

Wingfield Lewis

**My Lords of Strogue.
Volume 2 of 3**



Lewis Wingfield
My Lords of Strogue.
Volume 2 of 3

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23146235
My Lords of Strogue, Vol. 2 (of 3) / A Chronicle of Ireland, from the
Convention to the Union:*

Содержание

CHAPTER I.	4
CHAPTER II.	32
CHAPTER III.	45
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	69

Wingfield Lewis

My Lords of Strogue,

Vol. 2 (of 3) / A Chronicle

of Ireland, from the

Convention to the Union

CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT AT CROW STREET

The dowager's words produced their effect upon Doreen, despite her virtuous indignation. She no longer committed herself by indiscreet communings with the 'scatter-brained young men.' She seemed to be growing lukewarm to the cause as the decisive moment approached, shirking responsibility in a way her character belied, to the surprise of the patriots, amongst whom we must count Cassidy. The giant remarked with pained astonishment that she gave him no grateful look when he whispered about the pikes, when he hinted with dark nods that Phil and Bidy had been busy in the night; and he reflected with self-upbraiding that this change must be due to his ill-timed wooing. No doubt it was presumptuous in a 'half-

mounted' to aspire to an heiress, but sure she should accept as a compliment a piece of bungling for which her own charms were entirely responsible. He resolved to be more careful in the future, striving to bridge the breach by a nimble deference tempered by judicious sadness; and let no opportunity pass of making himself useful to the young earl. His hands were pretty full, thanks to my Lords Clare and Camden, who pursued the stormy tenor of their way with an edifying steadiness of purpose. He gladly rode errands for Lord Glandore, did shopping for the countess, drank bumpers in the Castle-yard in company with Major Sirr, waited about in my Lord Clare's anteroom; became a ubiquitous, faithful, and generally useful personage. He brought news sometimes of the gravest moment to the mysterious resorts where Dublin 'prentices were pretending to play ball; which hints resulted more frequently than not in a message smuggled in a loaf to the prisoners at Kilmainham and a courier sent galloping far away into the country.

The electric cloud loomed near on the horizon. Lord Clare watched the threatening vapour as it rolled, increasing hourly in volume, and, laughing, showed his gums. The ranks of the yeomanry were swelling day by day, thanks to the exertions of large proprietors whose interest it was to be well with the court; thanks to the complaisant alacrity of the squireens who acted at the beck of the great landowners. Small riots took place both in the capital and in the provinces, tussles between browbeaten peasants and a soldiery who grew hourly more insolent, which

originated for the most part in taunts at the old faith. Rumours floating vaguely, none knew whence, became current gossip, hints of a French invasion, of a landing somewhere in the north, which should set free the enslaved Catholics-of a Republican crusade in favour of liberty of conscience. The Orange societies of the north took the alarm. 'Liberty of conscience indeed!' they cried. 'We remember what happened in King James's time, when the national religion was for a brief space triumphant; how Protestants were massacred and their property destroyed. We will repel such an invasion with all our might, and will just prick these presuming slaves a little as a warning of what may follow.' There were excesses in Armagh and the cities of the north; wherein cottages were burnt, cattle confiscated, their owners hewn in pieces. News of military outrages arrived in Dublin; and the public, growing uneasy, looked to the Castle to mark its attitude. Ever since Lord Camden's advent, people remarked, things had been going wrong. Traitors by dozens had been imprisoned or executed. Coercion was the order of the day. But popular opinion had been divided; one party declaring that traitors must be hanged for the security of the body politic, the opposite party cogently pointing out that if Government acted with more prudence, men would not be driven into treason. But now the matter was taking a new form. One class, which had always been antagonistic to the other, was showing overt symptoms of the harshest tyranny. The Protestant ascendancy party had banded itself together in armed force at the call of

Government for the protection of the land. It was obvious that this armed force must not be permitted to exert its strength against its own brethren of another faith—to convert a deplorable harshness, of which in memory of man the instances were isolated, into a regularly organised system like that of Elizabeth. Government must interfere promptly, men said. These savage squireens, who swaggered in the King's colours, must be taught at once to curb their brutal proclivities, or a reign of terror would result such as shocked Europe in '89.

But Government did nothing of the kind. My Lord Clare held up his delicate hands in the lobby of the House of Lords, and, under shadow of William's statue, harangued passing senators upon the iniquity of the lower orders.

