

Trollope Anthony

The Landleaguers



Anthony Trollope
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Trollope A.

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VOLUME I

NOTE

This novel was to have contained sixty chapters. My father had written as much as is now published before his last illness. It will be seen that he had not finished the forty-ninth chapter; and the fragmentary portion of that chapter stands now just as he left it. He left no materials from which the tale could be completed, and no attempt at completion will be made. At the end of the third volume I have stated what were his intentions with regard to certain people in the story; but beyond what is there said I know nothing.

HENRY M. TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER I. MR. JONES OF CASTLE MORONY

In the year 1850 the two estates of Ballintubber and Morony were sold to Mr. Philip Jones, under the Estates Court, which had then been established. They had been the property of two different owners, but lay conveniently so as to make one possession for one proprietor. They were in the County Galway, and lay to the right and left of the road which runs down from the little town of Headford to Lough Corrib. At the time when the purchase was made there was no quieter spot in all Ireland, or one in which the lawful requirements of a landlord were more readily performed by a poor and obedient tenantry. The people were all Roman Catholics, were for the most part uneducated, and it may be said of them that not only were their souls not their own, but that they were not ambitious even of possessing their own bodies. Circumstances have changed much with them since that date. Not only have they in part repudiated the power of the priest as to their souls, but, in compliance with teaching which has come to them from America, they claim to be masters also of their bodies. Never were a people less fitted to exercise such dominion without control. Generous, kindly, impulsive, and docile, they have been willing to follow any recognised leader. When Philip Jones bought the property that had belonged to the widow O'Dwyer – for Ballintubber had for the last hundred years been the property of the O'Dwyers – and Morony, which, had been an outlying town-land belonging to the Hacketts for the last two centuries, he had at first been looked down upon as a new comer. But all that had passed by, and Mr. Jones was as much respected as though he had been an O'Jones from the time of Queen Elizabeth. But now the American teaching had come up, and things were different.

Mr. Jones had expended over £30,000 in purchasing the property, and was congratulated by all men on having done well with his money. There were some among his friends in England – and his friends were all English – who had told him that he was incurring a great risk in going into so distant and wild a country. But it was acknowledged that he could not in England have obtained so good a return in the way of rent. And it was soon found that the opportunities for improving the property were many and close at hand. At the end of ten years all men who knew Mr. Jones personally, or had seen the increasing comforts of Morony Castle, declared that, as he liked the kind of life, he had done uncommonly well for himself.

Nor had he done badly for his three married sisters, each of whom had left £4,000 in his hands. All the circumstances of the Miss Jones's as they had been, it will be here unnecessary to explain. Since Philip had become owner of Morony Castle, each of them had married, and the three brothers-in-law were equally well satisfied with the investment of their money. It will, however, thus be understood that the property did not belong entirely to Mr. Jones, and that the brothers-in-law and their wives were part owners. Mr. Jones, however, had been in possession of some other means, and had been able to use capital in improving the estate. But he was an aspiring man, and in addition to his money had borrowed something beyond. The sum borrowed, however, had been so small and so well expended, as to have created no sense of embarrassment in his mind.

When our story commences he was the father of four children. The elder and the younger were boys, and two girls came between them. In 1880, Frank, the elder, was two-and-twenty. The two girls who followed close after were twenty and nineteen, and the youngest boy, who was born after an interval of nearly ten years, was but ten years old. Some years after the mother had died, and Mr. Jones had since lived as a widower. It may be as well to state here that in 1880 he was fifty-five years old.

When his wife had died, the nature of the man had apparently been changed. Of all men he had been the most cheerful, the most eager, and the most easily pleased. He had worked hard at his property, and had loved his work. He knew every man and woman about the place, and always had a word to say to them. He had had a sailing boat on the lake, in which he had spent much of his time, but his wife had always been with him. Since her death he had hardly put his foot within the boat. He

had lately become quick and short-tempered, but always with a visible attempt to be kind to those around him. But people said of him that since his wife had died he had shown an indifference to the affairs of the world. He was anxious – so it was said – to leave matters as much as possible to his son; but, as has been already stated, his son was only twenty-two. He had formerly taken a great pleasure in attending the assizes at Galway. He had been named as a grand juror for the county, which he had indeed regarded as a great compliment; but since his wife's death he had not once attended.

People said of him that he had become indifferent to the work of his life, but in this they hardly spoke the truth. He had become indifferent rather to what had been its pleasures. To that which his conscience told him was its work, he applied himself with assiduity enough. There were two cares which sat near his heart: first, that no one should rob him; and secondly, that he should rob no one. It will often be the case that the first will look after itself, whereas the second will require careful watching. It was certainly the case with Philip Jones that he was most anxious to rob no one. He was, perhaps, a little too anxious that no one should rob him.

A few words must be said of his children. Frank, the eldest, was a good-looking, clever boy, who had been educated at the Queen's College, at Galway, and would have been better trained to meet the world had circumstances enabled him to be sent to a public school in England. As it was he thought himself, as heir to Morony Castle, to be a little god upon earth; and he thought also that it behoved his sisters and his brother, and the various dependents about the place, to treat him as though he were a god. To his father he was respectful, and fairly obedient in all matters, save one. As to that one matter, from which arose some trouble, much will have to be said as the story goes on.

The two girls were named Ada and Edith, and were, in form and figure, very unlike each other. Ada, the eldest, was tall, fair-haired, and very lovely. It was admitted in County Galway that among the Galway lasses no girl exceeded Ada Jones in brightness of beauty. She was sweet-tempered also, and gracious as she was lovely. But Edith did not share the gifts, which the fairy had bestowed upon her sister, in equal parts. She was, however, clever, and kind, and affectionate. In all matters, within the house, she was ready to accept a situation below her sister's; but this was not by her sister's doing. The demigod of the family seemed to assume this position, but on Ada's part there was no assumption. Edith, however, felt her infirmity. Among girls this is made to depend more on physical beauty than on other gifts, and there was no doubt that in this respect Edith was the inferior. She was dark, and small of stature, not ungraceful in her movements, or awkward in her person. She was black-haired, as had been her mother's, and almost swarthy in her complexion, and there was a squareness about her chin which robbed her face of much of its feminine softness. But her eyes were very bright, and when she would laugh, or say something intended to make another laugh, her face would be brightened up with fun, good-humour, or wit, in a manner which enabled no one to call her plain.

Of the younger boy, Florian, much will be said as the story goes on; but what can be said of a boy who is only ten which shall be descriptive and also interesting? He was small of his age, but clever and sharp, and, since his mother's death, had been his father's darling. He was beautiful to look at, as were all the children, except poor Edith, but the neighbours declared that his education had been much neglected. His father intended to send him to college at Galway. A bright vision had for a short time flitted before the father's eyes, and he had thought that he would have the boy prepared for Winchester; but lately things had not gone quite so well at Morony Castle, and that idea had passed by. So that it was now understood that Florian Jones would follow his brother to Galway College. Those who used to watch his ways would declare that the professors of Galway College would have some trouble with him.

While the mother had lived no family had been more easily ruled than that of the Jones's, but since her death some irregularities had gone on. The father had made a favourite of the younger boy, and thereby had done mischief. The eldest son, too, had become proud of his position, and an attempt had been made to check him with a hard hand; and yet much in the absolute working of the farm had been left to him. Then troubles had come, in which Mr. Jones would be sometimes too severe, and

sometimes too lenient. Of the girls it must be acknowledged that they were to be blamed for no fault after the first blow had come. Everyone at Morony had felt that the great blow had been the death of the mistress. But it must be confessed that other things had happened shortly afterwards which had tended to create disturbance. One of the family had declared that he intended to become a Roman Catholic. The Jones's had been Protestants, the father and mother having both come from England as Protestants. They were not, therefore, Ultra-Protestants, as those will know who best know Ireland. There had been no horror of a Catholic. According to Mrs. Jones the way to heaven had been open to both Catholic and Protestant, only it had suited her to say her prayers after the Protestant fashion. The girls had been filled with no pious fury; and as to Mr. Jones himself, some of the Protestant devotees in the neighbourhood of Tuam had declared that he was only half-hearted in the matter. An old clergyman, attached to the cathedral, and who had been chaplain to Bishop Plunket, had been heard to declare that he would rather have to deal with an avowed Papist.

But the one who had now declared himself as a convert, – I will say pervert if my readers wish it, – was no other than our young friend Florian. He came in one day and assured his sisters that he meant to be a Roman Catholic. They only laughed at him, and told him that he did not know what he was talking about. "Don't I though?" said Florian. "I've had no end of an argument with Father Malachi, and he's got the best o' me. I'm not going to church any more." When his brother Frank was told, he threatened to "lick the young sinner." "That's about the best can be said for you Protestants," said the young imp. "You lick us when you're strong enough." But the father, when he heard the tidings, declared that he would not have his son molested. No doubt he would live to see his mistake. It was to be hoped that he would do so. But there should be no compulsion. So Master Florian remained for the present attached to his Catholic propensities, and duly went to mass at Ballintubber. This had taken place in the autumn of the year.

There had occurred a circumstance which may be called the beginning of our story. It must first be told that Mr. Jones kept about four hundred acres of the estate in his own hands, and had been held to have done very well with it. A tract of this land lay down on Lough Corrib, and had in former days produced almost nothing but rushes. By means of drains and sluices, which had not been brought into use without the expenditure of much capital, he had thoroughly fertilised some eighty acres, where he grew large crops of hay, which he sent across the lake to Galway, and fed his sheep on the after-grass with great profit. But the care of the sluices had been a great labour, and, latterly, a great trouble to Mr. Jones. He had looked for no evil at the hands of his workmen, or tenants, or neighbours. But he had been taught by experience to expect great carelessness. It was when the rain had fallen in heavy quantities, and when the Lough was full that the evil was chiefly expected. Late in the autumn there came news up to the Castle, that the flood gates on the Ballintubber marshes had now been opened, and that the entire eighty acres were under water. Mr. Jones and his eldest son rushed down, and found that it was impossible to do anything. They could only wait till the waters had retreated, which would not take place for six months. The entire crop for the next year had been destroyed. Then Mr. Jones returned to the Castle stricken by a great blow, and was speechless for the rest of the day.

When the news had been brought, the family had been together at the breakfast table. The father and son had gone out together with the teller of the story. But Ada and Edith and Florian were left at the table. They all sat looking at each other till Edith was the first to speak.

"Flory, what do you know of all this?"

"What should I know?" said Flory. The two sisters looked at him, and each was aware that he did know something. Ada was not so quick as Edith, but even she was aroused. And from this moment Edith began to take the lead in managing her brother.

"You do," said Ada. "How was it done? Who did it – and why?"

"Sorrow a know, I know," said the boy.

"Flory, that is a lie," said Edith very solemnly, looking at him with all her eyes.

"You've no right to say that," said Florian. "It's just because I've turned Catholic, and it's all your spite." But the boy blushed ruby red, and the colour told its own story.

As soon as the news had been announced, Edith had seen the boy's countenance and had instantly watched him. His colour had not risen at once; but his lower jaw had fallen, and his eyes had glanced furtively round, and his whole frame had quivered. Then the rush of blood had flown to his face, and the story had been told so that Edith could read it. His first emotion had made it plain even to Ada. "Flory, you know all about it," said Ada.

Edith got up and went across the room and knelt down at the boy's side, leaning against his chair and looking up into his face. "Flory, you may lie with your voice, but you cannot stifle your heart within you. You have confessed the truth."

"I have not," said Flory; "I wasn't in it at all."

"Who says that you were in it? But you know."

"'Deed and I know nothin'." Now the boy began to cry. "You have no right to say I did it. Why should I do the likes of that?"

"Where were you at four o'clock yesterday afternoon?" asked Edith.

"I was just out, up at the lodge yonder."

"Flory, I know that you have seen this thing done. I am as certain of it as though I had been there myself."

"I haven't seen anything done – and I won't stay here to be questioned this way," said the boy, feeling that his blushes would betray him, and his incapacity to "lie square," as the Americans say.

Then the two sisters were left to talk over the matter together. "Did you not see it in his face?" said Edith.

"Yes, I saw something. But you don't mean to say that he knew it was to be done? That would make him a fiend."

"No; I don't think he knew it was to be done. But when Frank was teasing him the other day about his Catholic nonsense, and saying that he would not trust a Papist, Florian took the part of Pat Carroll. If there be a man about the place who would do a base turn to father, it's Pat Carroll. Now I know that Flory was down near the lough yesterday afternoon. Biddy Ryan saw him. If he went on he must have seen the water coming in."

"What shall we do?" asked Ada.

"Ah! – that's just it. What shall we do? If he could be made to tell the truth, that would be best. But as he denies it, father will believe him. Florian will say that we are spiting him because of his religion."

"But, Edith, we must tell father." At last it was decided that Edith should take the boy and talk to him. He was more prone to listen to Edith than to Ada. Edith did find her brother, and talked to him for an hour, – but in vain. He had managed to collect himself after his past breakdown, and was better able to bear the examination to which his sister put him, than at the first moment. He still blushed when he was questioned; till he became dogged and surly. The interview ended with repeated asseverations on Flory's part, that he knew nothing of the meadows.

Mr. Jones and his eldest son returned to the house, having been absent the entire day. "As sure as I am a living man, Pat Carroll has been at the doing of it," said Frank.

"He cannot have done it alone," said Ada.

"There have been others in it."

"That has been the worst of it," said the father. "Of course I have known since the beginning of the year, that that man would do any devil's turn of work against me. But one man cannot do much."

"Too much! too much!" said Edith.

"One man can murder me, of course. But we haven't yet come to such a state of things as that. Twelve months ago I thought there was not a man about the place who would raise his hand to do me an ill turn. I have done them many good turns in my time."

"You have, father," said Ada.

"Then this man came to me and said that because the tenants away in County Mayo were not paying their rents, he could not pay his. And he can sell his interest on his holding now for £150. When I endeavoured to explain this to him, and that it was at my cost his interest in the farm has been created, he became my enemy. I don't mind that; one has to look for that. But that others should be joined in it, and that there should be no one to say that they had seen it! There must have been five pairs of hands at work, and twenty pairs of eyes must have seen what the others were doing."

The two sisters looked at each other, but they said nothing. "I suppose we shall work it out of them some day," said Frank.

"I suppose nothing of the kind," said the father. "There are eighty acres of meadow lying under Lough Corrib this moment which will not give a ton of hay next summer, or food for a sheep next autumn. The pastures will be saturated, and sheep would perish with foot-rot and fluke. Then money must be laid out again upon it, just that Mr. Carroll may again wreak his vengeance." After that there was silence, for the children felt that not a word could be spoken which would comfort their father.

When they sat down to dinner, Mr. Jones asked after Florian. "He's not well," said Edith.

"Florian not well! So there's another misfortune."

"His ill-health is rather ill-humour. Bidy will take care of him, father."

"I do not choose that he should be looked after by Bidy in solitude. I suppose that somebody has been teasing him."

"No, father," said Edith, positively.

"Has anyone been speaking to him about his religion?"

"Not a word," said Edith. Then she told herself that to hold her tongue at the present moment would be cowardly. "Florian, father, has misbehaved himself, and has gone away cross. I would leave him, if I were you, till to-morrow."

"I know there is ill-will against him," said the father. All this was ill-judged on behalf of Mr. Jones. Peter, the old butler, who had lived in the family, was in the room. Peter, of course, was a Roman Catholic, and, though he was as true as steel, it could not but be felt that in this absurd contest he was on the side of the "young masther."

Down in the kitchen the conversion of the "young masther" to the true religion was a great affair, and Mr. Frank and the young ladies were looked upon as hard-hearted and cruel, because they stood in the way of this act of grace. Nothing more was said about Florian that night.

CHAPTER II. THE MAN IN THE MASK

Edith, before she went to bed that night, crept up to her brother's bedroom and seated herself on the bedside. It was a little room which Florian occupied alone, and lay at the back of the house, next to that in which Peter slept. Here, as she sat on the bed, she could see by a glance that young Florian feigned to be asleep.

"Flory, you are pretending to be asleep." Flory uttered a short snore, – or rather snort, for he was not a good actor. "You may as well wake up, because otherwise I shall shake you."

"Why am I to be shaken up in bed?"

"Because I want to speak to you."

"Why am I to be made to speak when I want to sleep?"

"Papa has been talking about you downstairs. He has come home from Ballintubber, very tired and very unhappy, and he thinks you have been made to go to bed without your supper because we have been attacking you about religion. I have told him that nobody has said a word to you."

"But you did."

"Not a word."

"You didn't tell him all that you told me – about letting in the water?" This was asked in a tone of great anxiety.

"Not a word, – not as yet."

"And you won't? Mind, I tell you it's all untrue. What do I know about letting in the water?"

"Who did it?"

"I'm not going to tell."

"You know, then?"

"No, I don't. But I'm not going to tell as though I knew it. You don't care about it in your religion, but we Catholics don't like telling lies."

"You saw nothing?"

"Whatever I saw I'm not to tell a lie about it."

"You've promised not, you mean?"

"Now, Edy, you're not going to trap me. You've got your own religion and I've got mine. It's a great thing in our religion to be able to hold your tongue. Father Malachi says it's one of the greatest trials which a man has to go through."

"Then, Flory, am I to gather that you will say nothing further to me?" Here the boy shook his head. "Because in that case I must tell father. At any rate, he must be told, and if you do not tell him, I shall."

"What is there to be told?"

"I shall tell him exactly what I saw, – and Ada. I saw, – we saw, – that when the news came about the flood, you were conscious of it all. If you will go to father and tell him the truth he will be but very little angry with you. I don't suppose you had a hand in it yourself."

"No!" shouted the boy.

"But I think you saw it, and that they made you swear an oath. Was that not so?"

"No!" whispered the boy.

"I am sure it was so." Then the boy again plucked up his courage, and declared with a loud voice, that it was not so.

That night before she retired to rest, Edith went to her father and told him all that she had to say. She took Ada with her, and together they used all their eloquence to make their father believe as they believed.

"No," said Edith, "he has not confessed. But words drop from him which make us sure that he knows who did it. I am certain that he saw it done. I don't mean to say that he saw the whole thing. The water, I suppose, was coming in all night."

"The whole night! While we were sleeping in our beds, the waters of the lough were ruining me," said the father.

"But he saw enough to be able to tell you who did it."

"I know who did it. It was that ruffian Carroll."

"But father, you will want evidence."

"Am I to bring up my own boy to swear that he was there, witnessing what was done, as the friend of my enemies? I do not believe that he was there at all."

"If you question him, he will probably own to it. It will be better to get at the truth and face it. He is only ten years old. You must tell me the story of his pretended conversion."

"Why should it be pretended?" asked the father.

"Well; of his conversion," said Edith.

"I don't see what it has to do with it? Am I to put myself forward as a bigoted Protestant? Florian has been foolish, but am I to say that I am angry, where I am not angry – not specially angry."

"It will show the influence under which he has taken up Carroll's side," said Edith.

"Or the influence under which he has been made to hold his tongue," said Ada.

