covert. And I must admit that their best friend can too easily offend them. I have lost excellent clients, I have never understood why; yet I respect the remains of their literature, I study their language, I attend their gatherings and subscribe the expenses; I consume Welsh mutton with relish; I enjoy the Triads, and can come down on them with a quotation from Catwg the Wise: but it so chanced that I trod on a kibe, and I had to pay the penalty. There's an Arabian tale, Miss Adister, of a peaceful traveller who ate a date in the desert and flung away the stone, which hit an invisible son of a genie in the eye, and the poor traveller suffered for it. Well, you commit these mortal injuries to the invisible among the Welsh. Some of them are hurt if you call them Welsh. They scout it as the original Saxon title for them. No, they are Cymry, Cambrians! They have forgiven the Romans. Saxon and Norman are still their enemies. If you stir their hearts you find it so. And, by the way, if King Edward had not trampled them into

the mire so thoroughly, we should hear of it at times even now. Instead of penillions and englyns, there would be days for fiery triplets. Say the worst of them, they are soundheaded. They have a ready comprehension for great thoughts. The Princess Nikolas, I remember, had a special fondness for the words of Catwg the Wise.'

'Adiante,' had murmured Caroline, to correct his indiscretion.

She was too late.

'Nikolas!' Mr. Adister thundered. 'Hold back that name in this house, title and all, if you speak of my daughter. I refuse admission to it here. She has given up my name, and she must be known by the one her feather-brained grandmother proposed for her, to satisfy her pleasure in a fine sound. English Christian names are my preference. I conceded Arthur to her without difficulty. She had a voice in David, I recollect; with very little profit to either of the boys. I had no voice in Adiante; but I stood at my girl's baptism, and Adiante let her be. At least I saved the girl from the addition of Arianrod. It was to have been Adiante Arianrod. Can you credit it? Prince-pah! Nikolas? Have you a notion of the sort of prince that makes an English lady of the best blood of England his princess?'

The lawyer had a precise notion of the sort of prince appearing to Mr. Adister in the person of his foreign son-in-law. Prince Nikolas had been described to him before, with graphic touches upon the quality of the reputation he bore at the courts and in the gambling-saloons of Europe. Dreading lest his client's

angry heat should precipitate him on the prince again, to the confusion of a lady's ears, Mr. Camminy gave an emphatic and short affirmative.

'You know what he is like?' said Mr. Adister, with a face of disgust reflected from the bare thought of the hideous likeness.

Mr. Camminy assured him that the description of the prince's lineaments would not be new. It was, as he was aware, derived from a miniature of her husband, transmitted by the princess, on its flight out of her father's loathing hand to the hearthstone and under his heel.

Assisted by Caroline, he managed to check the famous delineation of the adventurer prince in which a not very worthy gentleman's chronic fever of abomination made him really eloquent, quick to unburden himself in the teeth of decorum.

'And my son-in-law! My son-in-law!' ejaculated Mr. Adister, tossing his head higher, and so he stimulated his amazement and abhorrence of the portrait he rather wondered at them for not desiring to have sketched for their execration of it, alluringly foul as it was: while they in concert drew him back to the discussion of his daughter's business, reiterating prudent counsel, with a knowledge that they had only to wait for the ebbing of his temper.

'Let her be informed, sir, that by coming to England she can settle the business according to her wishes in one quarter of the time it would take a Commission sent out to her—if we should be authorised to send out one,' said Mr. Camminy. 'By committing the business to you, I fancy I perceive your daughter's disposition

to consider your feelings: possibly to a reluctance to do the deed unsanctioned by her father. It would appear so to a cool observer, notwithstanding her inattention to your remonstrances.'

The reply was: 'Dine here and sleep here. I shall be having more of these letters,' Mr. Adister added, profoundly sighing.

Caroline slipped away to mark a conclusion to the debate; and Mr. Camminy saw his client redden fast and frown.

'Besides,' he spoke in a husky voice, descending upon a subject hateful, 'she tells me to-day she is not in a state to travel! Do you hear? Make what you can of it.'

The proud and injured gentleman had the aspect of one who receives a blow that it is impossible for him to resent. He could not speak the shame he felt: it was literally in his flesh. But the cause had been sufficiently hinted to set the lawyer staring as men do when they encounter situations of grisly humour, where certain of the passions of man's developed nature are seen armed and furious against our mild prevailing ancient mother nature; and the contrast is between our utter wrath and her simple exposition of the circumstances and consequences forming her laws. There are situations which pass beyond the lightly stirred perceptive wits to the quiet court of the intellect, to be received there as an addition to our acquaintance with mankind. We know not of what substance to name them. Humour in its intense strain has a seat somewhere about the mouth of tragedy, giving it the enigmatical faint wry pull at a corner visible at times upon the dreadful mask.