'It is awful,' he declared in his rasping voice. 'What will Mr. Pitt say? He will withdraw your pensions, my poor gentlemen, unless you act with decision. Arm your vassals, my lords. The French will come and murder us in our beds. I vow the country is in danger. The Catholics must be shown their place.'

That the country was in danger there could be little doubt; but it was not precisely from the side to which the crafty chancellor thought fit to point.

Parliament met in solemn conclave, and did as it was told. Curran and a few others rose up in their places, solemnly protesting against a policy which sprang from a hidden fear of the lower orders. An Act of Indemnity was passed with regard to the proceedings in the north. Magistrates and petty officers

were held to have behaved wisely in permitting cottages to be burnt in the name of religion, in allowing fathers of families to be kidnapped in the night, and spirited away no one might tell whither. A profound feeling of wrath was stirred over all the land by the passing of this, and the Insurrection Bill which allowed it; whereby, amongst other things, a power of arbitrary transportation was given to magistrates, and outrages made legal which till now had been accomplished in defiance of the law. People saw clearly that the majority of both Lords and Commons were merely the representatives of their own greed and their own venality; that nothing could free motherland from a vicious thralldom of unpatriotic selfishness but a reform of Parliament and a complete change in the system of Government. How was this to be accomplished? There was the knotty point. Was the threatened rising of the masses really inevitable? Could they accomplish their objects at all if France should refuse substantial help? Was Government deliberately acting for a wicked purpose, or was the crime merely the negative one of incapacity? Agitation-meetings blaming the executive were held about the country, at which, when he heard of them, my Lord Clare expressed his amazement, ingeniously stating in public that he was astonished at the mildness of the Viceroy in not severely punishing the agitators. Such a hint was not lost upon his amateur colonels and military magistrates. They began to exhibit renewed examples of vigorous zeal, destroying property at pleasure, searching houses for arms, treating the inhabitants with such

brutality that women fell into convulsions and brought forth children before their time. A singular effect of these proceedings, which in itself spoke volumes, was a sudden moral reform among the peasantry. Men who had been drunken became reclaimed; fairs and markets were undisturbed by quarrelling; factions which had been at feud for centuries smoked the pipe of peace together. Hatred, kept down by fear, festered in the hearts of the children of the soil. It was felt that a moment was imminent when man might endure no more, when a down-trodden race must conquer its persecutors or seek relief from misery in death.

Doreen, from her retreat among the roses, watched the current of events which now rushed with rapid impetuosity towards an horizon of blood; and as month followed month, each laden with its progressive freight of trouble, wondered with beating heart that no news should be received from Tone. Had his projects failed? She knew that the difficulties with which he was called to cope were immense. The last letter she had had from him, long ago now, spoke of an expedition getting ready, which should start before the end of summer. It was now August, and as she sat waiting week after week, both hope and expectation waning, a feeling of heart-sickness crept over her, which seemed to chill her life-blood and dry up her bones. One day, listlessly gazing as usual across the sea, she looked up and beheld red-polled Biddy making uncouth signals from the shrubbery-signals she had looked for so frequently in vain. A letter! Yes. It was-at last! But it brought no comfort. An expedition was nearly ready;

but the leading spirit vacillated. General Hoche doubted whether the forces given to him were strong enough to do efficient service; whether the Irish were ready to receive them; whether the resources of Ireland had been truthfully laid before him.

To Tone's chagrin Hoche informed the Directory that it was fitting, before their ships and treasure were committed to the waters, that somebody of weight should come to France from Ireland, to corroborate Tone's statements and bring the latest news. It was vexatious-despairing! What was to be done? In this new strait the young patriot urgently applied to his friend Miss Wolfe, to consult with the United Irishmen as to some one being sent without delay. One of the Emmetts, Russell, Neilson, anybody who knew anything. She must see to this, or all was lost; for if no satisfactory tidings were speedily received the expedition would be diverted to some other purpose, and Ireland left to fight her battles single-handed. In his trouble he had made statements which were rash, no doubt-had promised large sums to France, in the name of the future Directory of Ireland, and had said that many men of property desired the Revolution. Whoever was sent over must, to prevent further parleying, corroborate these statements. She must show extra caution however in dealing with this business, for a Judas was abroad, more than one, perhaps-there could be no doubt of that. Mr. Pitt seemed informed of everything that passed in Ireland-and in Paris too, for that matter. Caution and despatch were needful above all things.