"Just so," said Edith. "We do not think that he has made one with your enemies in the matter. But he has seen them at work and has been made to promise that he will hold his tongue. I don't suppose you mean to let the affair slip by without punishing any one."

When the girls left him, Mr. Jones was by no means persuaded. As far as he could ascertain from examination of the persons about the locality, there was no one willing to state in evidence that he had seen anything. The injury had been done in November, on a wet, dreary, dull afternoon. He did learn that at half-past three the meadows were in their usual condition. As to the sluices, the gates of which had been pulled out and thrown away in twenty different places, he could learn nothing; no one had seen a sluice gate touched. As to Florian, and what Florian had been seen to do, he had asked no question, because Florian's name had not then been mentioned. But he had been struck by the awful silence of the people. There were women there, living on the spot, with whose families his family had been on the most kindly terms. When rheumatism was rife, – and rheumatism down on the lough side had often been rife – they had all come up to the Castle for port wine and solace. He had refused them nothing, – he, or his dear wife, who had gone, or his daughters; and, to give them their due, they had always been willing to work for him at a moment's notice. He would have declared that no man in Ireland was on better terms with his tenantry than he; and now, because there had been a quarrel between him and that pestilent fellow Carroll, – whom he had been willing to buy out from his bit of land and let him go to America, so that they might all be at peace, – could they all have turned against him and taken Carroll's part? As far as he had been able to gather the feelings of the people, from conversations with them, they had all acknowledged Carroll to be wrong. He would have said that there was not one among them who was not his friend rather than Carroll's. He was aware that there had been ill-feeling about in other parts of the country. There had been, – so he was told, – a few demagogues in Galway town, American chiefly, who had come thither to do what harm they could; and he had heard that there was discontent in parts of Mayo, about Ballyhaunis and Lough Glinn; but where he lived, round Lough Corrib, there had been no evil symptoms of such a nature. Now suddenly he found himself as though surrounded by a nest of hornets. There were eighty acres of his land under water, and no one would tell him how it was done, or by whom.

And now, to make the matter worse, there had come upon him this trouble with reference to his own boy. He would not believe the story which his daughters had told him; and yet he knew within his heart that they were infinitely the better worthy of credit. He believed in them. He knew them to be good and honest and zealous on his behalf; but how much better did he love poor Florian! And

in this matter of the child's change of religion, in which he had foolishly taken the child's part, he could not but think that Father Malachi had been most unkind to him; not that he knew what Father Malachi had done in the matter, but Florian talked as though he had been supported all through by the priest. Father Malachi had, in truth, done very little. He had told the boy to go to his father. The boy had said that he had done so, and that his father had assented. "But Frank and the girls are totally against it. They have no sense of religion at all." Then Father Malachi had told him to say his prayers, and come regularly to mass.

Mr. Jones agreed with his daughters that it behoved him to punish the culprit in this matter, but, nevertheless, he thought that it would be better for him to let it go unpunished than to bring his boy into collision with such a one as Pat Carroll. He twice talked the matter over with Florian, and twice did so to no effect. At first he threatened the young sinner, and frowned at him. But his frowns did no good. Florian, if he could stand firm against his sister Edith, was sure that he could do so against his father. Then Mr. Jones spoke him fair, and endeavoured to explain to him how sad a thing it would be if his boy were to turn against his own father and the interests of the family generally.

"But I haven't," said Florian confidently.

"You should tell me what you saw on that afternoon."

"I didn't see anything," said Florian sulkily.

"I don't believe he knew anything about it," said Mr. Jones to Edith afterwards. Edith could only receive this in silence, and keep her own opinion to herself. Ada was altogether of her mind, but Frank at last came round to his father's view. "It isn't probable," he said to his sisters, "that a boy of his age should be able to keep such a secret against four of us; and then it is most improbable that he should have seen anything of the occurrence and not have come at once to his father." But the girls held to their own opinion, till at last they were told by Frank that they were two pig-headed nincompoops.

Things were going on in this way, and Mr. Jones was still striving to find out evidence by which a case might be substantiated against Pat Carroll, when that gentleman, one winter afternoon, was using his eloquence upon Master Florian Jones. It was four o'clock, and the darkness of the night was now coming on very quickly. The scene was a cottage, almost in the town of Headford, and about two miles from the nearest part of the Morony estate. In this cottage Carroll was sitting at one side of a turf fire, while an old woman was standing by the doorway making a stocking. And in this cottage also was another man, whose face was concealed by an old crape mask, which covered his eyes and nose and mouth. He was standing on the other side of the fireplace, and Florian was seated on a stool in front of the fire. Ever and anon he turned his gaze round on the mysterious man in the mask, whom he did not at all know; and, in truth, he was frightened awfully through the whole interview by the man in the mask, who stood there by the fireside, almost close to Florian's elbow, without speaking a word; nor did the old woman say much, though it must be presumed that she heard all that was said.

"Faix, Mr. Flory, an' it's well for you you've come," said Carroll. "Jist you sit steady there, 'cause it won't do the laist good in life you're moving about where all the world'd see you." It was thus that the boy was addressed by him, whom we may now call his co-conspirator, and Carroll showed plainly, by his movements and by the glances which he cast around him, that he understood perfectly the dreadful nature of the business in which he was engaged. "You see that jintl'man there?" And Carroll pointed to the man in the mask.

"I see him," said poor Florian, almost in tears.

"You'd better mark him, that's all. If he catches a hould o'ye he'd tear ye to tatters, that's all. Not that he'd do ye the laist harum in life if ye'd just hould yer pace, and say nothin' to nobody."

"Not a word I'll say, Pat."

"Don't! That's all about it. Don't! We knows, – he knows, – what they're driving at down at the Castle. Sorra a word comes out of the mouth o' one on 'em, but that he knows it." Here the man in the mask shook his head and looked as horrible as a man in a mask can look. "They'll tell ye that the father who owns ye ought to know all about it. It's just him as shouldn't know."

"He don't," said Florian.

"Not a know; – an' if you main to keep yourself from being holed as they holed Muster Bingham the other day away at Hollymount." The boy understood perfectly well what was meant by the process of "holing." The Mr. Bingham, a small landlord, who had been acting as his own agent some twenty miles off, in the County of Mayo, had been frightfully murdered three months since. It was the first murder that had stained the quarrel which had now commenced in that part of the country. Mr. Bingham had been unpopular, but he had had to deal with such a small property, that no one had imagined that an attack would be made on him. But he had been shot down as he was driving home from Hollymount, whither he had gone to receive rent. He had been shot down during daylight, and no one had as yet been brought to justice for the murder. "You mind's Muster Bingham, Muster Flory; eh? He's gone, and sorra a soul knows anything about it. It's I'd be sorry to think you'd be polished off that way." Again the man in the mask made signs that he was wide awake.

To tell the truth of Florian, he felt rather complimented in the midst of all his horrors in being thus threatened with the fate of Mr. Bingham. He had heard much about Mr. Bingham, and regarded him as a person of much importance since his death. He was raised to a level now with Mr. Bingham. And then his immediate position was very much better than Bingham's. He was alive, and up to the present moment, – as long as he held his tongue and told nothing, – he would be regarded with friendly eyes by that terrible man in the mask. But, through it all, there was the agonising feeling that he was betraying them all at home. His father and Edith and Frank would not murder him when they found him out, but they would despise him. And the boy knew something, – he knew much of what was due by him to his father. At this moment he was much in dread of Pat Carroll. He was in greater dread of the man in the mask. But as he sat there, terrified by them as they intended to terrify him, he was aware of all that courage would demand from him. If he could once escape from that horrid cabin, he thought that he might be able to make a clean breast and tell everything. "It's I that'd be awful sorry that anything like what happened Bingham, should happen to you, Muster Flory."

"Why wouldn't you; and I'd have done nothing against you?" said Florian. He did feel that his conduct up to the present moment deserved more of gratitude than of threats from Pat Carroll.

"You're to remimber your oath, Muster Flory. You're become one of us, as Father Brosnan was telling you. You're not to be one of us, and then go over among them schaming Prothestants."

"I haven't gone over among them, – only my father is one of them."

"What's yer father to do with it now you're a Catholic? Av you is ever false to a Catholic on behalf of them Prothestants, though he's twice yer own father, you'd go t' hell for it; that's where you'd be going. And it's not only that, but the jintl'man as is there will be sending you on the journey." Then Pat signified that he alluded to the man in the mask, and the gentleman in the mask clenched his fist and shook it, – and shook his head also. "You ask Father Brosnan also, whether you ain't to be throe to us Catholics now you're one of us? It's a great favour as has been done you. You're mindful o' that – ain't you?" Poor Flory said that he was mindful.

Here they were joined by another conspirator, a man whom Florian had seen down by the sluices with Pat Carroll, and whom he thought he remembered to have noticed among the tenants from the other side of Ballintubber. "What's the chap up to now?" asked the stranger.

"He ain't up to nothin'," said Carroll. "We're only a cautioning of him."

"Not to be splitting on yourself?"

"Nor yet on you," said Carroll.

"Sorra a word he can say agin me," said the stranger. "I wasn't in it at all."

"But you was," said Florian. "I saw you pick the latch up and throw it away."

"You've sharp eyes, ain't you, to be seeing what warn't there to be seen at all? If you say you saw me in it, I'll have the tongue out of your mouth, you young liar."

"What's the good of frightening the boy, Michael. He's a good boy, and isn't a going to peach upon any of us."

"But I ain't a liar. He's a liar." This Florian said, plucking up renewed courage from the kind words Pat Carroll had said in his favour.

"Never mind," said Pat, throwing oil on the troubled waters. "We're all frinds at present, and shall be as long as we don't split on nobody."

"It's the meanest thing out, – that splitting on a pal," said the man who had been called Michael. "It's twice worse when one does it to one's father. I wouldn't show a ha'porth of mercy to such a chap as that."

"And to a Catholic as peached to a Prothestant," said Carroll, intending to signify his hatred of such a wretch by spitting on the ground.

"Or to a son as split because his father was in question." Then Michael spat twice upon the floor, showing the extremity of the disgust which in such a case would overpower him.

"I suppose I may go now," said Florian. He was told by Pat Carroll that he might go. But just at that moment the man in the mask, who had not spoken a word, extemporised a cross out of two bits of burned wood from the hearth, and put it right before Florian's nose; one hand held one stick, and the other, the other. "Swear," said the man in the mask.

"Bedad! he's in the right of it. Another oath will make it all the stronger. 'That ye'll never say a word of this to mortal ears, whether father or sister or brother, let 'em say what they will to yer, s'help yer the Blessed Virgin.'"

"I won't then," said Florian, struggling to get at the cross to kiss it.

"Stop a moment, me fine fellow," said Michael. "Nor yet to no one else – and you'll give yourself up to hell flames av you don't keep the blessed oath to the last day of your life. Now let him kiss it, Pat. I wouldn't be in his shoes for a ten-pun note if he breaks that oath."

"Nor I neither," said Pat. "Oh laws, no." Then Florian was allowed to escape from the cabin. This he did, and going out into the dark, and looking about him to see that he was not watched, made his way in at the back door of a fairly large house which stood near, still in the outskirts of the town of Headford. It was a fairly large house in Headford; but Headford does not contain many large houses. It was that in which lived Father Giles, the old parish priest of Tuam; – and with Father Giles lived his curate, that Father Brosnan of whom mention has above been made.

CHAPTER III. FATHER BROSNAN

There has come a change among the priests in Ireland during the last fifty years, as has been natural. Among whom has there not come a change in half a century? In England, statesmen are different, and parsons, and judges, and peers. When an entire country has been left unmoved by the outside world, so as to seem to have been left asleep while others have been awake, the different classes will seem to be the same at the end of every half century. A village lawyer in Spain will be as was a village lawyer fifty years ago. But a parish priest in Ireland will be an altered personage, because the country generally has not been sleeping.

There used to be two distinct sorts of priests; of whom the elder, who had probably been abroad, was the better educated; whereas the younger, who was home-nurtured, had less to say for himself on general topics. He was generally the more zealous in his religious duties, but the elder was the better read in doctrinal theology. As to the political question of the day, they were both apt to be on the list against the Government, though not so with such violence as to make themselves often obnoxious to the laws. It was natural that they should be opposed to the Government, as long as the Protestant Church claimed an ascendancy over them. But their feelings and aspirations were based then on their religious opinions. Now a set of men has risen up, with whom opposition to the rulers of the country is connected chiefly with political ideas. A dream of Home Rule has made them what they are, and thus they have been roused into waking life, by the American spirit, which has been imported into the country. There is still the old difference between the elder and the younger priests. The parish priest is not so frequently opposed to the law, as is his curate. The parish priest is willing that the landlord shall receive his rents, is not at least anxious, that he shall be dispossessed of his land. But the curate has ideas of peasant proprietors; is very hot for Home Rule, is less obedient to the authority of the bishops than he was of yore, and thinks more of the political, and less of the religious state of his country.

This variance of feeling might be seen in the three priests who have been already mentioned in our story. Father Giles was the parish pastor of Headford, in which position he had been for nearly forty years. He was a man seventy years of age, in full possession of all his faculties, very zealous in the well-being of his people, prone to teach them that if they would say their prayers, and do as they were bid by their betters, they would, in the long run, and after various phases of Catholic well or ill-being, go to heaven. But they would also have enough to eat in this world; which seemed to be almost more prominent in Father Giles's teaching than the happy bliss of heaven. But the older Father Giles became the more he thought of the good things of this world, on behalf of his people, and the less he liked being troubled with the political desires of his curate. He had gone so far as to forbid Father Brosnan to do this, or to do that on various occasions, to make a political speech here, or to attend a demonstration there; – in doing which, or in not doing it, the curate sometimes obeyed, but sometimes disobeyed the priest, thereby bringing Father Giles in his old age into infinite trouble.

But Father Malachi, in the neighbouring parish of Ballintubber, ran a course somewhat intermediate between these two. He, at the present moment, had no curate who interfered with his happiness. There was, indeed, a curate of Ballintubber – so named; but he lived away, not inhabiting the same house with Father Malachi, as is usual in Ireland; having a chapel to himself, and seldom making his way into our part of the country. Father Malachi was a strong-minded man, who knew the world. He, too, had an inclination for Home Rule, and still entertained a jealousy against the quasi-ascendancy of a Protestant bishop; but he had no sympathy whatever with Father Brosnan. Ireland for the Irish might be very well, but he did not at all want to have Ireland for the Americans. Father Giles and Father Malachi certainly agreed on one thing – that Brosnan was a great trouble.

If the conversion of Florian Jones was to be attributed to any clerical influence, Father Brosnan was entitled to claim the good or the evil done; but in truth very few polemical arguments had been used on the occasion. The boy's head had been filled with the idea of doing something remarkable, and he had himself gone to the priest. When a Protestant child does go to a priest on such a mission, what can the priest do but accept him? He is bound to look upon the suppliant as a brand to be saved from the burning. "You stupid young ass!" the priest may say to himself, apostrophising the boy; "why don't you remain as you are for the present? Why do you come to trouble me with a matter you can know nothing about?" But the priest must do as his Church directs him, and the brands have to be saved from the burning. Father Brosnan sent the boy to Father Malachi, and Father Malachi told the lad to go to his terrestrial father. It was this that Mr. Jones had expected, and there the boy was received as a Catholic.

But to Father Brosnan the matter was much more important in its political view. Father Brosnan knew the application as to his rent which had been made by Pat Carroll to his landlord. He was of opinion that no rent ought to be paid by any Irish tenant to any landlord – no rent, at least, to a Protestant landlord. Wrath boiled within his bosom when he heard of the answer which was given, as though Mr. Jones had robbed the man by his refusal. Mr. Brosnan thought that for the present a tenant was, as a matter of course, entitled to abatement in his rent, as in a short time he must be entitled to his land without paying any. He considered not at all the circumstances, whether, as had been the case on certain properties in Mayo, all money expended had been so expended by the tenant, or by the landlord, as had been the case with Pat Carroll's land. That was an injustice, according to Mr. Brosnan's theory; as is all property in accordance with the teaching of some political doctors who are not burdened with any.

It would have been unfair to Mr. Brosnan to say that he sympathised with murderers, or that he agreed with those who considered that midnight outrages were fair atonements; he demanded rights. He himself would have been hot with righteous indignation, had such a charge been made against him. But in the quarrel which was now beginning all his sympathies were with the Carrolls at large, and not with the Jones's at large. At every victory won by the British Parliament his heart again boiled with indignation. At every triumphant note that came over the water from America – which was generally raised by the record of the dollars sent – he boiled, on the other hand, with joy. He had gleams in his mind of a Republic. He thought of a Saxon as an evil being. The Queen, he would say, was very well, but she was better at a distance. The Lord-Lieutenant was a British vanity, and English pomp, but the Chief Secretary was a minister of the evil one himself. He believed that England was enriched by many millions a year robbed from Ireland, and that Ireland was impoverished to the same extent. He was a man thoroughly disloyal, and at the same time thoroughly ignorant, altogether in the dark as to the truth of things, a man who, whatever might be his fitness for the duties of the priesthood, to which he had been educated, had no capability of perceiving political facts, and no honesty in teaching them. But it would have been unjust to him to say that he was a murderer, or that he countenanced murder. To him it was that young Florian now betook himself, and found him seated alone in the back parlour in Father Giles's house. The old priest was out, and Father Brosnan was engaged on some portion of clerical duties. To give him his due, he performed those duties rigidly, and the more rigidly when, in doing them, he obeyed the letter of the law rather than the spirit. As Father Giles, in his idea of his duties, took altogether the other side of the question, and, in thinking of the spirit, had nearly altogether ignored the letter, it may be imagined that the two men did not agree together very well. In truth, Father Giles looked upon Father Brosnan as an ignorant, impertinent puppy, whereas Father Brosnan returned the compliment by regarding Father Giles as half an infidel, and almost as bad as a Protestant.

"Well, Master Florian," said the priest, "and how are things going with you?"

"Oh! Father Brosnan, I'm in terrible throuble."

"What throuble's up now?"

"They're all agin me at home, and father's nearly as bad as any of them. It's all along of my religion."

"I thought your father had given his consent?"

"So he has; but still he's agin me. And my two sisters are dead agin me. What am I to do about Pat Carroll?"

"Just hould your tongue."

"They do be saying that because what Pat and the other boys did was agin father's interest, I am bound to tell."

"You've given a promise?"

"I did give a promise."

"And you swore an oath," said the priest solemnly.

"I did swear an oath certainly."

"Then you must hould your tongue. In such a case as this I cannot absolve you from your word. I don't know what it is that Pat Carroll did." Here it must be admitted Father Brosnan did not stick to the absolute truth. He did know what Pat Carroll had done. All Headford knew that Mr. Jones's meadows had been flooded, and the priest must have known that the present cause of trouble at Castle Morony, was the injury thus done. Father Brosnan knew and approved of Pat Carroll's enmity to the Jones family. But he was able to justify the falsehood of his own heart, by stumbling over the degree of knowledge necessary. There was a sense in which he did not know it. He need not have sworn to it in a Court of Law. So he told himself, and so justified his conscience. "You need not tell me," he went on to say when the boy was proceeding to whisper the story, "I am not bound to know what it is that Pat Carroll does, and what it is that your father suffers. Do you go home, and keep your toe in your pump, as they say, and come to me for confession a day or two before Christmas. And if any of them say anything to you about your religion, just sit quiet and bear it."