That Mr. Adister should be astonished at such a communication from the princess, after a year of her marriage: and that he should take it for a further outrage of his paternal sentiments, should actually redden and be hoarse in alluding to it: the revelation of such points in our human character set the humane old lawyer staring at the reserve space within himself apart from his legal being, whereon he by fits compared his own constitution with that of the individuals revealed to him by their acts and confidential utterances. For him, he decided that he would have rejoiced at the news.

Granting the prince a monster, however, as Mr. Adister unforcedly considered him, it was not so cheering a piece of intelligence that involved him yet closer with that man's rank blood: it curdled his own. The marriage had shocked and stricken him, cleaving, in his love for his daughter, a goodly tree and withering many flowers. Still the marriage was but Adiante's gulf: he might be called father-in-law of her spangled ruffian; son-in-law, the desperado-rascal would never be called by him. But the result of the marriage dragged him bodily into the gulf: he became one of four, numbering the beast twice among them. The subtlety of his hatred so reckoned it; for he could not deny his daughter in the father's child; he could not exclude its unhallowed father in the mother's: and of this man's child he must know and own himself the grandfather. If ever he saw the child, if drawn to it to fondle it, some part of the little animal not his daughter's would partake of his embrace. And if neither of his boys married,

and his girl gave birth to a son! darkness rolled upon that avenue of vision. A trespasser and usurper-one of the demon's brood chased his very name out of Earlsfont!

'Camminy, you must try to amuse yourself,' he said briskly. 'Anything you may be wanting at home shall be sent for. I must have you here to make sure that I am acting under good advice. You can take one of the keepers for an hour or two of shooting. I may join you in the afternoon. You will find occupation for your gun in the north covers.'

He wandered about the house, looking into several rooms, and only partially at rest when he discovered Caroline in one, engaged upon some of her aquarelle sketches. He asked where the young Irishman was.

'Are you in search of him?' said she. 'You like him, uncle? He is out riding, they tell me.'

'The youngster is used to south-western showers in that climate of his,' Mr. Adister replied. 'I dare say we could find the Jesuit in him somewhere. There's the seed. His cousin Con O'Donnell has filled him with stuff about Ireland and England: the man has no better to do than to train a parrot. What do you think of him, my love?'

The judgement was not easily formed for expression. 'He is not quite like what I remember of his brother Philip. He talks much more, does he not? He seems more Irish than his brother. He is very strange. His feelings are strong; he has not an idea of concealing them. For a young man educated by the Jesuits, he is

remarkably open.'

'The Jesuits might be of service to me just now!' Mr. Adister addressed his troubled soul, and spoke upon another conception of them: 'How has he shown his feelings?'

Caroline answered quickly: 'His love of his brother. Anything that concerns his brother moves him; it is like a touch on a musical instrument. Perhaps I should say a native one.'

'Concerns his brother?' Mr. Adister inquired, and his look requesting enlightenment told her she might speak.

'Adiante,' she said softly. She coloured.

Her uncle mused awhile in a half-somnolent gloom. 'He talks of this at this present day?'

'It is not dead to him. He really appears to have hoped… he is extraordinary. He had not heard before of her marriage. I was a witness of the most singular scene this morning, at the piano. He gathered it from what he had heard. He was overwhelmed by it. I could not exaggerate. It was impossible to help being a little touched, though it was curious, very strange.'

Her uncle's attentiveness incited her to describe the scene, and as it visibly relieved his melancholy, she did it with a few vivid indications of the quaint young Irishman's manner of speech. She concluded: 'At last he begged to see a portrait of her husband.'

'Not of her?' said Mr. Adister abruptly.

'No; only of her husband.'

'Show him her portrait.'

A shade of surprise was on Caroline's forehead. 'Shall I?' She

had a dim momentary thought that the sight of the beautiful face would not be good for Patrick.

'Yes; let him see the woman who could throw herself away on that branded villain called a prince, abjuring her Church for a little fouler than hangman to me and every gentleman alive. I desire that he should see it. Submission to the demands of her husband's policy required it of her, she says! Show it him when he returns; you have her miniature in your keeping. And to-morrow take him to look at the full-length of her before she left England and ceased to be a lady of our country. I will order it to be placed in the armoury. Let him see the miniature of her this day.'