Doreen laid down this letter to consider it, with a presentiment of evil. The fevered workings of our distempered minds are not so terrible as the sledge-hammer blows which sometimes fall on us. Even the harassed conjectures born of fear prove less dreadful than realities. This was a blow which numbed her faculties. For her father's sake, who loved the fleshpots, she had resolved to be a calm spectator of the coming struggle—to mark the arrival of the French convoy and its certain triumph; to crown the successful heroes in private with metaphorical laurels; to forego for her living father's sake the joy of publicly helping in the emancipation of her dead mother's people. But here was something which put all her resolutions to flight.

The entire scaffolding threatened to tumble about the ears of those who held her sympathies; and it seemed that it might be in her power to prevent that catastrophe. So long as neutrality was likely to do the Catholic party no harm, she was prepared to sacrifice the vanities which hang about picturesque heroism—to view the glorious results as a mere spectator instead of walking in the procession under the triumphal arches. But this letter woefully changed the face of the prospect. It was quite possible apparently (and she felt cold as she realised it) that the gorgeous fabric in which her soul revelled was to vanish into air, and that she might afterwards be accused of having by apathy brought about its crumbling! What was she to do? What in the scale was this twaddle of the dowager's—this buckram rubbish of an old school—this bit of red-tape, which might come to be the halter

of liberty! But then her father-could she possibly have a right to bring suffering on him-to be in her own person the Nemesis who should deal punishment on him for his time-serving weakness?

The tumult within her was such that her ears throbbed and her throat seemed closing-yet her unaided judgment must settle this question with calm pros and cons. There is nothing so clearing to a healthy intellect, temporarily clouded, as strong muscular exertion. Miss Wolfe stepped into the cockleshell which was her own, and went for a row upon the bay.

She watched the shadows of the herring-boats, listened absently to the rhythmical cry of the fisherfolk as they landed the produce of their night's labour on the little quay, nodded in acknowledgment of their salutes, rowed herself with firm nervous strokes into mid-water, and then drifted. The freshness of a light breeze and the exertion seemed to string her nerves and clear her mind. She lay back in the light shallop, and trailing her brown fingers in the water, meditated. No! Her allegiance was due equally to both parents. Her father had cast his lot with the mammon of unrighteousness and gleaned the pleasant result of the proceeding. That was no reason for her to betray her mother's people. Much as she loved her father she differed widely from his views. She would keep in the background as much as might be, for his sake; but it certainly behoved her to act with promptitude and energy now. Send somebody over! Whom was she to send? Who was important enough for the mission? In whom might complete faith be placed? Cassidy was too bungling and stupid.

Moreover he knew no word of French, and would be sure to make mistakes. Robert Emmett? Too young, too romantic; a student in Trinity besides, whose lengthened absence would be remarked. Thomas Emmett, alas! was in durance vile. Whom might she send? Whom? If Terence would only take things seriously, he was the very man for the undertaking. What a pity she had not used her influence with him to good purpose, Miss Wolfe thought with compunction. The Judith and Holofernes idea was idiotic, of course; but Terence was a fish that might have been played with a satisfactory result. Yet, after all, could the sacredness of the cause justify her in enacting Delilah to his Samson? Surely not. With humiliation she admitted that the trick would be unworthy of one who lived under the roof of Strogue.

Terence had grown dreadfully cross of late. Once or twice her heart had bounded, for she had seemed to see that he was moody and disturbed on account of the way events were marching. Certainly he came home sometimes from the Four-courts with fierce denunciations on his lips anent the culpable folly of Lord Camden-but then he always calmed down again, when he was no longer hungry, hoping for better days, if Lord Clare would really take the helm. His belief in Lord Clare was the blindness which might be expected from a too simple mind.

As the damsel drifted she built castles for herself. If Terence, who was manly enough and true enough, would only take things a little more *au sérieux!* If men would only be true to their first impulse for good, what a much better world it would be! for,

taken unawares, it is nearly always our good angel who speaks first. He is always awake, if timid; but his dusky, coarse-natured fellow snores so loudly, that it is no easy matter to make out clearly what he counsels. Terence grew indignant often; was very hot over the Indemnity Bill and Insurrection ditto, but neither ever disturbed his sleep one jot, or interfered in the smallest degree with his capacity for grouse and claret. What a pity it was! A dependable man, a man of rank, whose heart was in the right place if it would but speak—a man who, from his position, would with a breath remove Hoche's scruples. But there was no use in thinking of him. Somebody must be sent, and speedily, or the interests of the United Irishmen would be compromised. Somebody must be sent—but who?