The boy was then dismissed, and went home to his father's home, indifferent as to who might see him now, because he had come from the priest's house. But the terror of that man in the mask still clung to him; and mingled with that was the righteous fear, which still struck cold to his heart, of the wicked injury which he was doing his father. Boy though he was, he knew well what truth and loyalty, and the bonds which should bind a family together, demanded from him. He was miserable with a woe which he had not known how to explain to the priest, as he thought of his terrible condition. At first Pat Carroll and his friends had recommended themselves to him. He had, in truth, only come on the scene of devastation down by the lough, by mere accident. But he had before heard that Pat was an aggrieved man in reference to his rent, and had taken it into his boyish heart to sympathise with such sorrows. When Pat had got hold of him on the spot, and had first exacted the promise of secrecy, Florian had given it willingly. He had not expected to be questioned on the subject, and had not attributed the importance to it which it had afterwards assumed. He had since denied all knowledge of it, and was of course burdened with a boy's fear of having to acknowledge the falsehood. And now there had been added to it that awful scene in the cabin at Headford, and on the top of that had come the priest's injunction. "In such a case as this I cannot absolve you from your word." It was so that the priest had addressed him, and there was something in it that struck his young mind with awe. There was the man in the mask tendering to him the oath upon the cross; and there had been Pat Carroll assuring him of that man's wrath. Then there had come the other stranger, speaking out angrily, and promising to him all evil, were he to divulge a word.

Nevertheless, his conscience was so strong within him, that when he reached the Castle he had almost made up his mind to tell his father everything. But just as he was about to enter the Lodge gate, he was touched on the arm by a female. "Master Florian," said the female, "we is all in your hands." It was now dark night, and he could not even see the woman's face. She seemed indeed to keep her face covered, and yet he could see the gleam of her eyes. "You're one of us now, Master Florian."

"I'm a Catholic, if you mean that."

"What else should I main? Would ye be unthru to your own people? Do ye know what would happen you if ye commit such a sin as that? I tould them up there that you'd never bring down hell fire upon yer head, by such a deed as that. It isn't what ye can do to him he'll mind, I said, but the anger o' the Blessed Virgin. Worn't it thru for me what I said, Master Florian?" She held him in the dark, and he could see the glimmer of her eyes, and hear the whisper of her voice, and she frightened him with the fear of the world to come. As he made his way up to the hall door, it was not the dread of the man in the mask, so much as the fear inspired by this woman which made him resolve that, come what come might, he must stick to the lie which he had told.

After breakfast the next morning, his father summoned him into his room. "Now," said Flory to himself, as he followed his father trembling, – "now must I be true." By this he meant that he must be true to his co-conspirators. If he were false to them, he would have to incur the anger of the Blessed Virgin. How this should be made to fall upon him, he did not in the least understand; but he did understand that the Virgin as he had thought her, should be kind, and mild, and gracious. He had never stopped to think whether the curse as uttered by the woman, might or might not be true. Of loyalty to his father he had thought much; but now he believed that it behoved him to think more of loyalty to the Virgin, as defined by the woman in the dark.

He followed his father into the magistrates' room, leaving his brother and two sisters in the parlour. He was glad that none of them were invited to accompany him, for he felt that his father was more prone to believe him, than were either his sisters or even his brother. "Florian," said his father, "you know, do you not, the trouble to which I have been put about this man, Pat Carroll?"

"Yes, father; I know you have."

"And the terrible loss which I have incurred! Eighty acres are under water. I suppose the miscreant will have cost me between £400 and £500."

"As much as that?" said Florian, frightened by the magnitude of the sum named.

"Indeed he will. It is hard to calculate the extent of the malignity of a wicked man. Whether the barony will share the loss with me I cannot yet say; but in either case the wickedness will be the same. There is no word bad enough for it. It is altogether damnable; and this is done by a man who calls me in question because of my religion." Here the father paused, but Florian stood by without an answer. If Pat Carroll was right in his religion, his father must be wrong; and Florian thought that Pat Carroll was right. But he did not see how the two things were joined together, – the opening of the sluices, and the truth of Pat Carroll's religious convictions. "But bad as the matter is as regards Pat Carroll, it is all as nothing in reference to the accusation made against you." Here the father came up, and laying his two hands on the boy's shoulders looked sadly into his face. "I cannot believe that my own boy, my darling boy, has joined in this evil deed against me!" Here the father ceased and waited for his son to speak.

The son remembered the determination to which he had come, and resolved to adhere to it. "I didn't," he said after a pause.

"I cannot believe it of you; and yet, your sisters who are as true as steel, who are so good that I bless God morning and night that He in His mercy has left me such treasures, – they believe it."

"They are against me because of my religion."

"No, Florian, not so; they disapprove of your change in religion, but they are not brought to accuse you by such a feeling. They say that they see it in your face."

"How can they see all that in my face?"

"That though you are lying persistently, you cannot hide from them that you are lying. They are not only good girls, but they have very sharp wits. A cleverer girl than Edith, or one better able to read the truth of a boy's head, or even a man's, I have never known. I hardly dare to put my own judgment against hers."

"In this case she knows nothing about it."

"But to me it is of such vital importance! It is not simply that your evidence is needed to punish the man; I would let the man go and all the evil that he has done me. But not for any money that I could name would I entertain such an opinion of my son. Were I convinced at this moment that you are innocent, I should be a happy man."

"Then you may, father."

"But your manner is against you. You do not answer me with that appearance of frankness which I should have expected."

"Of course it all makes me very miserable. How can a fellow be frank when he's suspected like this?"

"Florian, do you give me your most solemn assurance that you saw nothing of this evil work while it was being perpetrated?"

"Yes, father."

"You saw nothing, and you knew nothing?"

"No, father."

"You have no reason to accuse Pat Carroll, except by what you have heard?"

"No, father."

"Nor anyone else?"

"No, father." Then Mr. Jones stood silent, looking at his son. And the more he looked the more he doubted him. When the boy had uttered "No, father," for the last time, Mr. Jones felt almost convinced – almost convinced that Edith was right. "You may go now, Florian," he said. And the boy departed, fully convinced that his father had disbelieved him.

CHAPTER IV. MR. BLAKE OF CARNLOUGH

Three or four days after the occurrences narrated in the last chapter, Mr. Jones got on to his car and had himself driven down to Carnlough, the seat of Mr. Thomas Blake, a gentleman living about two miles the other side of Tuam. To reach Carnlough he had a journey to make of about ten miles, and as he seldom went, in these days, so far away from home, the fact of his going was known to all the household.

"Father is going to Carnlough," Florian said to Peter, the butler. "What is he going for?"

"Deed, then, Master Flory, who can tell that? Mr. Blake is a very old friend of master's."

"But why is he going now? It isn't often he goes to Carnlough; and when he does go, he is sure to say why."

"I shouldn't wonder af he's going to ax him as to how he shall get rid of the waters."

"He knows that better than Mr. Blake can tell him."

"Or maybe he's going to inquire how he shall cotch a hould of Pat Carroll."

It was evident, from the butler's answers, that all the world at Morony Castle felt that at present Mr. Jones could engage himself on no other subject than that of the flood.

"I wish father wouldn't think so much about the flood. After all, what's £500? It won't ruin a man like my father."

But the butler showed by his visage that he regarded £500 as a very serious matter, and that he was not at all astonished by the occupation which it gave to his master's thoughts.

Mr. Blake, of Carnlough, was the first Irishman with whom Mr. Jones had become acquainted in the County Galway. It was through his instance, indeed, that the Morony and Ballintubber properties had been bought, so that the acquaintance must have been well established before the purchase had been made. Mr. Blake was a man of good property, who, in former years, had always been regarded as popular in the county. He was a Protestant, but had not made himself odious to the Roman Catholics around him as an Orangeman, nor had he ever been considered to be hard as a landlord. He thought, perhaps, a little too much of popularity, and had prided himself a little perhaps, on managing "his boys" – as he called the tenants – with peculiar skill. Even still he could boast of his success, though there had arisen some little difficulties as to rent over at Carnlough; and, indeed, he was frightened lest some of the evil ways which had begun to prevail in the neighbouring parts of County Mayo, should make their way into County Galway.

Mr. Blake and Mr. Jones had been very intimate. It had been at Mr. Blake's instance that Mr. Jones had been brought on to the Grand Jury. But latterly they had not seen very much of each other. Mr. Jones, since the death of his wife, did not go frequently to Galway, and Carnlough was a long distance for a morning's drive. But on this occasion Mr. Jones drove himself over simply with the view of making a morning call. "Well, Jones, how are you; – and how are the girls, and how is Frank, and how is that young pickle, Master Florian?" These questions were answered by others of a similar nature. "How are the girls, and how is Mrs. Blake, and what is going on here at Carnlough?" There was no inquiry after the eldest son, for it was Mr. Blake's misfortune that he had no male child to inherit his property.

"Faith, then, things ain't going on a bit too well," said Mr. Blake. "Abatement, abatement, nothing but abatement! Nobody abates me anything. I have to pay all family charges just the same as ever. What would they say if I was to take away my wife and girls, shut up Carnlough, and go and live in France? I could give them some abatement then and be a richer man. But how would they like to have Carnlough empty?"

"There's no danger of that, I think."

"Upon my word, I don't know. The girls are talking of it, and when they begin to talk of a thing, I am very likely to do it. And Mrs. Blake is quite ready."

"You wouldn't leave the country?"

"That's just it. I'll stay if they'll let me. If they'll pay me rent enough to enable me to live here comfortably, I'll not desert them. But if they think that I'm to keep up the place on borrowed money, they'll find their mistake. I didn't mind ten per cent. for the last two years, though I have taken to drinking whisky punch in my old age, instead of claret and sherry. And I don't mind ten per cent. for this year, though I am sorely in want of a young horse to carry me. But if the ten per cent. is to go on, or to become twenty per cent. as one blackguard hinted, I shall say good-bye to Carnlough. They may fight it out then with Terry Daly as they can." Now, Terry Daly was the well-known agent for the lands of Carnlough. "What has brought you over here to-day?" asked Mr. Blake. "I can see with half an eye that there is some fresh trouble."

"Indeed there is."

"I have heard what they did with your sluices. That's another trick they've learnt out of County Mayo. When a landlord is not rich enough to give them all that they want, they make the matter easier by doing the best they can to ruin him. I don't think anything of that kind has been done at Carnlough."

"There is worse than that," said Mr. Jones sorrowfully.

"The devil there is! They have not mutilated any of your cattle?"

"No, there is nothing of that kind. The only enemy I've got about the place, as far as I know, is one Pat Carroll. It was he and others, whom he paid to serve him, that have let the waters in upon the meadows. Eighty acres are under water at this moment. But I can bear that like a man. The worst of that is, that all the neighbours should have seen him do it, and not one of them have come forward to tell me."

"That is the worst," said Mr. Blake. "There must be some terrible understanding among them, some compact for evil, when twenty men are afraid to tell what one man has been seen to do. It's fearful to think that the priests should not put a stop to it. How is Master Florian getting on with his priest?"

"It's about him that I have come to speak to you," said Mr. Jones.

"About Florian?"

"Yes; indeed. When I tell you my story, I think you will understand that I would tell it to no one but yourself in County Galway. I fear that Florian saw the men at work upon the flood gates."

"And will he not tell the truth?"

"You must remember that I cannot say that I know anything. The boy declares that he saw nothing; that he knows nothing. I have no evidence; but his sisters are sure that it is so. Edith says that he certainly was present when the gates were removed. She only judges from his manner and his countenance."

"What made her suspect him?" asked Mr. Blake.

"Only that she saw him when the news was brought to us. Edith is not ill-natured. She would not be prone to make a story against her brother."

"If Edith says so, it is so," said Mr. Blake, who among all Edith's admirers was one of the most ardent.

"I don't quite say that. I only mean to express my conviction that she intends to get at the truth."

"I'll wager my life upon her," said Mr. Blake. "As to the other; – well, you know, Jones, that he has turned Roman Catholic."

"That means nothing," said the distressed father. "He is only ten years old. Of course he's a fool for his pains; but he would not on that account do such a deed as this."

"I don't know. You must remember that he will be telling everything to the priests."

"We have two priests about us," said Mr. Jones, "and I would trust them in anything. There is Father Giles at Headford, and he is as fair a man as any clergyman of our own could be. You cannot imagine that he would give such advice to my boy?"

"Not Father Giles certainly," said the other man.

"Then down with us at Ballintubber there is Father Malachi."

"I know him too," said Mr. Blake. "He would not interfere with a boy like Florian. Is there no one else? What curate lives with Father Malachi?"

"There is none with him at Ballintubber. One Brosnan lives with Father Giles."

"That man is a firebrand," said Mr. Blake. "He is a wretched politician, always preaching up Home Rule."

"But I do not think that even he would teach a boy to deceive his own father in such a matter as this."

"I am not sure," said Blake. "It is very difficult to get at the vagaries of mind in such a man as Mr. Brosnan. But what do you intend to do?"

"I have come to you for advice. But remember this: – in my present frame of mind, the suspicion that I feel as to poor Florian is ten times worse to me than the loss of all my meadows. If I could find out Edith to have been wrong, I should be at once relieved of the great trouble which sits heaviest at my heart."

"I fear that Edith is right," said Mr. Blake.

"You are prejudiced a little in her favour. Whatever she says you will think right."

"You must weigh that, and take it for what it's worth," said Mr. Blake. "We know that the boy has got himself into bad hands. You do not suspect him of a desire to injure you?"

"Oh, no!" said the father.

"But he has seen these men do it, and now refuses to tell you. They have terrified him."

"He is not a cowardly boy," said Mr. Jones, still standing up for his son.

"But they have made him swear an oath that he will not tell. There has been something of that sort. What does he say himself?"

"Simply that he knows nothing about it."

"But how does he say it? Does he look you in the face? A boy of that kind may lie. Boys do – and girls also. When people say they don't, they know nothing about it; but if it's worth one's while to look at them one can generally tell when they're lying. I'm not a bit afraid of a boy when he is lying, – but only of one who can lie as though he didn't lie."

"I think that Florian is lying," said Mr. Jones slowly; "he does not look me in the face, and he does not lie straightforward."

"Then Edith is right; and I am right when I swear by her."

"But what am I to do with him? If, as I suppose, he saw Pat Carroll do the mischief, he must have seen others with him. If we knew who were the lot, we could certainly get the truth out of some of them, so as to get evidence for a conviction."

"Can't he be made to speak?" asked Mr. Blake.

"How can I make him? It will be understood all about Morony that he has been lying. And I feel that it is thought that he has made himself a hero by sticking to his lie. If they should turn upon him?" Mr. Blake sat silent but made no immediate reply. "It would be better for me to let the whole thing slide. If they were to kill him!"

"They would not do that. Here in County Galway they have not come to that as yet. There is not a county in all Ireland in which such a deed could be done," said Mr. Blake, standing up for his country. "Are you to let this ruffian pass unpunished while you have the power of convicting him? I think that you are bound to punish him. For the sake of your country you are bound to do so."

"And the boy?" said Mr. Jones hoarsely.

"He is but ten years old, and will soon live it down. And the disgrace of the lie will be drowned in the triumph of telling the truth at last. We should all feel, – I should feel, – that he would in such case deserve well, rather than ill, of his father and of me, and of all of us. Besides you had some idea of sending him to school in England." Here Mr. Jones shook his head, intending to indicate that no such expensive step as that would be possible after the loss incurred by the flooding of the eighty acres. "At any rate my advice to you is to make him declare the truth. I think little harm of a boy for lying, but I do think harm of those who allow a lie to pass unnoticed." So saying Mr. Blake ended the meeting, and took Mr. Jones away to see Mrs. Blake and the girls.

"I do suppose that father has gone to Carnlough, to consult with Mr. Blake about this affair of the flood." It was thus that Ada spoke to her brother Florian, when he came to her discussing the matter of their father's absence.

"What can Mr. Blake know about it?" said Florian.

"I suppose he means to ask about you. It is quite clear, Florian, that no one in the house believes you."

"Peter does."

"You mean that Peter thinks you are right to stand to the lie now you have told it. More shame for Peter if he does."

"You wouldn't have a fellow go and put himself out of favour with all the boys through the country? There is a horrible man that wears a mask – " Then he remembered, and stopped himself. He was on closer terms with Ada than with Edith, but not on terms so close as to justify his whispering a word about the man in the mask.

"Where did you see the man in the mask?" asked Ada. "Who is the man in the mask?"

"I don't know."

"But you know where you saw him. You must know that. What did the man in the mask say to you?"

"I am not going to tell you anything about him," said the boy. "I am not going to have my secrets got out of me in that way. It isn't honest. Nobody but a Protestant would do it." So saying Florian left his sister, with the tale of the man in the mask only half told.

CHAPTER V. MR. O'MAHONY AND HIS DAUGHTER

We must now turn to another personage in our story, and tell our readers something of the adventures and conditions of this gentleman; – something also of his daughter. The adventures of her early life will occupy much of our time and many of our pages; and though her father may not be so interesting as it is hoped that she will become, still he was so peculiar in his modes of thought, and so honest, though by no means wise, in his manner of thinking, as to make his story also perhaps worth the telling.

Gerald O'Mahony was at the time of the flooding of Mr. Jones's meadows not much more than forty years old. But he was already the father of a daughter nearly twenty. Where he was born, from what parents, or to what portion of Ireland his family belonged, no one knew. He himself had been heard to declare a suspicion that his father had come from County Kerry. But as he himself had been, according to his own statement, probably born in the United States, the county to which his father had belonged is not important. He had been bred up as a Roman Catholic, but had long since thrown over all the prejudices of his religion. He had married when he was quite young, and had soon lost his wife. But in talking of her now he always described her as an angel. But though he looked to be so young as to be his daughter's brother, rather than her father, he had never thought of marrying again. His daughter he declared was everything to him. But those who knew him well said that politics were dearer to him even than his daughter. Since he had been known in County Galway, he had passed and repassed nearly a dozen times between New York and Ireland; and his daughter had twice come with him. He had no declared means, but he had never been known to borrow a shilling, or to leave a bill unpaid. But he had frequently said aloud that he had no money left, and that unless he returned to his own country he and his daughter must be taken in by some poor-house. For Mr. O'Mahony, fond as he was of Ireland, allowed no one to say that he was an Irishman.