Mr. Adister resolved at the same time that Patrick should have his portrait of the prince for a set-off to the face of his daughter. He craved the relief it would be to him to lay his colours on the prince for the sparkling amazement of one whom, according to Caroline's description, he could expect to feel with him acutely, which neither his niece nor his lawyer had done: they never did when he painted the prince. He was unstrung, heavily plunged in the matter of his chagrin and grief: his unhealed wound had been scraped and strewn with salt by his daughter's letter; he had a thirst for the kind of sympathy he supposed he would find in the young Irishman's horror at the husband of the incomparable beauty now past redemption degraded by her hideous choice; lost to England and to her father and to common respect. For none, having once had the picture of the man, could dissociate them; they were like heaven and its reverse, everlastingly coupled

in the mind by their opposition of characters and aspects. Her father could not, and he judged of others by himself. He had been all but utterly solitary since her marriage, brooded on it until it saturated him; too proud to speak of the thing in sadness, or claim condolence for this wound inflicted on him by the daughter he had idolised other than through the indirect method of causing people to wonder at her chosen yoke-fellow. Their stupefaction refreshed him. Yet he was a gentleman capable of apprehending simultaneously that he sinned against his pride in the means he adopted to comfort his nature. But the wound was a perpetual sickness needing soul-medicine. Proud as he was, and unbending, he was not stronger than his malady, and he could disguise, he could not contain, the cry of immoderate grief. Adiante had been to him something beyond a creature beloved; she had with her glorious beauty and great-heartedness been the sole object which had ever inspirited his imagination. He could have thought no man, not the most illustrious, worthy of her. And there she was, voluntarily in the hands of a monster! 'Husband!' Mr. Adister broke away from Caroline, muttering: 'Her husband's policy!'

She was used to his interjections; she sat thinking more of the strange request to her to show Mr. O'Donnell the miniature of Adiante. She had often thought that her uncle regretted his rejection of Philip. It appeared so to her now, though not by any consecutive process of reasoning. She went to fetch the miniature, and gazing on it, she tried to guess at Mr. O'Donnell's

thoughts when doing the same; for who so inflammable as he? And who, woman or man, could behold this lighted face, with the dark raised eyes and abounding auburn tresses, where the contrast of colours was in itself thrilling, and not admire, or more, half worship, or wholly worship? She pitied the youth: she fancied that he would not continue so ingenuously true to his brother's love of Adiante after seeing it; unless one might hope that the light above beauty distinguishing its noble classic lines, and the energy of radiance, like a morning of chivalrous promise, in the eyes, would subdue him to distant admiration. These were her flitting thoughts under the spell of her queenly cousin's visage. She shut up the miniature-case, and waited to hand it to young Mr. O'Donnell.

CHAPTER VII. THE MINIATURE

Patrick returned to Earlsfont very late; he had but ten minutes to dress for dinner; a short allowance after a heated ride across miry tracks, though he would have expended some of them, in spite of his punctilious respect for the bell of the house entertaining him, if Miss Adister had been anywhere on the stairs or corridors as he rushed away to his room. He had things to tell; he had not been out over the country for nothing.

Fortunately for his good social principles, the butler at Earlsfont was a wary supervisor of his man; great guest or little guest; Patrick's linen was prepared for him properly studded; he had only to spring out of one suit into another; and still more fortunately the urgency for a rapid execution of the manoeuvre prevented his noticing a large square envelope posted against the looking-glass of his toilette-table. He caught sight of it first when pulling down his shirt-cuffs with an air of recovered ease, not to say genial triumph, to think that the feat of grooming himself, washing, dressing and stripping, the accustomed persuasive final sweep of the brush to his hair-crop, was done before the bell had rung. His name was on the envelope; and under his name, in smaller letters,

Adiante.

'Shall I?' said he, doing the thing he asked himself about doing tearing open the paper cover of the portrait of her who had flitted

in his head for years unseen. And there she was, remote but present.

His underlip dropped; he had the look of those who bate breath and swarm their wits to catch a sound. At last he remembered that the summoning bell had been in his ears a long time back, without his having been sensible of any meaning in it. He started to and fro. The treasure he held declined to enter the breast-pocket of his coat, and the other pockets he perhaps, if sentimentally, justly discarded as being beneath the honour of serving for a temporary casket. He locked it up, with a vow to come early to rest. Even then he had thoughts whether it might be safe.