The young lady became aware that she was drifting out to sea—that it would require all her nautical science and muscular power to bring her frail boat to port by sunset; and she was bound to be home again by sunset on this especial evening, because it was a 'lady's night' at Crow Street Theatre, and my lady had warned her that loyal ladies must 'show' there, because the Viceroy would be present, supported by a galaxy of beauty. So she handled her sculls like a true connexion of the pirate-earls; and as the warm blood tingled in her veins with the exertion, sent her little bark dancing over the water, her brain working busily the while.

She decided that it was not possible to stand aloof at this juncture. Tone—the hero, at whose shrine she worshipped—conjured her to act. She would meet at Crow Street, probably,

several of the prominent United Irishmen, and must choose her opportunity to confer secretly with them. Who could be sent to Paris with safety? None but Cassidy. What a pity he was so stupid! He meant well-of that she felt assured; but he would plead poverty-that was little matter, for she had jewels which might be pledged. But might he claim something more? Love-making and conspiracy do not go well together. A certain scene at the kennels recurred to her mind; and it was with a flush, more due to displeasure than healthful exercise, that at length she shot her boat beside the landing-stage. An unaccustomed shadow caused her to start and look upwards. A man was looking at her, with his thin legs apart and his arms folded across his chest-a little man, with elf-locks hanging about his face, and a strange melancholy smile upon his lips.

'Faix! and ye're a grand boatwoman, Miss Doreen,' Mr. Curran said; 'and ye look mighty well fingering those planks. I've bin watching you this half-hour, and wondering too-wondering whether, if I had been out alone where you were, I could ever be coaxed to return.'

Doreen looked up quickly at him. Had something dreadful come to pass? Something dreadful was happening hourly with exasperating monotony. 'We didn't expect you over to-day. Is Sara with you?'

'No. I trotted over on my nag to see if Terence had returned; and must go back at once, as Sara wants to go to Crow Street.'

'Is there anything new?' the young lady inquired, with averted

face, as she fastened up her boat. She was constantly fretting morbidly about the slowness of Tim's tread, as people will who are devoured with impatience, and yet half-dread the fulfilment of their wishes.

'New! No,' grunted the small lawyer. 'Would to heaven there were! No change could be for the worse. I have been engrossed these two days past in the Orr trial. Didn't Terence tell you? Well, well, he wouldn't shock ye. It's nothing new, faith! And there's no good talking of such things at home. They gave the verdict against us, despite all that I could urge; and the injustice was so glaring that Terence flew in a passion. Upon my word, he looked as fierce as his brother, the Prince of Cherokees! He vowed there was some mistake-that he would in person explain matters to the Viceroy (foolish lad-not to have learnt better by this time!); and so I trotted over to hear if he had succeeded in his suit.'

'What was the case?'

'Nothing particularly novel-another of the many evil results of the chancellor's Insurrection Bill,' grumbled Curran. 'One of its clauses breathes dire vengeance against such as administer illegal oaths. Rubbish! considering what you and I, young lady, know about a green bough in Britain's crown. Such oaths will be administered so long as this corrupt *régime* continues-just as they have been for five years and more. A fine would meet the case-and it should be a light one; for indeed the provocation is not slight. But now such administering has become penal. A soldier-a drunken fellow in the Fencibles-comes forward, swears that one

Orr—a harmless, obscure farmer, against whom he probably has a grudge—has induced him to take the oath, "Are you straight? as straight as a rush," and the rest. Maybe he has, maybe he hasn't—that's not the point; the jury retire, and remain closed up for hours—all through last night—far into this morning, and by-and-by give in a verdict of guilty. That farmer, who, on my conscience, I believe was innocent, is swinging by this time unless Terence's mission has been successful.'

The two walked up the steep path, which led to the Abbey terrace, in silence. Doreen was thinking that her resolve was right. It should be no fault of hers if the French fleet failed to come with healing on its wings. Curran was plunged in sadness, for he was beginning to be convinced that the triumphal car of Government would bear him down—chosen champion, as he believed himself—with its overpowering weight, as it did others. Of what use was his eloquence as an advocate in presence of packed juries and bribed witnesses? It was talking to the wall—or worse, for at least the wall serves its purpose without shame, and is washed white, and receives no bribes; Major Sirr's juries and witnesses were accustomed, on the other hand, to arrange their affairs in a jovial fashion in the major's sanctum before coming into court. There was little of the whitewash about them!