But his troubles were apparently no troubles to him. He was always good-humoured, and seemed always to be happy – except when in public, when he was engaged upon politics. Then he would work himself up to such a state of indignant anger as seemed to be altogether antagonistic to good-humour. The position he filled, – or had filled, – was that of lecturer on behalf of the United States. He had lectured at Manchester, at Glasgow, at Liverpool, and lately all over Ireland. But he had risen to such a height of wrath in advocating the doctrine of Republicanism that he had been stopped by the police. He had been held to have said things disrespectful of the Queen. This he loudly denied. He had always, he said, spoken of the Queen's virtues, her graces, and general fitness for her high office. He had declared, – and this was true, – that of all kings and queens of whom he had read in history she was the best. But, he had gone on to say there should be no king or queen. The practice was an absurdity. The reverence paid even to the high office was such as, in his idea, degraded a man. Even in America, the Kotooing which took place before the President's toe was to him an abomination. No man in accordance with his theory should worship another man. Titles should only be used as indicative of a man's trade or occupation. As one man was Mr. General Grant, another man should be Mr. Bricklayer Green. He could not do away with the Queen. But for the woman, he was quite disposed to worship her. All women were to be worshipped, and it was a privilege of a man to worship a woman. When a woman possessed so many virtues as did the Queen of England, it became a man's duty to worship them. But it was a woman whom he would worship, and not the Queen. This was carried to such a length, and he was so eloquent on the subject that the police were desired to interfere, and he was made to hold his tongue, – at any rate as far as England and Ireland were concerned.

He had made Galway a kind of centre home, attracted thither by the friendship which his daughter had made with Ada and Edith Jones. For though Ada and Edith were by no means

Republican in their thoughts and feelings, it had come to pass that they dearly loved the American girl who was so. Rachel O'Mahony had frequently been at Morony Castle, as had also her father; and Mr. Jones had taken delight in controverting the arguments of the American, because, as he had said, the American had been unselfish and true. But since his lecturing had been stopped, it had become necessary that he should go elsewhere to look for means of livelihood, and he had now betaken himself to London for that purpose, – a circumstance which will be explained at greater length as the story progresses.

Republicanism was not the only matter in his political creed to which Gerald O'Mahony was devoted. Though he was no Irishman, as he delighted to intimate, his heart was Irish; and during his various visits to the country, he had filled his bosom with thoughts of Irish wrongs. No educated man was ever born and bred in more utter ignorance of all political truths than this amiable and philanthropic gentleman. In regard to Ireland his theory was that the land should be taken from the present proprietors, and divided among the peasants who tilled it. When asked what should be done with the present owners, he was quite ready with his answer: "Let them be paid for the property by the State!" He would have no man injured to the extent of a shilling. When asked where the State was to get the money, he declared that that was a mere detail. States did get money. As for the landlords themselves, with the money in their pockets, let them emigrate to the United States, if they were in want of something to do. As to the division of the land, – that he said would settle itself. One man would have ten acres, and another fifty; but that would be fair, because one man had been used to pay for ten, and another to pay for fifty. As for the men who got no land in the scramble he could see no injustice. The man who chanced to have been a tenant for the last twelve months, must take the benefit of his position. No doubt such man could sell his land immediately after he got it, because Freedom of Sale was one of the points of his charter. He could see the injustice of giving the land at a rent fixed by the State, because the State has no right to interfere in ordinary contracts between man and man. But if the land was to be given up without any rent, then he could see no injustice. Thus, and thus only, could Ireland be made to return to the beauty and the grace of her original simplicity.

But on the wrongs arising from the want of Home Rule he was warmer even than on those which the land question had produced. "Why should Ireland be governed by a British Parliament, a British Lord-Lieutenant, a British Chief-Secretary, a British Commander-in-Chief, and trodden under foot by a British soldiery? Why should Scotland be so governed, why should Wales, why should Yorkshire?" Mr. Jones would reply, "Repeal the Unions; restore the Heptarchy!" Mr. O'Mahony had but a confused idea of what the Heptarchy had been. But he was sure that it would be for the benefit of Ireland, that Irish knives should be made of Irish steel. "As undoubtedly would have been the case if the question of protection were to be left to an Irish Parliament to settle," said Mr. Jones. "Heaven help the man who would want to cut his mutton. His best chance would be that he would soon have no mutton to cut."

So the dispute was carried on with much warmth on one side, and with many arguments on the other, but without any quarrelling. It was impossible to quarrel with O'Mahony, who was thoroughly unselfish, and desirous of no violence. When he had heard what had been done in reference to Mr. Jones's meadows, and had been told of the suspected conduct of Pat Carroll, he was as indignant as though he had himself been a landed proprietor, or even an Orangeman. And on Mr. Jones's part there was a desire to do justice to all around him, which came within the capacity of O'Mahony's vision. He knew that Mr. Jones himself was a fair-dealing, honest gentleman, and he could not, therefore, quarrel with him.

There is a steamer running from the town of Galway, across Lough Corrib, to the little village of Cong, on the Mayo side of the lake, which stops and picks up passengers within a mile of Morony Castle. From this, passengers are landed, so that the means of transit between Galway and Mr. Jones's house are peculiarly easy. Up and down by this steamer Ada and Edith Jones had frequently gone to visit their friend, and as frequently that friend had come to visit them. But unfortunately the steamer

had been open to others besides the young ladies, and Rachel O'Mahony had found a dearer friend than either of the girls at Morony Castle. It had come to pass that Frank Jones and Rachel O'Mahony had declared themselves to be engaged. On no such ground as want of wealth, or want of family, or want of education, had Mr. Jones based his objection to the match; but there had been a peculiarity in the position of Rachel which had made him hesitate. It was not that she was an American, but such an American! It was not that he was a Republican, but such a Republican! And she was more anxious to carry Frank away with her to the United States, and to join him in a political partnership with her father, than to come and settle herself down at the Castle. Thus there had arisen an understanding on the part of the young people, that, though they were engaged, they were engaged without the consent of the young man's father. Rachel therefore was not to be brought to the Castle while Frank was there. To all this Rachel's father had assented, in a smiling indifferent manner, half intended to ridicule all who were concerned. As it was not a question of politics, Mr. O'Mahony could not work himself up to any anger, or apparently even to anxiety in the matter. "Your young people," – here he meant English and Irish generally, – "are taught to think they should begin the world where we leave it off."

"Your young people are just as fond of what money will buy as are ours," said Mr. Jones.

"But they are fonder of one another, even, than of money. When they love one another they become engaged. Then they marry. And as a rule they don't starve. As a rule people with us seldom do starve. As for making out an income for a young man to start with, that with us is quite out of the question. Frank some day will have this property."

"That won't give him much of an income," said Mr. Jones, who since the affair of the flood had become very despondent in reference to the estate.

"Then he's as well off now as ever he will be, and might as well marry the girl." But all this was said with no eagerness.

"They are merely boy and girl as yet," said Mr. Jones.

"I was married, and Rachel was born before I was Frank's age." So saying, Mr. O'Mahony consented to come to Morony Castle, and bid them adieu, without bringing his girl with him. This was hard upon Ada and Edith, as Mr. Frank, of course, went into Galway as often as he pleased, and made his adieu after his own fashion.

And there had come up another cause which had created further objections to the marriage in Mr. Jones's mind. Mr. O'Mahony had declared that as his lecturing was brought to an end by the police, he must throw himself upon Rachel's capabilities for earning some money. Rachel's capabilities had been often discussed at the Castle, but with various feelings on the three sides into which the party had formed themselves. All the Jones's were on one side, and declared that the capability had better not be exercised. In this they were probably wrong; – but it was their opinion. They had lived for many years away from London. The children had so lived all their lives; and they conceived that prejudices still existed which had now been banished or nearly banished from the world. Mr. O'Mahony, who formed another party, thought that the matter was one of supreme indifference. As long as he could earn money by lecturing it was well that he should earn it. It was always better that the men of a family should work than the women; but, if the man's talent was of no use, then it might be well to fall back upon the woman. He only laughed at the existence of a prejudice in the matter. He himself had no prejudices. He regarded all prejudices as the triumph of folly over education.

But Rachel, who was the third party in the discussion, had a very strong feeling of her own. She was of opinion that if the capability in question existed, it ought to be exercised. On that subject, – her possession of the capability, – she entertained, she said, strong doubts. But if the capability existed it certainly ought to be used. That was Rachel's opinion, expressed with all the vigour which she knew how to throw into the subject.

This capability had already been exercised in New York, where it had been efficacious, though the effect had not been great. She had been brought up to sing, and great things had been promised

of her voice. An American manager had thought much of her performance, though she had hitherto, he said, been young, and had not come to the strength of her throat. But he had himself seen to her education, almost as a child, and had been sure that sooner or later she would do great things in the musical world. Mr. Mahomet M. Moss was the gentleman in question, and he at present was in London. That such a voice as Rachel O'Mahony's should be lost to the world, was to his thinking a profanity, an indecency, an iniquity, a wasting of God's choicest gifts, and an abomination not to be thought of; for Mr. Mahomet M. Moss was in the affairs of his own profession a most energetic gentleman. Rachel rather turned up her nose at Mr. Mahomet M. Moss; but she was very anxious to go to London and to take her chance, and to do something, as she said, laughing, just to keep her father's pot a little on the boil; – but for Mr. Mahomet M. Moss she did not care one straw. Mr. O'Mahony was therefore ready to start on the journey, and had now come to Morony Castle to say farewell to his friend Mr. Jones. "Are you sure about that fellow Moss?" said Mr. Jones.

"What do you call sure about him? He's as big a swindler, I guess, as you shall find from here to himself."

"And are you going to put Rachel into his hands?"

"Well, I think so; – after a sort of fashion. He'll swindle her out of three parts of what she earns; – but she'll get the fourth part. It's always the way with a young girl when she's first brought out."

"I don't mean about money. Will you leave her conduct in his hands?"

"He'll be a clever chap who'll undertake to look after Rachel's conduct. I guess she'll conduct herself mostly."

"You'll be there to be sure," said Mr. Jones.

"Yes, I shall be there; and she'll conduct me too. Very likely."

"But, Mr. O'Mahony, – as a father!"

"I know pretty well what you would be saying. Our young folk grow old quicker a long sight than yours do. Now your girls here are as sweet as primroses out of the wood. But Rachel is like a rose that has been brought up to stand firm on its own bush. I'm not a bit afraid of her. Nor yet is your son. She looks as though you might blow her away with the breath from your mouth. You try her, and you'll find that she'll want a deal of blowing."

"Does not a young girl lose something of the aroma of her youth by seeing too much of the world too soon?"

"How old do you expect her to be when she's to die?"

"Rachel! How can I tell? She is only as yet entering upon life, and her health seems to be quite confirmed."

"The best confirmed I ever knew in my life. She never has a day's illness. Taking all the chances one way and another, shall we say sixty?"

"More than that, I should think," said Mr. Jones.

"Say sixty. She may fall down a trap in the theatre, or be drowned in one of your Cunarders."

"The Cunard steamers never drown anybody," said Mr. Jones.

"Well, then, a White Star – or any cockle-shell you may please to name. We'll put her down for sixty as an average."

"I don't know what you are driving at," said Mr. Jones.

"She has lived a third of her life already, and you expect her to know nothing, so that the aroma may still cling to her. Aroma does very well for earls' daughters and young marchionesses, though as far as I can learn, it's going out of fashion with them. What has an American girl to do with aroma, who's got her bread to earn? She's got to look to her conduct, and to be sharp at the same time. Mr. Mahomet M. Moss will rob her of seventy-five cents out of every dollar for the next twelve months. In three years' time he'll rob her of nothing. Only that she knows what conduct means, he'd have to look very sharp to keep his own."

"It is not natural," said Mr. Jones.

"But it's American. Marvels are not natural, and we are marvellous people. I don't know much about aroma, but I think you'll find Rachel will come out of the washing without losing much colour in the process."

Then the two friends parted, and Mr. O'Mahony went back to Galway, preparatory to his journey to London.

CHAPTER VI. RACHEL AND HER LOVERS

On the day following that of O'Mahony's return to Galway, he, and his daughter, and Frank Jones were together at the Galway Station preparatory to the departure of the O'Mahonys for Dublin and London. "I guess you two have got something to say to each other, so I'll leave you to yourselves," said the father.

"I guess we have," said Rachel, "so if you'll wait here we'll come to you when the cars are fixed." So saying, Rachel put her hand on her lover's arm and walked off with him along the platform. Rachel O'Mahony had not been badly described when her father said of her that she looked as though she might be blown away. She was very fair, and small and frail to look at. Her father had also said of her that her health was remarkably good, – "the best confirmed that he had ever known in his life." But though this too, was true, she hardly looked it. No one could have pointed out any sign of malady about her; only one would have said that there was nothing of her. And the colour on her face was so evanescent that he who watched her was inclined to think that she herself was like her colour. And she moved as though she was always on the vanishing point. "I'm very fond of eating," she had been heard to say. "I know it's vulgar; but it's true." No doubt she was fond of eating, but so is a sparrow. There was nothing she would not attempt to do in the way of taking exercise. She would undertake very long walks, and would then fail, and declare that she must be carried home; but she would finally get through the day's work better than another woman who appeared to have double her strength. Her feet and hands were the tiniest little adjuncts to a grown human body that could be seen anywhere. They looked at least to be so. But they were in perfect symmetry with her legs and arms. "I wish I were bigger," she had once been heard to say, "because I could hit a man." The man to whom she alluded was Mr. Mahomet M. Moss. "I sometimes want to hit a woman, but that would be such a small triumph." And yet she had a pride in her little female fineries. "Now, Frank," she had once said, "I guess you won't get another woman in all Galway to put her foot into that boot; nor yet in New York either."

"I don't think I could," said the enraptured Frank.

"You'd better take it to New York and try, and if you find the lady you can bring her back with you."

Frank refused the commission, saying something of course very pretty as to his mistress's foot. "Ten buttons! These only have eight," she said, objecting to a present which her lover had just brought her. "If I had ten buttons, and the gloves to fit me, I'd cut my arm off and put it under a glass case. Lovers are sent out to do all possible and impossible things in order to deserve their lady-loves. You shall go and wander about till you find a glove with ten buttons to fit me, then I'll consent to be Mrs. – Jones." By all of which little manœuvres Frank was charmed and oppressed to the last degree. When she would call herself the "future Mrs. – Jones," he would almost feel inclined to abandon both the name and the property. "Why not be Mrs. Morony," Rachel would say, "or Mrs. Ballintubber? The Ballintubber, of Ballintubber, would sound exquisitely, and then I should always be called 'Madam.'"

Her beauty was all but perfect, as far as symmetry was concerned, only that there was not enough of it; and for the perfection of female beauty a tone of colour is, methinks, needed somewhat darker than that which prevailed with Rachel O'Mahony. Her hair was so light that one felt it rather than saw it, as one feels the sunlight. It was soft and feathery, as is the under plumage on the wings of some small tropical birds. "A lock of my hair!" she had once said to Frank; "but it will all go into nothing. You should have paid your vows to some girl who could give you a good lump of hair fit to stuff a pillow with. If you have mine you will think in a few weeks that the spiders have been there and have left their dust behind." But she gave him the lock of hair, and laid it on his lips with her own little hands.

There was not enough of her beauty. Even in touching her a lover could not but feel that he had to deal with a little child. In looking at her he could only look down upon her. It was not till she spoke, and that her words came to his assistance, that he found that he had to deal with one who was not altogether a child. "Mr. Mahomet M. Moss declares his opinion that I shall be seen above the gaslights. It was very civil and complimentary of Mahomet M. M. But I mean to make myself heard. Mahomet M. M. did not seem to think of this." Since Frank had known her she had taken every opportunity in her power of belittling Mahomet M. M., as she was wont to call Mr. Moss.

Frank Jones was, in truth, a handsome stalwart young man, clever enough for the world, who thought a good deal of himself, and who thought very much more of the girl whom he loved. It was chiefly because he was absolutely unlike an American that Rachel O'Mahony had come to love him. Who does not know the "got up" look of the gentleman from the other side of the water, who seems to know himself to be much better than his father, and infinitely superior to his grandfather; who is always ready to make a speech on every occasion, and who feels himself to be fit company for a Prime Minister as soon as he has left school. Probably he is. Young Jones was not so; and it was on account of this deficiency that Rachel prized him. "I'm not like a young girl myself," she had said to her father, "but I do love a jolly nice boy. With us at sixteen, they are all but decrepit old men, and yet they are such little monkeys."

"For a little monkey, what do you think of yourself?" her father had replied. But the conversation then had not gone any further.

"I know you'll be after me before long," Rachel said to Frank, as they walked up and down the platform together.

"If I do, I shall ask you to marry me at once," he replied.

"I shall never do that without your father's leave."

"Is that the way they manage things in America?"

"It's the way I shall manage them here," said Rachel. "I'm in the unfortunate position of having three papas to whom I must attend. There is papa O'Mahony –"

"You will never be incommoded much by him," he replied.

"He is the least potent of the three, no doubt. Then there is papa Jones. He is absolutely omnipotent in this matter. He would not let me come down to Castle Morony for fear I should contaminate you all. I obeyed without even daring to feel the slightest snub, and if I were married to-morrow, I should kiss his toe in token of respect, and with a great deal more affection than I should kiss your half-bearded lips, sir." Here Frank got a hold of her hand beneath his arm, and gave it a squeeze. "He is the real old-fashioned father in the play, who is expected to come out at last with a hundred thousand dollars and his blessing."

"And who is the third papa?"

"Don't you know? Mahomet M. Moss. He is the third papa – if only he would consent to remain in that comparatively humble position." Here Frank listened to her words with sharp ears, but he said nothing at the moment. "Mahomet M. Moss is at any rate my lord and master for the present."

"Not whilst I am alive," said Frank.

"But he is. There is no use in rebelling. You are not my lord and master until you have gone through a certain ceremony. I wish you were. Will that satisfy you?"

"There is something in the name of lord and master which a girl shouldn't apply to anyone but to him who is to be her husband."

"Fiddlestick! Mr. Lord and Master that is to be, but is not as yet. But he is, in many respects. I don't think, Frank, you can imagine the horror I feel in reference to that vilest of human beings. I shall carry a dagger with me, in order to have it ready for any occasion."

"What does he do? You shall not go to be subjected to such danger and such annoyance."

She turned round, and looked up into his face as with derision. "The annoyance no doubt will be mine, Frank, and must be endured; the danger will be his, I think. Nor shall I use the dagger that

I spoke of. I can look at him, and I can make him hear my voice, in spite of the smallness of my stature. But there is no one in this world whom I detest as I do that greasy Jew. It is not for what he does, but that I simply detest him. He makes love to me."

"What!"

"Oh! he does. You needn't look like that. You needn't be a bit jealous."

"I shall come over at once."

"And knock him on the head! You had better not do that, because we want to make some money by his means. As a lover I can keep him at a distance. I wish I could do so to you, Mr. Jones."

"Why do you wish to keep me at a distance?"

"Because you know how to be troublesome. It is much harder to keep a lover at a distance when you really love him with all your heart" – here she looked up into his face and squeezed his arm, and nearly made him mad for the moment – "than a beast like that, who is no better than a toad to you. There, do you see that ugly old man there?" She pointed to a cross-looking old gentleman of sixty, who was scolding a porter violently. "Why aren't you jealous of that man?"

"You never saw him before."