Who spoke, and what they uttered at the repast, and his own remarks, he was unaware of. He turned right and left a brilliant countenance that had the glitter of frost-light; it sparkled and was unreceptive. No wonder Miss Adister deemed him wilder and stranger than ever. She necessarily supposed the excess of his peculiarities to be an effect of the portrait, and would have had him, according to her ideas of a young man of some depth of feeling, dreamier. On the contrary, he talked sheer commonplace. He had ridden to the spur of the mountains, and had put up the mare, and groomed and fed her, not permitting another hand to touch her: all very well, and his praises of the mare likewise, but he had not a syllable for the sublime of the mountains. He might have careered over midland flats for any susceptibility that he betrayed to the grandeur of the scenery she

loved. Ultimately she fancied the miniature had been overlooked in his hurry to dress, and that he was now merely excited by his lively gallop to a certain degree of hard brightness noticeable in hunting men at their dinner.

The elixir in Patrick carried him higher than mountain crests. Adiante illumined an expanded world for him, miraculous, yet the real one, only wanting such light to show its riches. She lifted it out of darkness with swift throbs of her heavenliness as she swam to his eyelids, vanished and dazzled anew, and made these gleams of her and the dark intervals his dream of the winged earth on her flight from splendour to splendour, secresy to secresy;—follow you that can, the youth whose heart is an opened mine, whose head is an irradiated sky, under the spell of imagined magical beauty. She was bugle, banner, sunrise, of his inmost ambition and rapture.

And without a warning, she fled; her features were lost; his power of imagining them wrestled with vapour; the effort contracted his outlook. But if she left him blind of her, she left him with no lessened bigness of heart. He frankly believed in her revelation of a greater world and a livelier earth, a flying earth and a world wealthier than grouped history in heroic marvels: he fell back on the exultation of his having seen her, and on the hope for the speedy coming of midnight, when the fountain of her in the miniature would be seen and drunk of at his full leisure, and his glorious elation of thrice man almost up to mounting spirit would be restored to make him worthy of the vision.

Meanwhile Caroline had withdrawn and the lord of Earlsfont was fretting at his theme. He had decided not to be a party in the sale of either of his daughter's estates: let her choose other agents: if the iniquity was committed, his hands would be clean of it. Mr. Adister spoke by way of prelude to the sketch of 'this prince' whose title was a lurid delusion. Patrick heard of a sexagenarian rake and Danube adventurer, in person a description of falcon-Caliban, containing his shagginess in a frogged hussar-jacket and crimson pantaloons, with hook-nose, fox-eyes, grizzled billow of frowsy moustache, and chin of a beast of prey. This fellow, habitually one of the dogs lining the green tables of the foreign Baths, snapping for gold all day and half the night, to spend their winnings in debauchery and howl threats of suicide, never fulfilled early enough, when they lost, claimed his princedom on the strength of his father's murder of a reigning prince and sitting in his place for six months, till a merited shot from another pretender sent him to his account. 'What do you say to such a nest of assassins, and one of them, an outcast and blackleg, asking an English gentleman to acknowledge him as a member of his family! I have,' said Mr. Adister, 'direct information that this gibbet-bird is conspiring to dethrone—they call it—the present reigning prince, and the proceeds of my daughter's estates are, by her desire—if she has not written under compulsion of the scoundrel—intended to speed their blood-mongering. There goes a Welshwoman's legacy to the sea, with a herd of swine with devils in them!'

Mr. Camminy kept his head bent, his hand on his glass of port. Patrick stared, and the working of his troubled brows gave the unhappy gentleman such lean comfort as he was capable of taking. Patrick in sooth was engaged in the hard attempt at the same time to do two of the most difficult things which can be proposed to the ingenuity of sensational youth: he was trying to excuse a respected senior for conduct that he could not approve, while he did inward battle to reconcile his feelings with the frightful addition to his hoard of knowledge: in other words, he sought strenuously to mix the sketch of the prince with the dregs of the elixir coming from the portrait of Adiante; and now she sank into obscurity behind the blackest of brushes, representing her incredible husband; and now by force of some natural light she broke through the ugly mist and gave her adored the sweet lines and colours of the features he had lost. There was an ebb and flow of the struggle, until, able to say to himself that he saw her clearly as though the portrait was in the palm of his hand, the battle of the imagination ceased and she was fairer for him than if her foot had continued pure of its erratic step: fairer, owing to the eyes he saw with; he had shaken himself free of the exacting senses which consent to the worship of women upon the condition of their possessing all the precious and the miraculous qualities; among others, the gift of an exquisite fragility that cannot break; in short, upon terms flattering to the individual devotee. Without knowing it he had done it and got some of the upholding strength of those noblest of honest men who not

merely give souls to women—an extraordinary endowment of them—but also discourse to them with their souls.