When Doreen conducted the lawyer into the tapestry-saloon, my lady was concerned at her eccentric little friend's dejection; and easily prevailed on him to dine before returning to the Priory. Terence did not appear, which was of evil augury; so his chief

took the opportunity of the ladies retiring to their toilet, to mount his nag and gallop homewards, with a leaden weight within his breast.

Neither the dowager nor her niece were theatre-going people. The former held dim uncomplimentary opinions about the private lives of actresses, and her pride of caste revolted at the familiar behaviour of the gallery, who were given to homely conversation with their betters in the boxes, and to making rude comments upon the proceedings on the stage. Miss Wolfe disliked the play, because mimic woes and mimic laughter were alike an insult to the soreness of her heart, and the too real sorrows of the world in which she lived. Yet both were compelled by fashion to show themselves in Crow Street whenever a specially prominent goddess of *ton* thought fit to command a night. On such occasions the auditorium was illuminated with wax candles; the rank of the metropolis in diamonds and feathers filled the boxes; pit-tickets were freely distributed among the tradespeople with whom the lady dealt, whilst she took up her own position at the extreme end of the refecton-room (a fine gallery erected by Mr. Fred. Jones, the manager), bowing a welcome to all who rallied round her.

On this particular evening the Lady-Lieutenant herself had commanded the performance, so all the adherents of the Castle were there in state-members of the peerage in brand-new uniforms; the cabinet, consisting of the chancellor, the chief secretary, the speaker, and the attorney-and such a show of

female beauty as Dublin can always boast. Lady Camden held quite a court in the refectory-room, supported by Lord Clare, whose arrogant countenance beamed with the consciousness of strength. My Lord Camden had shuffled away to the curtained viceregal box, pretending to be engrossed with the wretchedness of Lucy Lockit; the fact being that his conscience began to worry him, and that he withdrew from public gaze as much as ceremony would permit.

My lord chancellor was not a man ever to lurk in corners, or to shun a few paltry hisses. He stood forward beside the Viceroy's wife, nodding to the crowds who bowed before him with a loathsome smirk, too coldly overbearing to reckon what men thought of him, provided they bent the knee. He had reached at this time the acme of his power. His word was law. He browbeat his comrades in the cabinet till honest Arthur Wolfe quite winced. He had undertaken to mould into shape a corrupt upper class, and his first move had been to give a rein to their bad passions. His second was to cultivate an unusual urbanity; for it would be needful by-and-by to win the members of the Bar, and to lay in a good stock of promising raw material in the shape of young M.P.'s just rough from grass. He made a point, too, of being particularly civil to girls, for he said that if the confidence of the females in a house is won, the men may be counted on as gained. Satan found no footing in Paradise till he made sure of Eve.

So my Lord Clare tripped hither and thither in his natty

attire, complimenting one, grinning at another; suggesting an ice to a young lady; confounding a sheepish youth by offering his jewelled snuff-box; laughing a hyena-laugh at some feeble joke; making himself so pleasant that folks stared in wonder. Ladies of highest rank rustled up and curtsyed, then formed into a parterre of shot silks and waving plumes behind my Lady Camden. It was a magnificent spectacle of brilliancy and wealth.

What mattered the cries of those who sat in darkness? what signified the cloud that was rolling quickly nearer? The Countess of Glandore, a grand sight, in the family jewels, swept into her place, led forward by Mr. Wolfe, who had advanced to meet his sister; whilst Lord Clare raised Doreen's fingers to his lips with a gallant bow, vowing that her father should be proud of such rare charms. And well he might, and was, indeed, for there lingered on the girl's face a heightened colour which gave a lustre to her eye, while the roundness of her tall figure was shown off at its very best by a tightfitting robe of yellow crape, elaborately embroidered with silver tassels. Her dark coils of hair were knotted round her head in a plain thick diadem, raised high behind to show its noble contour where it joined her neck; while the olive skin seemed to acquire a richer hue by contrast with a pale coral necklet and long ear-drops. Lord Clare looked at her with a half-sarcastic smile, and said:

'Will you walk in the lobby and survey the house? I always like to show myself with a lovely girl upon my arm. There is a sight there, too, that will please you, I think.'