"That's just the reason. He may be worth my affection, but I know that that Mahomet M. M. is not. You begin with the most bitter hatred on my part. I don't hate that old gentleman. I rather like him on the whole, though he was so cross. At any rate he's not a greasy Jew. Papa says that hating Jews is a prejudice. Loving you is a prejudice, I suppose."

"My darling!"

"You can't suppose you are the best man I ever saw, can you?"

"It's a sort of thing we are not to reason about."

"Then it's a prejudice. I'm prejudiced against Mahomet M. M. I'm equally prejudiced in favour of Mr. Jones, junior, of Ballintubber. It's horrible to be troubled by the one."

"Well!"

"Well! There's nothing more coming, Mr. Jones. Only don't you come over in any of your fits of jealousy, or you'll have to be sent back again. You're not my lord and master – yet."

"I wish I were."

"So do I. What more do you want than that? I don't believe there's another girl in New York would say as much to you, – nor yet in County Galway."

"But what does he say to you?"

"Well; just the kind of things that you never say. And he certainly never does the kind of things which you do; and that, Mr. Jones, is an improvement. But papa is in a hurry, and I shouldn't wonder if the train didn't go on in a quarter of an hour. I'll write to you about Mahomet M. M.; and if I behave very badly, such as prodding him with the dagger, or something of that sort, then I will let you know the details. You can't do it here, so you may as well go." So saying, she jumped into the carriage, and the train had started before Frank Jones had begun to think whether he could do it there or no.

"He's a good fellow, take him all round," said Mr. O'Mahony, when the carriages had left the station.

"As good as the rest of them."

"I think he is better."

"Of course we all think so of our own. Why should he be better than any other young lady's Mr. Jones? I don't suppose he is better; but we'll endeavour to believe that he is up to the average."

"Is that all that you've got to say for him, Rachel?"

"What! To you? Not exactly – if I am to speak the solid truth; which I don't see why I should have to do, even to my own father. I do think him above the average. I think him so much above the average as to be the best of all. But why? Simply because I believe him when he says he wants to marry me, and make me his companion for life. And then there's an affinity between us which God certainly manages. Why should I trust him in every detail of life with a perfect faith, and not trust

Mr. Mahomet M. Moss to the extent of half-a-crown? If he were to ask me for everything I have in the world, I should give it to him, without a thought except of his goodness in taking care of it for me. I wouldn't let Mahomet M. Moss have a dollar of mine without giving me his bond. Papa, there will be a row between me and Mr. Mahomet M. Moss, and so it's well to put you on your guard."

"What sort of a row, my dear?"

"A very rowy row. I don't mean about dollars, for you'll have to manage that just at first. When we have got into the running, I think I shall have something to say on that subject too."

"What row do you mean?"

"He'll misbehave himself. He always does, more or less."

"The poor fellow can't open his mouth without your saying that he misbehaves himself."

"That's quite true; he can't. He can't brush his hair, or tie his cravat, or settle his pantaloons, without misbehaving himself. He certainly can't look out of his eye without gross misbehaviour."

"What is he to do then?" said Mr. O'Mahony. "Nature has imbued him with all these peculiarities, and you are fantastic to find fault with him."

"Perhaps so – but then I am fantastic. When you've got a dirty coat on, or Frank, I don't find fault with it; but when he's got a clean coat, I writhe at him in my disgust. Yet, upon the whole, I like men to have clean coats."

"But you haven't said how the row is to come."

"Because I don't know; but it will come. It won't be about his coat, nor yet his hat, unless he puts it close down under my nose. My time, as I understand, is to be at his disposal."

"There will be an agreement made as to all that."

"An agreement as to my performances. I quite understand that I must be present at fixed times at the theatre, and that he must fix them. That will not worry me; particularly if you will go to the theatre with me."

"Of course I will do that when you want it."

"But he is to come to me with his beastly lessons. Am I to have no relief from that?"

"The hours can be fixed."

"But they won't be fixed. There's no doubt that he understands his trade. He can make me open my mouth and keep it open. And he can tell me when I sing false or flat. Providence when she gave him that horrid head of hair, did give him also the peculiarity of a fine ear. I think it is the meanest thing out for a man to be proud of that. If you can run a straight furrow with a plough it is quite as great a gift."

"That is nonsense, my dear. Such an ear as Mr. Moss's is very rare."

"A man who can see exactly across an entire field is just as rare. I don't see the difference. Nor when a woman sings do I respect her especially because of her voice. When a man can write a poem like Homer, or rule a country like Washington, there is something to say for him. I shall tell him that I will devote one hour a day to practising, and no more."

"That will settle the difficulty; if it be enough."

"But during that hour, there is to be no word spoken except what has to do with the lessons. You'll bear me out in that?"

"There must be some give and take in regard to ordinary conversation."

"You don't know what a beast he is, papa. What am I to do if he tells me to my face that I'm a beautiful young woman?"

"Tell him that you are quite aware of the fact, but that it is a matter you do not care to talk about."

"And then he'll simper. You do not know what a vile creature he can be. I can take care of myself. You needn't be a bit afraid about that. I fancy I could give him a slap on the face which would startle him a little. And if we came to blows, I do believe that he would not have a leg to stand upon. He is nearly fifty."

"My dear!"

"Say forty. But I do believe a good shove would knock him off his nasty little legs. I used to think he wore a wig; but no hairdresser could be such a disgrace to his profession to let such a wig as that go out of his shop."

"I always regarded him as a good-looking young man," said Mr. O'Mahony. Here Rachel shook her head, and made a terrible grimace. "It's all fancy you know," continued he.

"I suppose it is. But if you hear that I have told him that I regard him as a disgusting monkey, you must not be surprised." This was the last conversation which Mr. O'Mahony and his daughter had respecting Mahomet M. Moss, till they reached London.

CHAPTER VII. BROWN'S

When Mr. O'Mahony and his daughter stepped out of the train on the platform at Euston Square, they were at once encountered by Mr. Mahomet M. Moss. "Oh, dear!" ejaculated Miss O'Mahony, turning back upon her father. "Cannot you get rid of him?" Mr. O'Mahony, without a word of reply to his daughter, at once greeted Mr. Moss most affectionately. "Yes, my bird is here – as you see. You have taken a great deal of trouble in coming to meet us." Mr. Moss begged that the trouble might be taken as being the greatest pleasure he had ever had in his life. "Nothing could be too much to do for Miss O'Mahony." He had had, he said, the wires at work, and had been taught to expect them by this train. Would Miss O'Mahony condescend to take a seat in the carriage which was waiting for her? She had not spoken a word, but had laid fast hold of her father's arm. "I had better look after the luggage," said the father, shaking the daughter off. "Perhaps Mr. Moss will go with you," said she; – and at the moment she looked anything but pleasant. Mr. Moss expressed his sense of the high honour which was done him by her command, but suggested that she should seat herself in the carriage. "I will stand here under this pillar," she said. And as she took her stand it would have required a man with more effrontery than Mr. Moss possessed, to attempt to move her. We have seen Miss O'Mahony taking a few liberties with her lover, but still very affectionate. And we have seen her enjoying the badinage of perfect equality with her papa. There was nothing then of the ferocious young lady about her. Young ladies, – some young ladies, – can be very ferocious. Miss O'Mahony appeared to be one of them. As she stood under the iron post waiting till her father and Mr. Moss returned, with two porters carrying the luggage, the pretty little fair, fly-away Rachel looked as though she had in her hand the dagger of which she had once spoken, and was waiting for an opportunity to use it.

"Is your maid here, Miss O'Mahony?" asked Mr. Moss.

"I haven't got a maid," said Rachel, looking at him as though she intended to annihilate him.

They all seated themselves in the carriage with their small parcels, leaving their luggage to come after them in a cab which Mr. Moss had had allowed to him. But they, the O'Mahonys, knew nothing of their immediate destination. It had been clearly the father's business to ask; but he was a man possessed of no presence of mind. Suddenly the idea struck Rachel, and she called out with a loud voice, "Father, where on earth are we going?"

"I suppose Mr. Moss can tell us."

"You are going to apartments which I have secured for Miss O'Mahony at considerable trouble," said Mr. Moss. "The theatres are all stirring."

"But we are not going to live in a theatre."

"The ladies of the theatres find only one situation convenient. They must live somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Strand. I have secured two sitting-rooms and two bedrooms on the first floor, overlooking the views at Brown's."

"Won't they cost money?" asked the father.

"Of course they will," said Rachel. "What fools we have been! We intended to go to some inn for one night till we could find a fitting place, – somewhere about Gower Street."

"Gower Street wouldn't do at all," said Mr. Moss. "The distance from everything would be very great." Two ideas passed at that moment through Rachel's mind. The first was that the distance might serve to keep Mr. Moss out of her sitting-room, and the second was that were she to succeed in doing this, she might be forced to go to his sitting-room. "I think Gower Street would be found to be inconvenient, Miss O'Mahony."

"Bloomsbury Square is very near. Here we are at the hotel. Now, father, before you have anything taken off the carriages, ask the prices."

Then Mr. Moss, still keeping his seat, made a little speech. "I think if Miss O'Mahony would allow me, I would counsel her against too rigid an economy. She will have heard of the old proverb, – 'A penny wise and a pound foolish.'"

"'Cut your coat according to your cloth,' I have heard of that too; and I have heard of 'Burning a candle at both ends.'"

"'You shouldn't spoil your ship for a ha'porth of tar,'" said Mr. Moss with a smile, which showed his idea, that he had the best of the argument.

"It won't matter for one night," said Mr. O'Mahony, getting out of the carriage. Half the packages had been already taken off the cab.

Rachel followed her father, and without attending to Mr. Moss got hold of her father in the street. "I don't like the look of the house at all, father, you don't know what the people would be up to. I shall never go to sleep in this house." Mr. Moss, with his hat off, was standing in the doorway, suffused, as to his face, with a bland smile.

It may be as well to say at once that the house was all that an hotel ought to be, excepting, perhaps, that the prices were a little high. The two sitting-rooms and the two bedrooms – with the maid's room, which had also been taken – did seem to be very heavy to Rachel, who knew down to a shilling – or rather, to a dollar, as she would have said – how much her father had in his pocket. Indefinite promises of great wealth had been also made to herself; but according to a scale suggested by Mr. Moss, a pound a night, out of which she would have to keep herself, was the remuneration immediately promised. Then a sudden thought struck Miss O'Mahony. They were still standing discussing the price in one of the sitting-rooms, and Mr. Moss was also there. "Father," she said, "I'm sure that Frank would not approve."

"I don't think that he would feel himself bound to interfere," said Mr. O'Mahony.

"When a young woman is engaged to a young man it does make a difference," she replied, looking Mr. Moss full in the face.

"The happy man," said Mr. Moss, still bowing and smiling, "would not be so unreasonable as to interfere with the career of his fair *fiancée*."

"If we stay here very long," said Rachel, still addressing her father, "I guess we should have to pawn our watches. But here we are for the present, and here we must remain. I am awfully tired now, and should so like to have a cup of tea – by ourselves." Then Mr. Moss took his leave, promising to appear again upon the scene at eleven o'clock on the following day. "Thank you," said Rachel, "you are very kind, but I rather think I shall be out at eleven o'clock."

"What is the use of your carrying on like that with the man?" said her father.

"Because he's a beast."

"My dear, he's not a beast. He's not a beast that you ought to treat in that way. You'll be a beast too if you come to rise high in your profession. It is a kind of work which sharpens the intellect, but is apt to make men and women beasts. Did you ever hear of a prima donna who thought that another prima donna sang better than she did?"

"I guess that all the prima donnas sing better than I do."

"But you have not got to the position yet. Mr. Moss, I take it, was doing very well in New York, so as to have become a beast, as you call him. But he's very good-natured."

"He's a nasty, stuck-up, greasy Jew. A decent young woman is insulted by being spoken to by him."

"What made you tell him that you were engaged to Frank Jones?"

"I thought it might protect me – but it won't. I shall tell him next time that I am Frank's wife. But even that will not protect me."

"You will have to see him very often."

"And very often I shall have to be insulted. I guess he does the same kind of thing with all the singing girls who come into his hands."

"Give it up, Rachel."

"I don't mind being insulted so much as some girls do, you know. I can't fancy an English girl putting up with him – unless she liked to do as he pleased. I hate him; – but I think I can endure him. The only thing is, whether he would turn against me and rend me. Then we shall come utterly to the ground, here in London."

"Give it up."

"No! You can lecture and I can sing, and it's odd if we can't make one profession or the other pay. I think I shall have to fight with him, but I won't give it up. What I am afraid is that Frank should appear on the scene. And then, oh law! if Mr. Moss should get one blow in the eye!"

There she sat, sipping her tea and eating her toast, with her feet upon the fender, while Mr. O'Mahony ate his mutton-chop and drank his whisky and water.

"Father, now I'm coming back to my temper, I want something better than this buttered toast. Could they get me a veal cutlet, or a bit of cold chicken?"

A waiter was summoned.

"And you must give me a little bit of ham with the cold chicken. No, father; I won't have any wine because it would get into my head, and then I should kill Mr. Mahomet M. Moss."

"My dear," said her father when the man had left the room, "do you wish to declare all your animosities before the waiter?"

"Well, yes, I think I do. If we are to remain here it will be better that they should all know that I regard this man as my schoolmaster. I know what I'm about; I don't let a word go without thinking of it."

Then again they remained silent, and Mr. O'Mahony pretended to go to sleep – and eventually did do so. He devoted himself for the time to Home Rule, and got himself into a frame of mind in which he really thought of Ireland.

"The first flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea."

Why should she not be so? She had all the sentiment necessary, all the poetry, all the eloquence, all the wit. And then when he was beginning to think whether something more than sentiment and eloquence were not necessary, he went to sleep.

But Rachel was not sleeping. Her thoughts were less stationary than her father's, and her ideas more realistic. She had been told that she could sing, and she had sung at New York with great applause. And she had gone on studying, or rather practising, the art with great diligence. She had already become aware that practice was more needed than study. All, nearly all, this man could teach her was to open her mouth. Nature had given her an ear, and a voice, if she would work hard so as to use it. It was there before her. But it had seemed to her that her career was clogged with the necessary burden of Mr. Moss. Mr. Moss had got hold of her, and how should she get rid of him? He was the Old Man of the Sea, and how should she shake him off? And then there was present to her alone a vision of Frank Jones. To live at Morony Castle and be Frank Jones's wife, would not that be sweeter than to sing at a theatre under the care of Mr. Mahomet M. Moss? All the sweetness of a country life in a pleasant house by the lake side, and a husband with her who would endure all the little petulance, and vagaries, and excesses of her wayward but affectionate temper, all these things were present to her mind. And to be Mistress Jones, who could look all the world in the face, this – as compared with the gaslight of a theatre, which might mean failure, and could only mean gaslight – this, on the present occasion, did tempt her sorely. Her moods were very various. There were moments of her life when the gaslight had its charm, and in which she declared to herself that she was willing to run all the chances of failure for the hope of success. There were moments in which Mr. Moss loomed less odious before her eyes. Should she be afraid of Mr. Moss, and fly from her destiny because a man was greasy? And to this view of her circumstances she always came at last when her father's condition pressed itself upon her. The house beside the lake was not her own as yet, nor would it be her husband's when she was married.

Nor could there be a home for her father there as long as old Mr. Jones was alive, nor possibly when his son should come to the throne. For a time he must go to America, and she must go with him. She had declared to herself that she could not go back to the United States unless she could go back as a successful singer. For these reasons she resolved that she would face Mr. Moss bravely and all his horrors.

"If that gentleman comes here to-morrow at eleven, show him up here," she said to the waiter.

"Mr. Moss, ma'am?" the waiter asked.

"Yes, Mr. Moss," she answered in a loud voice, which told the man much of her story. "Where did that piano come from?" she asked brusquely.

"Mr. Moss had it sent in," said the man.

"And my father is paying separate rent for it?" she asked.

"What's that, my dear? What's that about rent?"

"We have got this piano to pay for. It's one of Erard's. Mr. Moss has sent it, and of course we must pay till we have sent it back again. That'll do." Then the man went.

"It's my belief that he intends to get us into pecuniary difficulties. You have only got £62 left."

"But you are to have twenty shillings a day till Christmas."

"What's that?"

"According to what he says it will be increased after Christmas. He spoke of £2 a day."

"Yes; if my singing be approved of. But who is to be the judge? If the musical world choose to say that they must have Rachel O'Mahony, that will be all very well. Am I to sing at twenty shillings a day for just as long as Mr. Moss may want me? And are we to remain here, and run up a bill which we shall never be able to pay, till they put us out of the door and call us swindlers?"

"Frank Jones would help us at a pinch if we came to that difficulty," said the father.

"I wouldn't take a shilling from Frank Jones. Frank Jones is all the world to me, but he cannot help me till he has made me his wife. We must go out of this at the end of the first week, and send the piano back. As far as I can make it out, our expenses here will be about £17 10s. a week. What the piano will cost, I don't know; but we'll learn that from Mr. Moss. I'll make him understand that we can't stay here, having no more than twenty shillings a day. If he won't undertake to give me £2 a day immediately after Christmas, we must go back to New York while we've got money left to take us."

"Have it your own way," said Mr. O'Mahony.

"I don't mean to remain here and wake up some morning and find that I can't stir a step without asking Mahomet M. M. for some money favour. I know I can sing; I can sing, at any rate, to the extent of forty shillings a day. For forty shillings a day I'll stay; but if I can't earn that at once let us go back to New York. It is not the poverty I mind so much, nor yet the debt, nor yet even your distress, you dear old father. You and I could weather it out together on a twopenny roll. Things would never be altogether bad with us as long as we are together; and as long as we have not put ourselves in the power of Mahomet M. M. Fancy owing Mr. Moss a sum of money which we couldn't pay! Mahomet's 'little bill!' I would say to a Christian: 'All right, Mr. Christian, you shall have your money in good time, and if you don't it won't hurt you.' He wouldn't be any more than an ordinary Christian, and would pull a long face; but he would have no little scheme ready, cut and dry, for getting my body and soul under his thumb."

"You are very unchristian yourself, my dear."

"I certainly have my own opinion of Mahomet M. M., and I shall tell him to-morrow morning that I don't mean to run the danger."

Then they went to bed, and slept the sleep of the just. They ordered breakfast at nine, so that, as Rachel said, the heavy mutton-chop might not be sticking in her throat as she attempted to show off before Mr. Moss on his arrival. But from eight till nine she passed her time in the double employment of brushing her hair and preparing the conversation as it was to take place between herself and Mr.

Moss. When a young lady boasts that she doesn't "let a word go without thinking of it," she has to be careful in preparing her words. And she prepared them now.

"There will be two of them against me," she said to herself as she made the preparation. "There'll be the dear old governor, and the governor that isn't dear. If I were left quite to myself, I think I could do it easier. But then it might come to sticking a knife into him."

"Father," she said, during breakfast, "I'm going to practise for half an hour before this man comes."

"That means that I'm to go away."