Patrick accepted Adiante's husband: the man was her husband. Hideous (for there was no combating her father's painting of him), he was almost interesting through his alliance: —an example of how much earth the worshipper can swallow when he is quite sincere. Instead of his going under eclipse, the beauty of his lady eclipsed her monster. He believed in her right to choose according to her pleasure since her lover was denied her. Sitting alone by his fire, he gazed at her for hours and bled for Philip. There was a riddle to be answered in her cutting herself away from Philip; he could not answer it; her face was the vindication and the grief. The usual traverses besetting true lovers were suggested to him, enemies and slanders and intercepted letters. He rejected them in the presence of the beautiful inscrutable. Small marvel that Philip had loved her. 'Poor fellow' Patrick cried aloud, and drooped on a fit of tears.

The sleep he had was urgently dream-ridden to goals that eluded him and broadened to fresh races and chases waving something to be won which never was won, albeit untiringly pursued amid a series of adventures, tragic episodes; wild enthusiasm. The whole of it was featureless, a shifting agitation; yet he must have been endowed to extricate a particular meaning applied to himself out of the mass of tumbled events, and closely in relation to realities, for he quitted his bed passionately regretting that he had not gone through a course of drill and study

of the military art. He remembered Mr. Adister's having said that military training was good for all gentlemen.

'I could join the French Foreign Legion,' he thought.

Adiante was as beautiful by day as by night. He looked. The riddle of her was more burdensome in the daylight.

He sighed, and on another surging of his admiration launched the resolve that he would serve her blindly, without one question. How, when, where, and the means and the aim, he did not think of. There was she, and here was he, and heaven and a great heart would show the way.

Adiante at eighteen, the full length of her, fresh in her love of Philip, was not the same person to him, she had not the same secret; she was beautiful differently. By right he should have loved the portrait best: but he had not seen it first; he had already lived through a life of emotions with the miniature, and could besides clasp the frame; and moreover he fondled an absurd notion that the miniature would be entrusted to him for a time, and was almost a possession. The pain of the thought of relinquishing it was the origin of this foolishness. And again, if it be fair to prove him so deeply, true to his brother though he was (admiration of a woman does thus influence the tides of our blood to render the noblest of us guilty of some unconscious wavering of our loyalty), Patrick dedicated the full-length of Adiante to Philip, and reserved the other, her face and neck, for himself.

Obediently to Mr. Adister's order, the portrait had been taken

from one of his private rooms and placed in the armoury, the veil covering the canvas of late removed. Guns and spears and swords overhead and about, the youthful figure of Adiante was ominously encompassed. Caroline stood with Patrick before the portrait of her cousin; she expected him to show a sign of appreciation. He asked her to tell him the Church whose forms of faith the princess had embraced. She answered that it was the Greek Church. 'The Greek,' said he, gazing harder at the portrait. Presently she said: 'It was a perfect likeness.' She named the famous artist who had painted it. Patrick's 'Ah' was unsatisfactory.

'We,' said she, 'think it a living image of her as she was then.'

He would not be instigated to speak.

'You do not admire it, Mr. O'Donnell?' she cried.

'Oh, but I do. That's how she looked when she was drawing on her gloves with good will to go out to meet him. You can't see her there and not be sure she had a heart. She part smiles; she keeps her mouth shut, but there's the dimple, and it means a thought, like a bubble bursting up from the heart in her breast. She's tall. She carries herself like a great French lady, and nothing beats that. It's the same colour, dark eyebrows and fair hair. And not thinking of her pride. She thinks of her walk, and the end of it, where he's waiting. The eyes are not the same.'

'The same?' said Caroline.

'As this.' He tapped on the left side. She did not understand it at all.

‘The bit of work done in Vienna,’ said he.

She blushed. ‘Do you admire that so much?’

‘I do.’

‘We consider it not to be compared to this.’

‘Perhaps not. I like it better.’

‘But why do you like that better?’ said Caroline, deeming it his wilfulness.

Patrick put out a finger. ‘The eyes there don’t seem to say, “I’m yours to make a hero of you.” But look,’ he drew forth from under his waistcoat the miniature, ‘what don’t they say here! It’s a bright day for the Austrian capital that has her by the river Danube. Yours has a landscape; I’ve made acquaintance with the country, I caught the print of it on my ride yesterday; and those are your mountains. But mine has her all to herself while she’s thinking undisturbed in her boudoir. I have her and her thoughts; that’s next to her soul. I’ve an idea it ought to be given to Philip.’ He craned his head round to woo some shadow of assent to the daring suggestion. ‘Just to break the shock ‘twill be to my brother, Miss Adister. If I could hand him this, and say, “Keep it, for you’ll get nothing more of her; and that’s worth a kingdom.”’

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.