Calmly she took his arm. Etiquette demanded that she should remain in the theatre for half-an-hour. It mattered little how she killed the time; nevertheless her eyes wandered restlessly about in search of Cassidy, to whom she was resolved to speak if possible. Suddenly she started and turned scarlet. In an upper box, talking earnestly together, were Cassidy and young Robert; with them Tom Emmett, Russell, and the rest, whom she supposed to be safe under lock and key within Kilmainham gaol.

'I thought you would be surprised,' drawled the chancellor. 'See how Government is maligned! The proceedings of those young gentlemen were such that we were obliged to lock them up. We could not do otherwise, you know. But having given them this lesson, you see we've humanely let them out again. Let us hope they'll be wise-wiser, for instance, than Mr. Tone appears to be—who is indeed singularly foolish. He seems to imagine that men of property will rally to his standard when he arrives with his precious expedition. Oh, my country! How truly is thy colour green! Here is an adventurer without a sou, grandiloquently promising to pay vast debts of gratitude!'

Doreen looked up in the speaker's face suspiciously. The very language of the letter she had received that day! Her aunt's warning, hitherto forgotten, flashed across her. '*See that your correspondence is not tampered with.*' Verily, Tone was right. There was a Judas playing a devilish game somewhere.

'Mr. Tone has been long absent,' she said, with a troubled face.

'None the less mischievous,' retorted the other, carelessly. 'But

his claws are cut, for we know all he does as soon as it is done. Now, if Government has erred, is it not on the side of leniency?'

'The fox was very civil to the bird on the tree-branch,' Mr. Curran observed dryly, who with Sara now joined them, 'until the fowl was fool enough to drop his cake! Your lordship is a bad Irishman, we know; but you should not take us for a race of idiots. The people are too quiet. You miss the trenchant articles in Tom Emmett's newspaper. You perceive that even the Orange outrages of Armagh have failed to goad the poor cowed creatures to rebellion. Give them more rope, my lord, and they'll certainly hang themselves-aye, and me too amongst them, I dare say!'

Lord Clare coloured slightly, and bit his lip, but answered nothing.

'At a moment when the foe is at our gates,' Curran pursued bitterly-'for the French armament at Brest is surely meant for Ireland-do you strive to unite all parties against a common enemy? No! Look at the scenes which are daily enacted under your auspices in the north. Robbery, rape, and murder; one brother at another brother's throat. Yet I am wrong. We are of one accord on one point. You are uniting us as one man against the conciliation of our animosities and the consolidation of our strength. Alas for Erin! Rent by faction as she is, there is nothing for her but a bridewell or a guard-house-the grinding tyranny of England or the military despotism of France!'

Arthur Wolfe, who was always endeavouring to prevent these two from snarling, here interposed, and dragged the irascible

little lawyer away. The chancellor, however, fired a parting shot-crying out in a tone of airy innocence:

'On my honour, I know not what you'd have. We give every one as much liberty as possible. Look up at the gallery this moment. Every man in it has a bludgeon or shillalagh-and they're all staring at the box where the ex-prisoners are. I vow they look monstrous dangerous. It's brave of my lord-lieutenant to sit there so quietly!'

It was true that all eyes were turned from time to time to that particular box, as though something unusual might be expected to take place. Meanwhile the unconscious lady-lieutenant in the refecton-room continued to smirk and bow, highly pleased at the full gathering around her.

Stout Madam Gillin panted through the crowd in an amazing turban of coquelicot and gold, distributing hearty handshakes to the right and left; and Norah looked so pretty as she brought up the rear, that the Countess of Glandore's ire was kindled, and she glanced anxiously about for her elder son. He was not present though, for he never would go anywhere where there were high-born young ladies.

Mrs. Gillin too was looking out for somebody, and, perceiving Curran, beckoned him with her fan.

'The young man,' she said in an undertone-'you know who I mean-I hear from old Jug that he's mighty annoyed about this Orr case. Indeed it's bad enough i' faith, but don't let him be rash.'

'Terence?' Curran replied; 'I've been expecting him every

moment.'

'He's not here,' returned Mrs. Gillin. 'His man Phil's below with orders to await his coming. I don't like his getting mixed up in these things. It's not his place, you know. If his mother had a grain of goodness-but there! I can't mention her with patience.'

Curran looked grave, and hurried away to cross-question Phil. It was singular that Terence should not have appeared. The two ladies, between whom there was the bond of a secret, looked each other in the eyes, and temptation was too much for my lady to resist.