"Not in the least. I shall go into the next room where the piano lives, and you can come or not just as you please. I shall be squalling all the time, and as we do have the grandeur of two rooms for the present, you might as well use them. But when he comes we must take care and see that matters go right. You had better leave us alone at first, that I may sing to him. Then, when that's over, do you be in waiting to be called in. I mean to have a little bit of business with my trusted agent, manager, and parent in music, 'Mahomet M. M.'"

She went to the instrument, and practised there till half-past eleven, at which hour Mr. Moss presented himself. "You'll want to hear me sing of course," she said without getting up from the music-stool.

"Just a bar or two to know how you have improved. But it is hardly necessary. I see from the motion of your lips that you have been keeping your mouth open. And I hear from the tone of your voice, that it is all there. There is no doubt about you, if you have practised opening your mouth."

"At any rate you shall hear, and if you will stand there you shall see."

Then the music lesson began, and Mr. Moss proved himself to be an adept in his art. Rachel did not in the least doubt his skill, and obeyed him in everything as faithfully as she would have done, had he been personally a favourite with her. "Allow me to express my great delight and my strong admiration for the young débutante. As far as Miss O'Mahony is concerned the word failure may be struck out of the language. And no epithet should be used to qualify success, but one in the most superlative degree. Allow me to – " And he attempted to raise her hand to his lips, and to express his homage in a manner certainly not unusual with gentlemen of his profession.

"Mr. Moss," said the young lady starting up, "there need be nothing of that kind. There had better not. When a young woman is going to be married to a young man, she can't be too careful. You don't know, perhaps, but I'm going to be Mrs. Jones. Mr. Jones is apt to dislike such things. If you'll wait half a moment, I'll bring papa in." So saying she ran out of the room, and in two minutes returned, followed by her father. The two men shook hands, and each of them looked as though he did not know what he was expected to say to the other. "Now then, father, you must arrange things with Mr. Moss."

Mr. Moss bowed. "I don't exactly know what I have got to arrange," said Mr. O'Mahony.

"We've got to arrange so that we shan't get into debt with Mr. Moss."

"There need not be the least fear in the world as to that," said Mr. Moss.

"Ah; but that's just what we do fear, and what we must fear."

"So unnecessary, – so altogether unnecessary," said Mr. Moss, expecting to be allowed to be the banker for the occasion. "If you will just draw on me for what you want."

"But that is just what we won't do." Then there was a pause, and Mr. Moss shrugged his shoulders. "It's as well to understand that at the beginning. Of course this place is too expensive for us and we must get out of it as soon as possible."

"Why in such a hurry?" said Mr. Moss raising his two hands.

"And we must send back the piano. It was so good of you to think of it! But it must go back."

"No, no, no!" shouted Mr. Moss. "The piano is my affair. A piano more or less for a few months is nothing between me and Erard's people. They are only too happy."

"I do not in the least doubt it. Messrs. Erard's people are always glad to secure a lady who is about to come out as a singer. But they send the bill in at last."

"Not to you; – not to you."

"But to you. That would be a great deal worse, would it not, father? We might as well understand each other."

"Mr. O'Mahony and I will understand each other very well."

"But it is necessary that Miss O'Mahony and you should understand each other also. My father trusts me, and I cannot tell you how absolutely I obey him."

"Or he you," said Mr. Moss laughing.

"At any rate we two know what we are about, sir. You will not find us differing. Now Mr. Moss, you are to pay me twenty shillings a day."

"Till Christmas; – twenty shillings a night till Christmas."

"Of course we cannot live here on twenty shillings a day. The rooms nearly take it all. We can't live on twenty shillings a day, anyhow."

"Then make it forty shillings immediately after the Christmas holidays."

"I must have an agreement to that effect," said Rachel, "or we must go back to Ireland. I must have the agreement before Christmas, or we shall go back. We have a few pounds which will take us away."

"You must not speak of going away, really, Miss O'Mahony."

"Then I must have an agreement signed. You understand that. And we shall look for cheaper rooms to-day. There is a little street close by where we can manage it. But on the one thing we are determined; – we will not get into debt."

CHAPTER VIII. CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1880

On Christmas-day Rachel O'Mahony wrote a letter to her lover at Morony Castle:

Cecil Street, Christmas-day, 1880.

Dearest Frank,

You do love me, don't you? What's the use of my loving you, and thinking that you are everything, only that you are to love me? I am quite content that it should be so. Only let it be so. You'll ask me what reason I have to be jealous. I am not jealous. I do think in my heart that you think that I'm – just perfect. And when I tell myself that it is so, I lay myself back in my chair and kiss at you with my lips till I am tired of kissing the space where you ain't. But if I am wrong, and if you are having a good time of it with Miss Considine at Mrs. McKeon's ball, and are not thinking a bit of me and my kisses, what's the use? It's a very unfair bargain that a woman makes with a man. "Yes; I do love you," I say, – "but – " Then there's a sigh. "Yes; I'll love you," you say – "if – " Then there's a laugh. If I tell a fib, and am not worth having, you can always recuperate. But we can't recuperate. I'm to go about the world and be laughed at, as the girl that Frank Jones made a fool of. Oh! Mr. Jones, if you treat me in that way, won't I punish you? I'll jump into the lough with a label round my neck telling the whole story. But I am not a bit jealous, because I know you are good.

And now I must tell you a bit more of my history. We got rid of that lovely hotel, paying £6 10s., when that just earned £1. And I have brought the piano with me. The man at Erard's told me that I should have it for £2 10s. a month, frankly owning that he hoped to get my custom. "But Mr. Moss is to pay nothing?" I asked. He swore that Mr. Moss would have to pay nothing, and leave what occurred between him and me. I don't think he will. £30 a year ought to be enough for the hire of a piano. So here we are established, at £10 a month – the first-floor, with father's bedroom behind the sitting-room. I have the room upstairs over the sitting-room. They are small stumpy little rooms, – "but mine own." Who says – "But mine own?" Somebody does, and I repeat it. They are mine own, at any rate till next Saturday.

And we have settled this terrible engagement and signed it. I'm to sing for Moss at "The Embankment" for four months, at the rate of £600 a year. It was a Jew's bargain, for I really had filled the house for a fortnight. Fancy a theatre called "The Embankment"! There is a nasty muddy rheumatic sound about it; but it's very prettily got up, and the exits and entrances are also good. Father goes with me every night, but I mean to let him off the terrible task soon. He smiles, and says he likes it. I only tell him he would be a child if he did. They want to change the piece, but I shall make them pay me for my dresses; I am not going to wear any other woman's old clothes. It's not the proper way to begin, you have to begin as a slave or as an empress. Of course, anybody prefers to do the empress. They try, and then they fail, and tumble down. I shall tumble down, no doubt; but I may as well have my chance.

And now I'm going to make you say that I'm a beast. And so I am. I make a little use of Mahomet M. M.'s passion to achieve my throne instead of taking up at once with serfdom. But I do it without vouchsafing him even the first corner of a smile. The harshest treatment is all that he gets. Men such as Mahomet M. will live on harsh treatment for a while, looking forward to revenge when their time comes.

But I shall soon have made sure of my throne, or shall have failed; and in either case shall cease to care for Mahomet M. By bullying him and by treating him as dust beneath my feet, I can do something to show how proud I am, and how sure I am of success. He offers me money – not paid money down, which would have certain allurements. I shouldn't take it. I needn't tell you that. I should like to have plenty of loose sovereigns, so as to hire broughams from the yard, instead of walking, or going in a 'bus about London, which is very upsetting to my pride. Father and I go down to the theatre in a hansom, when we feel ourselves quite smart. But it isn't money like that which he offers. He wants to pay me a month in advance, and suggests that I shall get into debt, and come to him to get me out of it. There was some talk of papa going to New York for a few weeks, and he said he would come and look after me in his absence. "Thank you, Mr. Moss," I said, "but I'm not sure I should want any looking after, only for such as you." Those are the very words I spoke, and I looked him full in the face. "Why, what do you expect from me?" he said. "Insult," I replied, as bold as brass. And then we are playing the two lovers at "The Embankment." Isn't it a pretty family history? He said nothing at the moment, but came back in half an hour to make some unnecessary remarks about the part. "Why did you say just now that I insulted you?" he asked. "Because you do," I replied. "Never, never!" he exclaimed, with most grotesque energy. "I have never insulted you." You know, my dear, he has twenty times endeavoured to kiss my hand, and once he saw fit to stroke my hair. Beast! If you knew the sort of feeling I have for him – such as you would have if you found a cockroach in your dressing-case. Of course in our life young women have to put up with this kind of thing, and some of them like it. But he knows that I am going to be married, or at any rate am engaged, Mr. Frank. I make constant use of your name, telling everybody that I am the future Mrs. Jones, putting such weight upon the Jones. With me he knows that it is an insult; but I don't want to quarrel with him if I can help it, and therefore I softened it down. "You hear me say, Mr. Moss, that I'm an engaged young woman. Knowing that, you oughtn't to speak to me as you do." "Why, what do I say?" You should have seen his grin as he asked me; such a leer of triumph, as though he knew that he were getting the better of me. "Mr. Jones wouldn't approve if he were to see it." "But luckily he don't," said my admirer. Oh, if you knew how willingly I'd stand at a tub and wash your shirts, while the very touch of his gloves makes me creep all over with horror. "Let us have peace for the future," I said. "I dislike all those familiarities. If you will only give them up we shall go on like a house on fire." Then the beast made an attempt to squeeze my hand as he went out of the room. I retreated, however, behind the table, and escaped untouched on that occasion.

You are not to come over, whatever happens, until I tell you. You ought to know very well by this time that I can fight my battles by myself; and if you did come, there would be an end altogether to the £200 which I am earning. To give him his due, he's very punctual with his money, only that he wants to pay me in advance, which I will never have. He has been liberal about my dresses, telling me to order just what I want, and have the bill sent in to the costume manager. When I have worn them they become the property of the theatre. God help any poor young woman that will ever be expected to get into them. So now you know exactly how I am standing with Mahomet M. M.

Poor father goes about to public meetings, but never is allowed to open his mouth for fear he should say something about the Queen. I don't mean that he is really watched, but he promised in Ireland not to lecture any more if they would let

him go, and he wishes to keep his word. But I fear it makes him very unhappy. He has, at any rate, the comfort of coming home and giving me the lecture, which he ought to have delivered to more sympathetic ears. Not but what I do care about the people; only how am I to know whether they ought to be allowed to make their own petticoats, or why it is that they don't do so? He says it's the London Parliament; and that if they had members in College Green, the young women would go to work at once, and make petticoats for all the world. I don't understand it, and wish that he had someone else to lecture to.

How are you getting on with all your own pet troubles? Is the little subsiding lake at Ballintubber still a lake? And what about poor Florian and his religion? Has he told up as yet? I fear, I fear, that poor Florian has been fibbing, and that there will be no peace for him or for your father till the truth has been told.

Now, sir, I have told you everything, just as a young woman ought to tell her future lord and master. You say you ought to know what Moss is doing. You do know, exactly, as far as I can tell you. Of course you wouldn't like to see him, but then you have the comfort of knowing that I don't like it either. I suppose it is a comfort, eh, my bold young man? Of course you want me to hate the pig, and I do hate him. You may be sure that I will get rid of him as soon as I conveniently can. But for the present he is a necessary evil. If you had a home to give me, I would come to it – oh, so readily! There is something in the glitter of a theatre – what people call the boards, the gaslights, the music, the mock love-making, the pretence of being somebody, the feeling of mystery which is attached to you, and the feeling you have that you are generally unlike the world at large – which has its charms. Even your name, blazoned in a dirty playbill, without any Mister or Mistress to guard you, so unlike the ways of ordinary life, does gratify one's vanity. I can't say why it should be so, but it is. I always feel a little prouder of myself when father is not with me. I am Miss O'Mahony, looking after myself, whereas other young ladies have to be watched. It has its attractions.

But – but to be the wife of Frank Jones, and to look after Frank's little house, and to cook for him his chicken and his bacon, and to feel that I am all the world to him, and to think – ! But, oh, Frank, I cannot tell you what things I think. I do feel, as I think them, that I have not been made to stand long before the glare of the gas, and that the time will certainly come when I shall walk about Ballintubber leaning on your arm, and hearing all your future troubles about rents not paid, and waters that have come in.

*Your own, own girl,
Rachel O'Mahony.*

CHAPTER IX. BLACK DALY

Frank Jones received his letter just as he was about to leave Castle Morony for the meet at Ballytowngal, the seat, as everybody knows, of Sir Nicholas Bodkin. Ballytowngal is about two miles from Claregalway, on the road to Oranmore. Sir Nicholas is known all through the West of Ireland, as a sporting man, and is held in high esteem. But there is, I think, something different in the estimation which he now enjoys from that which he possessed twenty years ago. He was then, as now, a Roman Catholic, – as were also his wife and children; and, as a Roman Catholic, he was more popular with the lower classes, and with the priests, who are their natural friends, than with his brother grand-jurors of the country, who were, for the most part, Protestants.

Sir Nicholas is now sixty years old, and when he came to the title at thirty, he was regarded certainly as a poor man's friend. He always lived on the estate. He rarely went up to Dublin, except for a fortnight, when the hunting was over, and when he paid his respects to the Lord Lieutenant. The house at Ballytowngal was said, in those days, to be as well kept up as any mansion in County Galway. But the saying came probably from those who were not intimate in the more gloriously maintained mansions. Sir Nicholas had £5000 a year, and though he did manage to pay his bills annually, spent every shilling of it. He preserved his foxes loyally, and was quite as keen about the fishing of a little river that he owned, and which ran down from his demesne into Lough Corrib. He was particular also about his snipe, and would boast that in a little spinney at Ballytowngal were to be met the earliest woodcock found in the West of Ireland. He was a thorough sportsman; – but a Roman Catholic – and as a Roman Catholic he was hardly equal in standing to some of his Protestant neighbours. He voted for Major Stackpoole, when Major Stackpoole stood for the county on the Liberal interest, and was once requested to come forward himself, and stand for the City as a Roman Catholic. This he did not do, being a prudent man; but at that period, from twenty to thirty years ago, he was certainly regarded as inferior to a Protestant by many of the Protestant gentlemen of the country.

But things are changed now. Sir Nicholas's neighbours, such of them at least that are Protestants, regard Sir Nicholas as equal to themselves. They do not care much for his religion, but they know that he is not a Home-Ruler, or latterly, since the Land League sprang into existence, a Land Leaguer. He is, in fact, one of themselves as a county gentleman, and the question of religion has gone altogether into abeyance. Had you known the county thirty years ago, and had now heard Sir Nicholas talking of county matters, you would think that he was one of the old Protestants. It was so that the rich people regarded him, – and so also the poor. But Sir Nicholas had not varied at all. He liked to get his rents paid, and as long as his tenants would pay them, he was at one with them. They had begun now to have opinions of their own upon the subject, and he was at one with them no longer.

Frank Jones had heard in Galway, that there was to be a difficulty about drawing the Ballytowngal coverts. The hounds were to be allowed to draw the demesne coverts, but beyond that they were to be interrupted. Foxes seldom broke from Ballytowngal, or if they did they ran to Moytubber. At Moytubber the hounds would probably change, – or would do so if allowed to continue their sport in peace. But at Moytubber the row would begin. Knowing this, Frank Jones was anxious to leave his home in time, as he was aware that the hounds would be carried on to Moytubber as quickly as possible. Black Daly had sworn a solemn oath that he would draw Moytubber in the teeth of every Home-Ruler and Land Leaguer in County Galway.

A word or two must be said descriptive of Black Daly, as he was called, the master of the Galway hounds. They used to be called the Galway blazers, but the name had nearly dropped out of fashion since Black Daly had become their master, a quarter of a century since. Who Black Daly was or whence he had come, many men, even in County Galway, did not know. It was not that he had no property, but that his property was so small, as to make it seem improbable that the owner of

it should be the master of the county hounds. But in truth Black Daly lived at Daly's Bridge, in the neighbourhood of Castle Blakeney, when he was supposed to be at home. And the house in which he lived he had undoubtedly inherited from his father. But he was not often there, and kept his kennels at Ahaseragh, five miles away from Daly's Bridge. Much was not therefore known of Mr. Daly, in his own house.

But in the field no man was better known, or more popular, if thorough obedience is an element of popularity. The old gentry of the county could tell why Mr. Daly had been put into his present situation five-and-twenty years ago; but the manner of his election was not often talked about. He had no money, and very few acres of his own on which to preserve foxes. He had never done anything to earn a shilling since he had been born, unless he may have been said to have earned shillings by his present occupation. As he got his living out of it, he certainly may have been said to have done so. He never borrowed a shilling from any man, and certainly paid his way. But if he told a young man that he ought to buy a horse the young man certainly bought it. And if he told a young man that he must pay a certain price, the young man generally paid it. But if the young man were not ready with his money by the day fixed, that young man generally had a bad time of it. Young men have been known to be driven not only out of County Galway, but out of Ireland itself, by the tone of Mr. Daly's voice, and by the blackness of his frown. And yet it was said generally that neither young men nor old men were injured in their dealings with Mr. Daly. "That horse won't be much the worse for his splint, and he's worth £70 to you, because you can ride him ten stone. You had better give me £70 for him." Then the young man would promise the £70 in three months' time, and if he kept his word, would swear by Black Daly ever afterwards. In this way Mr. Daly sold a great many horses.

But he had been put into his present position because he hunted the hounds, during the illness of a distant cousin, who was the then master. The master had died, but the county had the best sport that winter that it had ever enjoyed. "I don't see why I should not do it, as well as another," Tom Daly had said. He was then known as Tom Daly. "You've got no money," his cousin had said, the son of the old gentleman who was just dead. It was well understood that the cousin wished to have the hounds, but that he was thought not to have all the necessary attributes. "I suppose the county means to pay for all sport," said Tom. Then the hat went round, and an annual sum of £900 a year was voted. Since that the hounds have gone on, and the bills have been paid; and Tom has raised the number of days' hunting to four a week, or has lowered it to two, according to the amount of money given. He makes no proposition now, but declares what he means to do. "Things are dearer," he said last year, "and you won't have above five days a fortnight, unless you can make the money up to £1,200. I want £400 a day, and £400 I must have." The county had then voted him the money in the plenitude of its power, and Daly had hunted seven days a fortnight. But all the Galway world felt that there was about to be a fall.

Black Daly was a man quite as dark as his sobriquet described him. He was tall, but very thin and bony, and seemed not to have an ounce of flesh about his face or body. He had large, black whiskers, – coarse and jet black, – which did not quite meet beneath his chin. And he wore no other beard, no tuft, no imperial, no moustachios; but when he was seen before shaving on a morning, he would seem to be black all over, and his hair was black, short, and harsh; and though black, round about his ears it was beginning to be tinged with grey. He was now over fifty years of age; but the hair on his head was as thick as it had been when he first undertook the hounds. He had great dark eyes in his head, deep down, so that they seemed to glitter at you out of caverns. And above them were great, bushy eyebrows, every hair of which seemed to be black, and harsh, and hard. His nose was well-formed and prominent; but of cheeks he had apparently none. Between his whiskers and his nose, and the corners of his mouth, there was nothing but two hollow cavities. He was somewhat over six feet high, but from his extraordinary thinness gave the appearance of much greater height. His arms were long, and the waistcoat which he wore was always long; his breeches were very long; and his boots seemed the longest thing about him – unless his spurs seemed longer. He had no flesh

about him, and it was boasted of him that, in spite of his length, and in spite of his height, he could ride under twelve stone. Of himself, and of his doings, he never talked. They were secrets of his own, of which he might have to make money. And no one had a right to ask him questions. He did not conceive that it would be necessary for a gentleman to declare his weight unless he were about to ride a race. Now it was understood that for the last ten years Black Daly had ridden no races.

He was a man of whom it might be said that he never joked. Though his life was devoted in a peculiar manner to sport, and there may be thought to be something akin between the amusements and the lightness of life, it was all serious to him. Though he was bitter over it, or happy; triumphant, or occasionally in despair – as when the money was not forthcoming – he never laughed. It was all serious to him, and apparently sad, from the first note of a hound in the early covert, down to the tidings that a poor fox had been found poisoned near his earth. He had much to do to find sport for the county on such limited means, and he was always doing it.

He not only knew every hound in his pack, but he knew their ages, their sires, and their dams; and the sires and the dams of most of their sires and dams. He knew the constitution of each, and to what extent their noses were to be trusted. "It's a very heavy scent to-day," he would say, "because Gaylap carries it over the plough. It's only a catching scent because the drops don't hang on the bushes." His lore on all such matters was incredible, but he would never listen to any argument. A man had a right to his own opinion; but then the man who differed from him knew nothing. He gave out his little laws to favoured individuals; not by way of conversation, for which he cared nothing, but because it might be well that the favoured individual should know the truth on that occasion.

As a man to ride he was a complete master of his art. There was nothing which a horse could do with a man on his back, which Daly could not make him do; and when he had ridden a horse he would know exactly what was within his power. But there was no desire with him for the showing off of a horse. He often rode to sell a horse, but he never seemed to do so. He never rode at difficult places unless driven to do so by the exigencies of the moment. He was always quiet in the field, unless when driven to express himself as to the faults of some young man. Then he could blaze forth in his anger with great power. He was constantly to be seen trotting along a road when hounds were running, because he had no desire to achieve for himself a character for hard riding. But he was always with his hounds when he was wanted, and it was boasted of him that he had ridden four days a week through the season on three horses, and had never lamed one of them. He was rarely known to have a second horse out, and when he did so, it was for some purpose peculiar to the day's work. On such days he had generally a horse to sell.

It is hardly necessary to say that Black Daly was an unmarried man. No one who knew him could conceive that he should have had a wife. His hounds were his children, and he could have taught no wife to assist him in looking after them, with the constant attention and tender care which was given to them by Barney Smith, his huntsman. A wife, had she seen to the feeding of the numerous babies, would have given them too much to eat, and had she not undertaken this care, she would have been useless at Daly's Bridge. But Barney Smith was invaluable; double the amount of work got usually from a huntsman was done by him. There was no kennel man, no second horseman, no stud-groom at the Ahaseragh kennels. It may be said that Black Daly filled all these positions himself, and that in each Barney Smith was his first lieutenant. Circumstances had given him the use of the Ahaseragh kennels, which had been the property of his cousin, and circumstances had not enabled him to build others at Daly's Bridge. Gradually he had found it easier to move himself than the hounds. And so it had come to pass that two rooms had been prepared for him close to the kennels, and that Mr. Barney Smith gave him such attendance as was necessary. Of strictly personal attendance Black Daly wanted very little; but the discomforts of that home, while one pair of breeches were supposed to be at Daly's Bridge, and the others at Ahaseragh, were presumed by the world at large to be very grievous.

But the personal appearance of Mr. Daly on hunting mornings, was not a matter of indifference. It was not that he wore beautiful pink tops, or came out guarded from the dust by little aprons, or had

his cravat just out of the bandbox, or his scarlet coat always new, and in the latest fashion, nor had his hat just come from the shop in Piccadilly with the newest twist to its rim. But there was something manly, and even powerful about his whole apparel. He was always the same, so that by men even in his own county, he would hardly have been known in other garments. The strong, broad brimmed high hat, with the cord passing down his back beneath his coat, that had known the weather of various winters; the dark, red coat, with long swallow tails, which had grown nearly black under many storms; the dark, buff striped waistcoat, with the stripes running downwards, long, so as to come well down over his breeches; the breeches themselves, which were always of leather, but which had become nearly brown under the hands of Barney Smith or his wife, and the mahogany top-boots, of which the tops seemed to be a foot in length, could none of them have been worn by any but Black Daly. His very spurs must have surely been made for him, they were in length and weight; and general strength of leather, so peculiarly his own. He was unlike other masters of hounds in this, that he never carried a horn; but he spoke to his hounds in a loud, indistinct chirruping voice, which all County Galway believed to be understood to every hound in the park.

One other fact must be told respecting Mr. Daly. He was a Protestant – as opposed to a Roman Catholic. No one had ever known him go to church, or speak a word in reference to religion. He was equally civil or uncivil to priest and parson when priest or parson appeared in the field. But on no account would he speak to either of them if he could avoid it. But he had in his heart a thorough conviction that all Roman Catholics ought to be regarded as enemies by all Protestants, and that the feeling was one entirely independent of faith and prayerbooks, or crosses and masses. For him fox-hunting – fox-hunting for others – was the work of his life, and he did not care to meddle with what he did not understand. But he was a Protestant, and Sir Nicholas Bodkin was a Roman Catholic, and therefore an enemy – as a dog may be supposed to declare himself a dog, and a cat a cat, if called upon to explain the cause for the old family quarrel.

Now there had come a cloud over his spirit in reference to the state of his country. He could see that the quarrel was not entirely one between Protestant and Catholic as it used to be, but still he could not get it out of his mind, but that the old causes were producing in a different way their old effects. Whiteboys, Terryalts, Ribbonmen, Repeaters, Physical-Forcemen, Fenians, Home-Rulers, Professors of Dynamite, and American-Irish, were, to his thinking, all the same. He never talked much about it, because he did not like to expose his ignorance; but his convictions were not the less formed. It was the business of a Protestant to take rent, and of a Roman Catholic to pay rent. There were certain deviations in this ordained rule of life, but they were only exceptions. The Roman Catholics had the worst of this position, and the Protestants the best. Therefore the Roman Catholics were of course quarrelling with it, and therefore the Roman Catholics must be kept down. Such had been Mr. Daly's general outlook into life. But now the advancing evil of the time was about to fall even upon himself, and upon his beneficent labours, done for the world at large. It was whispered in County Galway that the people were about to rise and interfere with fox-hunting! It may be imagined that on this special day Mr. Daly's heart was low beneath his black-striped waistcoat, as he rode on his way to draw the coverts at Ballytowngal.

At the cross-roads of Monivea he met Peter Bodkin, the eldest son of Sir Nicholas. Now Peter Bodkin had quarrelled long and very bitterly with his father. Every acre of the property at Ballytowngal was entailed upon him, and Peter had thought that under such circumstances his father was not doing enough for him. The quarrel had been made up, but still the evil rankled in Peter's bosom, who was driven to live with his wife and family on £500 a year; and had found himself hardly driven to keep himself out of the hands of the Jews. His father had wished him to follow some profession, but this had been contrary to Peter's idea of what was becoming. But though he had only £500 a year, and five children, he did manage to keep two horses, and saw a good deal of hunting.

And among all the hunting men in County Galway he was the one who lived on the closest terms of intimacy with Black Daly. For, though he was a Roman Catholic, his religion did not trouble

him much; and he was undoubtedly on the same side with Daly in the feuds that were coming on the country. Indeed, he and Daly had entertained the same feelings for some years; for, in the quarrels which had been rife between the father and son, Mr. Daly had taken the son's part, as far as so silent a man can be said to have taken any part at all.

"Well, Peter." "Well, Daly," were the greetings, as the two men met; and then they rode on together in silence for a mile. "Have you heard what the boys are going to do?" asked the master. Peter shook his head. "I suppose there's nothing in it?"

"I fear there is."

"What will they do?" asked Mr. Daly.

"Just prevent your hunting."

"If they touch me, or either of the men, by God! I'll shoot some of them." Then he put his hand into his pocket, as much as to explain a pistol was there. After that the two men rode on in silence till they came to the gates of Ballytowngal.

CHAPTER X. BALLYTOWNGAL

Daly, among other virtues, or vices, was famed for punctuality. He wore a large silver watch in his pocket which was as true as the sun, or at any rate was believed by its owner to be so. From Daly's watch on hunting mornings there was no appeal. He always reached the appointed meet at five minutes before eleven, by his watch, and by his watch the hounds were always moved from their haunches at five minutes past eleven. Though the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary and the Lord Chancellor had been there, there would have been no deviation. The interval of ten minutes he generally spent in whispered confabulations with the earth-warners, secrets into which no attendant horseman ever dived; for Black Daly was a mysterious man, who did not choose to be inquired into as to his movements. On this occasion he said not a word to any earth-warner, though two were in attendance; but he sat silent and more gloomy than ever on his big black horse, waiting for the minutes to pass by till he should be able to run his hounds through the Ballytowngal coverts, and then hurry on to Moytubber.

Mr. Daly's mind was, in truth, fixed upon Moytubber, and what would there be done this morning. He was a simple-minded man, who kept his thoughts fixed for the most part on one object. He knew that it was his privilege to draw the coverts of Moytubber, and to hunt the country around; and he felt also, after some gallant fashion, that it was his business to protect the rights of others in the pursuit of their favourite amusement. No man could touch him or either of his servants in the way of violence without committing an offence which he would be bound to oppose by violence. He was no lawyer, and understood not at all the statutes as fixed upon the subject. If a man laid a hand upon him violently, and would not take his hand off again when desired, he would be entitled to shoot that man. Such was the law, as in his simplicity and manliness he believed it to exist. He was a man not given to pistols; but when he heard that he was to be stopped in his hunting on this morning, and stopped by dastardly, pernicious curs who called themselves Landleaguers, he went into Ballinasloe, and bought himself a pistol. Black Daly was a sad, serious man, who could not put up with the frivolities of life; to whom the necessity of providing for that large family of children was very serious; but he was not of his nature a quarrelsome man. But now he was threatened on the tenderest point; and with much simpler thought had resolved that it would be his duty to quarrel.

But just when he had spoken the word on which Barney and the hounds were prepared to move, Sir Nicholas trotted up to him. Sir Nicholas and all the sporting gentlemen of County Galway were there, whispering with each other, having collected themselves in crowds much bigger than usual. There was much whispering, and many opinions had been given as to the steps which it would be well that the hunt should take if interrupted in their sport. But at last Peter Bodkin had singled out his father, and had communicated to him the fact of Black Daly's pistol. "He'll use it, as sure as eggs are eggs," said Peter whispering to his father.

"Then there'll be murder," said Sir Nicholas, who though a good hunting neighbour had never been on very friendly terms with Mr. Daly.

"When Tom Daly says he'll do a thing, he means to do it," said Peter. "He won't be stopped by my calling it murder." Then Sir Nicholas had quickly discussed the matter with sundry other sportsmen of the neighbourhood. There were Mr. Persse of Doneraile, and Mr. Blake of Letterkenny, and Lord Ardrahan, and Sir Jasper Lynch, of Bohernane. During the ten minutes that were allowed to them, they put their heads together, and with much forethought made Mr. Persse their spokesman. Lord Ardrahan and Sir Jasper might have seemed to take upon themselves an authority which Daly would not endure. And Blake, of Letterkenny, would have been too young to carry with him sufficient weight. Sir Nicholas himself was a Roman Catholic, and was Peter's father, and Peter would have been in a scrape for having told the story of the pistol. So Mr. Persse put himself forward. "Daly,"

he said, trotting up to the master, "I'm afraid we're going to encounter a lot of these Landleaguers at Moytubber."

"What do they want at Moytubber? Nobody is doing anything to them."

"Of course not; they are a set of miserable ruffians. I'm sorry to say that there are a lot of my tenants among them. But it's no use discussing that now."

"I can only go on," said Daly, "as though they were in bed." Then he put his hand in his pocket, and felt that the pistol was there.

Mr. Persse saw what he did, and knew that his hand was on the pistol. "We have only a minute now to decide," he said.

"To decide what?" asked Daly.

"There must be no violence on our side." Daly turned round his face upon him, and looked at him from the bottom of those two dark caverns. "Believe me when I say it; there must be no violence on our side."

"If they attempt to stop my horse?"

"There must be no violence on our side to bring us, or rather you, to further grief."

"By God! I'd shoot the man who did it," said Daly.

"No, no; let there be no shooting. Were you to do so, there can be no doubt that you would be tried by a jury and –"

"Hanged," said Daly. "May be so; I have got to look that in the face. It is an accursed country in which we are living."

"But you would not encounter the danger in carrying out a trifling amusement such as this?"

Daly again turned round and looked at him. Was this work of his life, this employment on which he was so conscientiously eager, to be called trifling? Did they know the thoughts which it cost him, the hard work by which it was achieved, the days and nights which were devoted to it? Trifling amusement! To him it was the work of his life. To those around him it was the best part of theirs.

"I will not interfere with them," Daly said.

He alluded here to the enemies of hunting generally. He had not hunted the country so long without having had many rows with many men. Farmers, angry with him for the moment, had endeavoured to stop him as he rode upon their land; and they had poisoned his foxes from revenge, or stolen them from cupidity. He had borne with such men, expressing the severity of his judgment chiefly by the look of his eyes; but he had never quarrelled with them violently. They had been contemptible people whom it would be better to look at than to shoot. But here were men coming, or were there now, prepared to fight with him for his rights. And he would fight with them, even though hanging should be the end of it.

"I will not interfere with them, unless they interfere with me."

"Have you a pistol with you, Daly?" said Persse.

"I have."

"Then give it me."

"Not so. If I want to use a pistol it will be better to have it in my own pocket than in yours. If I do not want to use it I can keep it myself, and no one will be the wiser."

"Listen to me, Daly."

"Well, Mr. Persse?"

"Do not call me 'Mr. Persse,' as though you were determined to quarrel with me. It will be well that you should take advice in this matter from those whom you have known all your life. There is Sir Nicholas Bodkin –"

"He may be one of them for all that I can tell," said Daly.

"Lord Ardahan is not one of them. And Sir Jasper Lynch, and Blake of Letterkenny, they are all there, if you will speak to them. In such a matter as this it is not worth your while to get into serious trouble. To you and me hunting is a matter of much importance; but the world at large will

not regard it as one in which blood should be shed. They will come prepared to make themselves disagreeable, but if there be bloodshed it will simply be by your hands. And think what an injury you would do to your side of the question, and what a benefit to theirs!"

"How so?"

"We are regarded as the dominant party, as gentlemen who ought to do what is right, and support the laws."

"If I am attacked may I not defend myself?"

"No; not by a pistol carried loaded into a hunting-field. You would have all the world against you."

Then the two men rode on silently together. The hounds were drawing the woods of Ballytowngal, but had not found, and were prepared to go on to Moytubber. But, according to the Galway custom, Barney Smith was waiting for orders from his master. Daly now sat stock still upon his horse for awhile, looking at the dark fringe of trees by which the park was surrounded. He was thinking, as well as he knew how to think, of the position in which he was placed. To be driven to go contrary to his fixed purpose by fear was a course intolerable to him. But to have done that which was clearly injurious to his party was as bad. And this Persse to whom he had shown his momentary anger by calling him Mr., was a man whom he greatly regarded. There was no one in the field whose word would go further with him in hunting matters. He had clearly been rightly chosen as a deputation. But Daly knew that as he had gone to bed the previous night, and as he had got up in the morning, and as he had trotted along by Monivea cross-roads, and had met Peter Bodkin, every thought of his mind had been intent on the pistol within his pocket. To shoot a man who should lay hold of him or his horse, or endeavour to stop his horse, had seemed to him to be bare justice. But he had resolved that he would first give some spoken warning to the sinner. After that, God help the man; for he would find no help in Black Tom Daly.

But now his mind was shaken by the admonitions of Mr. Persse. He could not say of Mr. Persse as he had said, most unjustly, of Sir Nicholas, that he was one of them. Mr. Persse was well-known as a Tory and a Protestant, and an indefatigable opponent of Home-Rulers. To Sir Nicholas, in the minds of some men, there attached a slight stain of his religion. "I will keep the pistol in my pocket," said Tom Daly, without turning his eyes away from the belt of trees.

"Had you not better trust it with me?" said Mr. Persse.

"No, I am not such an idiot as to shoot a man when I do not intend it."

"Seeing how moved you are, I thought that perhaps the pistol might be safer in my hands."

"No, the pistol shall remain with me." Then he turned round to join Barney Smith, who was waiting for him up by the gate out of the covert. But he turned again to say a word to Mr. Persse. "Thank you, Persse, I am obliged to you. It might be inconvenient being locked up before the season is over." Then a weird grin covered his face; which was the nearest approach to laughter ever seen with Black Tom Daly.

From Ballytowngal to Moytubber was about a mile and a half. Some few, during the conversation between Mr. Persse and the master, had gone on, so that they might be the first to see what was in store for them. But the crowd of horsemen had remained with their eyes fixed upon Daly. He rode up to them and passed on without speaking a word, except that he gave the necessary orders to Barney Smith. Then two or three clustered round Mr. Persse, asking him whispered questions. "It'll be all right," said Persse, nodding his head; and so the *cortège* passed on. But not a word was spoken by Daly himself, either then or afterwards, except a whispered order or two given to Barney Smith. Moytubber is a gorse covert lying about three hundred yards from the road, and through it the horsemen always passed; on other occasions it was locked. Now the gate had been taken off its hinges and thrown back upon the bank; and Daly, as he passed into the field, perceived that the covert was surrounded by a crowd.

CHAPTER XI. MOYTUBBER

"What's all this about?" said Tom as he rode up the covert side, and addressing a man whose face he happened to know. He was one Kit Mooney, a baker from Claregalway, who in these latter days had turned Landleaguer. But he was one who simply thought that his bread might be better buttered for him on that side of the question. He was not an ardent politician; but few local Irishmen were so. Had no stirring spirits been wafted across the waters from America to teach Irishmen that one man is as good as another, or generally better, Kit Mooney would never have found it out. Had not his zeal been awakened by the eloquence of Mr. O'Meagher, the member for Athlone, who had just made a grand speech to the people at Athenry, Kit Mooney would have gone on in his old ways, and would at this moment have been touching his hat to Tom Daly, and whispering to him of the fox that had lately been seen "staling away jist there, Mr. Daly, 'fore a'most yer very eyes." But Mr. O'Meagher had spent three glorious weeks in New York, and, having practised the art of speaking on board the steamer as he returned, had come to Athenry and filled the mind of Kit Mooney and sundry others with political truth of the deepest dye. But the gist of the truths so taught had been chiefly this: – that if a man did not pay his rent, but kept his money in his pocket, he manifestly did two good things; he enriched himself, and he so far pauperised the landlord, who was naturally his enemy. What other teaching could be necessary to make Kit understand, – Kit Mooney who held twenty acres of meadow land convenient to the town of Claregalway, – that this was the way to thrive in the world? "Rent is not known in America, that great and glorious country. Every man owns the fields which he cultivates. Why should you here allow yourself to be degraded by the unmanly name of tenants? The earth which supports you should be as free to you as the air you breathe." Such had been the eloquence of Mr. O'Meagher; and it had stirred the mind of Kit Mooney and made him feel that life should be recommenced by him under new principles. Things had not quite gone swimmingly with him since, because Nicholas Bodkin's agent had caused a sheriff's bailiff to appear upon the scene, and the notion of keeping the landlord's rent in the pocket had been found to be surrounded with difficulties. But the great principle was there, and there had come another eloquent man, who had also been in America; and Kit Mooney was now a confirmed Landleaguer.

"Faix thin, yer honour, it isn't much hunting the quality will see this day out of Moytubber; nor yet nowhere round, av the boys are as good as their word."

"Why should they not hunt at Moytubber?" said Mr. Daly, who, as he looked around saw indeed ample cause why there should be no hunting. He had thought as he trotted along the road that some individual Landleaguer would hold his horse by the rein and cause him to stop him in the performance of his duty; but there were two hundred footmen there roaming at will through the sacred precincts of the gorse, and Daly knew well that no fox could have remained there with such a crowd around him.

"The boys are just taking their pleasure themselves this fine Christmas morning," said Kit, who had not moved from the bank on which he had been found sitting. "Begorra, you'll find 'em all out about the counthry, intirely, Mr. Daly. They're out to make your honour welcome. There is lashings of 'em across in Phil French's woods and all down to Peter Brown's, away at Oranmore. There is not a boy in the barony but what is out to bid yer honour welcome this morning."

Kit Mooney could not have given a more exact account of what was being done by "the boys" on that morning had he owned all those rich gifts of eloquence which Mr. O'Meagher possessed. Tom Daly at once saw that there was no need for shooting any culprit, and was thankful. The interruption to the sport of the county had become much more general than he had expected, and it was apparently so organised as to have spread itself over all that portion of County Galway, in which his hounds ran. "Bedad, Mr. Daly, what Kit says is thrue," said another man whom he did not know. "You'll find 'em out everywhere. Why ain't the boys to be having their fun?"

It was useless to allow a hound to go into the covert of Moytubber. The crowd around was waiting anxiously to see the attempt made, so that they might enjoy their triumph. To watch Black Tom drawing Moytubber without a fox would be nuts to them; and then to follow the hounds on to the next covert, and to the next, with the same result, would afford them an ample day's amusement. But the Bodkins, and the Blakes, and the Persses were quite alive to this, and so also was Tom Daly. A council of war was therefore held, in order that the line of conduct might be adopted which might be held to be most conducive to the general dignity of the hunt.

"I should send the hounds home," said Lord Ardrahan. "If Mr. Daly would call at my place and lunch, as he goes by, I should be most happy."

Tom Daly, on hearing this, only shook his head. The shake was intended to signify that he did not like the advice tendered, nor the accompanying hospitable offer. To go home would be to throw down their arms at once, and acknowledge themselves beaten. If beaten to-day, why should they not be beaten on another day, and then what would become of Tom Daly's employment? A sad idea came across his mind, as he shook his head, warning him that in this terrible affair of to-day, he might see the end of all his life's work. Such a thought had never occurred to him before. If a crowd of disloyal Roman Catholics chose to prevent the gentry in their hunting, undoubtedly they had the power. Daly was slow at thinking, but an idea when it had once come home to him, struck him forcibly. As he shook his head at that moment he bethought himself, what would become of Black Daly if the people of the county refused to allow his hounds to run? And a second idea struck him, – that he certainly would not lunch with Lord Ardrahan. Lord Ardrahan was, to his thinking, somewhat pompous, and had been felt by Tom to expect that he, Tom, should acknowledge the inferiority of his position by his demeanour. Now such an idea as this was altogether in opposition to Tom's mode of living. Even though the hounds were to be taken away from him, and he were left at Daly's Bridge with the £200 a year which had come to him from his father, he would make no such acknowledgment as that to any gentleman in County Galway. So he shook his head, and said not a word in answer to Lord Ardrahan.

"What do you propose to do, Daly?" demanded Mr. Persse.

"Go on and draw till night. There's a moon, and if we can find a fox before ten, Barney and I will manage to kill him. Those blackguards can't keep on with us." This was Daly's plan, spoken out within hearing of many of the blackguards.

"You had better take my offer, and come to Ardrahan Castle," said his lordship.

"No, my lord," said Daly, with the tone of authority which a master of hounds always knows how to assume.

"I shall draw on. Barney, get the hounds together." Then he whispered to Barney Smith that the hounds should go on to Kilcornan. Now Kilcornan was a place much beloved by foxes, about ten miles distant from Moytubber. It was not among the coverts appointed to be drawn on that day, which all lay back towards Ahaseragh. At Kilcornan the earths would be found to open. But it would be better to trot off rapidly to some distant home for foxes, even though the day's sport might be lost. Daly was very anxious that it should not be said through the country that he had been driven home by a set of roughs from any one covert or another. The day's draw would be known – the line of the country, that is, which, in the ordinary course of things, he would follow on that day. But by going to Kilcornan he might throw them off his scent. So he started for Kilcornan, having whispered his orders to Barney Smith, but communicating his intentions to no one else.

"What will you do, Daly?" said Sir Jasper Lynch.

"Go on."

"But where will you go?" inquired the baronet. He was a man about Daly's age, with whom Daly was on comfortable terms. He had no cause for being crabbed with Sir Jasper as with Lord Ardrahan. But he did not want to declare his purpose to any man. There is no one in the ordinary work of his life so mysterious as a master of hounds. And among masters no one was more mysterious than Tom

Daly. And this, too, was no ordinary day. Tom only shook his head and trotted on in advance. His secret had been told only to Barney Smith, and with Barney Smith he knew that it would be safe.

So they all trotted off at a pace much faster than usual. "What's up with Black Tom now?" asked Sir Nicholas of Sir Jasper. "What's Daly up to now?" asked Mr. Blake of Mr. Persse. They all shook their heads, and declared themselves willing to follow their leader without further inquiry. "I suppose he knows what he's about," said Mr. Persse; "but we, at any rate, must go and see." So they followed him; and in half an hour's time it became apparent that they were going to Kilcornan.

But at Kilcornan they found a crowd almost equal to that which had stopped them at Moytubber. Kilcornan is a large demesne, into which they would, in the ordinary course, have made their entrance through the lodge gate. At present they went at once to an outlying covert, which was supposed to be especially the abode of foxes; but even here, as Barney trotted up with his hounds, at a pace much quicker than usual, they found that the ground before them had been occupied by Landleaguers. "You'll not do much in the hunting way to-day, Muster Daly," said one of the intruders. "When we heard you were a-coming we had a little hunt of our own. There ain't a fox anywhere about the place now, Muster Daly." Tom Daly turned round and sat on his big black horse, frowning at the world before him; a sorrowful man. What shall we do next? It does not behove a master of hounds to seek counsel in difficulty from anyone. A man, if he is master, should be sufficient to himself in all emergencies. No man felt this more clearly than did Black Tom Daly. He had been ashamed of himself once this morning, because he had taken advice from Mr. Persse. But now he must think the matter out for himself and follow his own devices.

It was as yet only two o'clock, but he had come on at a great pace, taking much more out of his horse than was usual to him on such occasions. But, sitting there, he did make up his mind. He would go on to Mr. Lambert's place at Clare, and would draw the coverts, going there as fast as the horse's legs would carry him. There he would borrow two horses if it were possible, but one, at least, for Barney Smith. Then he would draw back by impossible routes, to the kennels at Ahaseragh. Men might come with him or might go; but to none would he tell his mind. If Providence would only send him a fox on the route, all things, he thought, might still be well with him. It would be odd if he and Barney Smith, between them, were not able to give an account of that fox when they had done with him. But if he should find no such fox – if he, the master of the Galway hounds, should have ridden backwards and forwards across County Galway, and have been impeded altogether in his efforts by wretched Landleaguers, then – as he thought – a final day would have to come for him.

He spoke no word to anyone, but he did go on just as he proposed to himself. He drew Clare, but drew it blank; and then, leaving his own horses, he borrowed two others for himself and Barney, and went on upon his route. Before the day was over – or rather, before the night was far advanced – he had borrowed three others, in his course about the country, for himself and his servants. Quick as lightning he went from covert to covert; but the conspiracy had been well arranged, and a holiday for the foxes in County Galway was established for that day. Some men were very stanch to him, going with him whither they knew not, so that "poor dear Tom" might not be left alone; but alone he was during the long evening of that day, as far as all conversation went. He spoke to no one, except to Barney, and to him only a few words; giving him a direction as to where he should go next, and into what covert he should put the hounds. They, too, must have been much surprised and very weary, as they dragged their tired limbs to their kennel, at about eight o'clock. And Tom Daly's ride across the country will long be remembered, and the exertions which he made to find a fox on that day.

But it was all in vain. As Tom ate his solitary mutton-chop, and drank his cold whisky and water, and then took himself to bed, he was a melancholy man. The occupation of his life, he thought, was gone. These reprobates, whom he now hated worse than ever, having learned their powers to disturb the amusements of their betters, would never allow another day's hunting in the county. He was aware now, though he never had thought of it before, by how weak a hold his right of hunting the country was held. He and his hounds could go into any covert; but so also could any other man, with

or without hounds. To disturb a fox, three or four men would suffice; one would suffice according to Tom's idea of a fox. The occupation of his life was over.

Tom Daly was by nature a melancholy man. All County Galway knew that. He was a man not given to many words, by no means devoted to sport in the ordinary sense. It was a hard business that he had undertaken. The work was in every sense hard, and the payment made was very small. In fact no payment was made, other than that of his being lifted into a position in which he was able to hold his head high among gentlemen of property. What should he do with himself during the remainder of his life, if hunting in County Galway was brought to an end? He was an intent, eager man, whom it was hard to teach that the occupations of his life were less worthy than those of other men. But there had come moments of doubt as he had sat alone in his little room at Ahaseragh and had meditated, whether the pursuit of vermin was worthy all the energy which he had given to it.

"You may sell those brutes of yours now, and then perhaps you'll be able to educate your children." So Sir Nicholas Bodkin had addressed his eldest son, as they rode home together on that occasion.

"Why so?" Peter had asked, thinking more of the "brutes" alluded to than of the children. He was accustomed to the tone of his father's remarks, and cared for them not more than the ordinary son cares for the expression of the ordinary father's ill humour. But now he knew that some reference was intended to the interruption that had been made in their day's sport, and was anxious to learn what his father thought about it. "Why so?" he asked.

"Because you won't want them for this game any longer. Hunting is done with in these parts. When a blackguard like Kit Mooney is able to address such a one as Tom Daly after that fashion, anything that requires respect may be said to be over. Hunting has existed solely on respect. I had intended to buy that mare of French's, but I shan't now."

"What does all that mean, Lynch?" said Mr. Persse to Sir Jasper, as they rode home together.

"It means quarrelling to the knife."

"In a quarrel to the knife," said Mr. Persse, "all lighter things must be thrown away. Daly had brought a pistol in his pocket as you heard this morning. I have been thinking of it ever since; and, putting two and two together, it seems to me to be almost impossible that hunting should go on in County Galway."

CHAPTER XII. "DON'T HATE HIM, ADA."

Among those who had gone as far as Mr. Lambert's, but had not proceeded further, had been Frank Jones. He had heard and seen what has been narrated, and was as much impressed as others with the condition of the country. The populace generally – for so it had seemed to be – had risen *en masse* to put down the amusement of the gentry, and there had been a secret conspiracy, so that they had been able to do the same thing in different parts of the county. Frank, as he rode back to Morony Castle, a long way from Mr. Lambert's covert, was very melancholy in his mind. The persecution of Mahomet M. Moss and of the Landleaguers together was almost too much for him.

When he got home his father also was melancholy, and the girls were melancholy. "What sport have you had, Frank?" said the father. But he asked the question in a melancholy tone, simply as being one which the son expects on returning from hunting. In this expectation Mr. Jones gave way. Frank shook his head, but did not utter a word.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the father.

"The whole country is in arms." This, no doubt, was an exaggeration, as the only arms that had been brought to Moytubber on the occasion had been the pistol in Tom Daly's pocket.

"In arms?" said Philip Jones.

"Well, yes! I call it so. I call men in arms, when they are prepared to carry out any illegal purpose by violence, and these men have done that all through the County Galway."

"What have they done?"

"You know where the meet was; well, they drew Ballytowngal, and found no fox there. It was not expected, and nothing happened there. The people did not come into old Nick Bodkin's demesne, but we had heard by the time that we were there that we should come across a lot of Landleaguers at Moytubber. There they were as thick as bees round the covert, and there was one man who had the impudence to tell Tom Daly that draw where he might, he would draw in vain for a fox to-day in County Galway."

"Do you mean that there was a crowd?" asked Mr. Jones.

"A crowd! Yes, all Claregalway seemed to have turned out. Claregalway is not much of a place, but everyone was there from Oranmore and from Athenry, and half the town from Galway city." This certainly was an exaggeration on the part of Frank, but was excused by his desire to impress his father with the real truth in the matter. "I never saw half such a number of people by a covert side. But the truth was soon known. They had beat Moytubber, and kicked up such a row as the foxes in that gorse had never heard before. And they were not slow in obtaining their object."

"Their object was clear enough."

"They didn't intend that the hounds should hunt that day either at Moytubber or elsewhere. Daly did not put his hounds into the covert at all; but rode away as fast as his horse's legs could carry him to Kilcornan."

"That must be ten miles at least," said his father.

"Twenty, I should think. But we rode away at a hand-gallop, leaving the crowd behind us." This again was an exaggeration. "But when we got to the covert at Kilcornan there was just the same sort of crowd, and just the same work had been on foot. The men there all told us that we need not expect to find a fox. A rumour had got about the field by this time that Tom Daly had a loaded pistol in his pocket. What he meant to do with it I don't know. He could have done no good without a regular massacre."

"Did he show his pistol?"

"I didn't see it; but I do believe it was there. Some of the old fogies were awfully solemn about it."

"What was the end of it all?" asked Edith, who together with her sister was now listening to Frank's narrative.

"You know Mr. Lambert's place on the road towards Gort. It's a long way off, and I'm a little out of my latitude there. But I went as far as that, and found a bigger crowd than ever. They said that all Gort was there; but Tom having drawn the covert, went on, and swore that he wouldn't leave a place in all County Galway untried. He borrowed fresh horses, and went on with Barney Smith as grim as death. He is still drawing his covert somewhere."

It was thus that Frank Jones told the story of that day's hunting. To his father's ears it sounded as being very ominous. He did not care much for hunting himself, nor would it much perplex him if the Landleaguers would confine themselves to this mode of operations. But as he heard of the crowds surrounding the coverts through the county, he thought also of his many acres still under water, by the operation of a man who had taken upon himself to be his enemy. And the whole morning had been spent in fruitless endeavours to make Florian tell the truth. The boy had remained surly, sullen, and silent. "He will tell me at last," Edith had said to her father. But her father had said, that unless the truth were now told, he must allow the affair to go by. "The time for dealing with the matter will be gone," he had said. "Pat Carroll is going about the country as bold as brass, and says that he will fix his own rent; whereas I know, and all the tenants know, that he ought to be in Galway jail. There isn't a man on the estate who isn't certain that it was he, with five or six others, who let the waters in upon the meadows."

"Then why on earth cannot you make them tell?"

"They say that they only think it," said Edith.

"The very best of them only think it," said Ada.

"And there is not one of them," said Mr. Jones, "whom you could trust to put into a witness-box. To tell the truth, I do not see what right I have to ask them to go there. If I was to select a man, — or two, how can I say to them, 'forget yourself, forget your wife and children, encounter possible murder, and probable ruin, in order that I may get my revenge on this man'?"

"It is not revenge but justice," said Frank.

"It would be revenge to their minds. And if it came to pass that there was a man who would thus sacrifice himself to me, what must I do with him afterwards? Were I to send him to America with money, and take his land into my own hand, see what horrible things would be said of me. The sort of witness I want to back up others, who would then be made to come, is Florian."

"What would they do to him?" asked Edith.

"I could send him to an English school for a couple of years, till all this should have passed by. I have thought of that."

"That, too, would cost money," said Ada.

"Of course it would cost money, but it would be forthcoming, rather than that the boy should be in danger. But the feeling, to me, as to the boy himself, comes uppermost. It is that he himself should have such a secret in his bosom, and keep it there, locked fast, in opposition to his own father. I want to get it out of him while he is yet a boy, so that his name shall not go abroad as one who, by such manifest falsehood, took part against his own father. It is the injury done to him, rather than the injury done to me."

"He has promised his priest that he will not tell," said Edith, making what excuse she could for her brother.

"He has not promised his priest," said Mr. Jones. "He has made no promise to Father Malachi, of Ballintubber. If he has promised at all it is to that pestilent fellow at Headford. The curate at Headford is not his priest, and why should a promise made to any priest be more sacred than one made to another, unless it were made in confession? I cannot understand Florian. It seems as though he were anxious to take part with these wretches against his country, against his religion, and against his father. It is unintelligible to me that a boy of his age should, at the same time, be so precocious

and so stupid. I have told him that I know him to be a liar, and that until he will tell the truth he shall not come into my presence." Having so spoken the father sat silent, while Frank went off to dress.

It was felt by them all that a terrible decision had been come to in the family. A verdict had gone out and had pronounced Florian guilty. They had all gradually come to think that it was so. But now the judge had pronounced the doom. The lad was not to be allowed into his presence during the continuance of the present state of things. In the first place, how was he to be kept out of his father's presence? And the boy was one who would turn mutinous in spirit under such a command. The meaning of it was that he should not sit at table with his father. But, in accordance with the ways of the family, he had always done so. A separate breakfast must be provided for him, and a separate dinner. Then would there not be danger that he should be driven to look for his friends elsewhere? Would he not associate with Father Brosnan, or, worse again, with Pat Carroll? "Ada," said Edith that night as they sat together, "Florian must be made to confess."

"How make him?"

"You and I must do it."

"That's all very well," said Ada, "but how? You have been at him now for nine months, and have not moved him. He's the most obstinate boy, I think, that ever lived."

"Do you know, there is something in it all that makes me love him the better?" said Edith.

"Is there? There is something in it that almost makes me hate him."

"Don't hate him, Ada – if you can help it. He has got some religious idea into his head. It is all stupid."

"It is beastly," said Ada.

"You may call it as you please," said the other, "it is stupid and beastly. He is travelling altogether in a wrong direction, and is putting everybody concerned with him in immense trouble. It may be quite right that a person should be a Roman Catholic – or that he should be a Protestant; but before one turns from one to the other, one should be old enough to know something about it. It is very vexatious; but with Flory there is, I think, some idea of an idea. He has got it into his head that the Catholics are a downtrodden people, and therefore he will be one of them."

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