'These are indeed dangerous times,' she remarked sweetly to Lady Camden, 'when it behoves us all to do our duty. I beg you will assure his excellency that Glandore will not shrink from his. He can be of little use here where so many have come forward; but he will retire to Donegal as soon as it shall seem needful to watch over his tenants in the interest of Government. And I should not be surprised-but it is a terrible indiscretion-*if when things are settled he should bring back with him a bride.*'

The stroke went home. Norah turned deadly pale; and Madam Gillin, who had commenced confidences about flannel with a neighbour, found herself suddenly called upon to attend to her daughter, who was fainting. Scarcely had the court circle gathered round the girl, than a new source of commotion became evident in the lobby. High words were being bandied, with a low accompaniment of murmuring. The harsh accents of the chancellor were ringing in remonstrance; Doreen, who, despite

her aunt's frowns, had handed her pouncet-box to Madam Gillin, became aware that the other voice was Terence's, raised in unusual indignation. She was quickly carried by the stream to the scene of the disturbance.

Yes; it was Terence, sure enough—in his boots; his hair disordered; a look of menace on his white face; and Lord Clare was striving to bar his passage. Honest Phil behind, firing-iron in hand as usual, stood watching his master's eye.

'Let me pass, my lord!' the young man was saying fiercely. 'An innocent man's life hangs on a thread. I have striven to see his excellency for hours, but have been prevented. He is in his box I know, and I will see him. It cannot be that he knows what's happening! The conscience-stricken jury have repented of their crime, they have made solemn oath that they convicted Orr (God have mercy on them!) when they had been made hopelessly drunk by Major Sirr. Even that's not all. The soldier, too, is afraid of what he's done, and owns that he had a private reason for his malice. Orr will be hanged at dawn unless Lord Camden signs his respite. I'm sure his excellency cannot know what's passing! It's the effect of this horrible one-witness law of yours. Even Caiaphas and his Sanhedrim dared not, in the great judicial murder, to set aside the law which demands at least two witnesses. Even Jezebel suborned two men of Belial to bring about the end of Naboth!'

Perceiving that the throng were in favour of the pleader, Lord Clare strove to draw away the son of his old friend, lest the public

should think fit to take an inconvenient part in the discussion—an effort in which he found unexpected help from Curran. The party retreated therefore into an adjoining cloak-room, followed only by a few, while Phil kept doughty guard without, and Lady Camden tried to look as if she were not flustered.

'Oh, that drunkenness should be employed to procure the murder of a man!' Terence cried in agitation. 'If Orr dies, this will be the most savage act which has disgraced even our tribunals. I have striven to believe in the honesty of Government. Let us go together and explain to his excellency while there's yet time!'

The chancellor laid his hand on the young man's shoulder as if to soothe a petulant child; while Curran sat on a table with arms crossed and a sour smile flitting about his lips.

'Young gentleman,' Lord Clare said, 'take the advice of an older man and your mother's friend. Keep aloof from these matters, and don't give credence to grandams' tales. We understand what we are doing, and want no dictation from raw youths—we are satisfied of Orr's guilt. You are keeping bad company, as I warned you once' (with a furtive side-glance at Mr. Curran), 'and will get yourself into trouble!'

Terence's arms dropped to his sides, and he stood thinking. A whispering without could plainly be distinguished through the closed door. He looked for help to his chief, who had spoken out so bravely at the trial, but who now swung his legs in silence.

Presently he sighed, and passing both hands over his face, said slowly: 'Then they were right—I could not, and would not

believe it. The lord-lieutenant, then, is a passive instrument in the hands of wicked men—he is made, for a purpose, grossly, inhumanly, to abuse the royal prerogative of mercy, of which the King himself is but a trustee for the benefit of his people. Some of those jurymen were threatened by suborned fellow-jurors—their tottering consciences deadened for awhile by drink; but they have woken to remorse in time. You say this hideous farce may not be stopped! Beware, Lord Clare! Remember to whom you must answer for this man's life! It's true—all true—and I am helpless!

Lord Clare was provoked. Things were assuming an awkward and unexpected phase. It would not do to have a scandal in the theatre. Suppressing his wrath, he whispered to Mr. Curran before leaving the apartment:

'This boy must not be made a scapegoat. I rely on you to use your influence over him for his family's sake. He has listened to idle gossip, and ardent youth is easily set ablaze. This is most untoward. I will remove their excellencies at once and disappoint those donkeys who are greedily on the look-out for an *esclandre*.'

His rasping voice was heard presently above the hum in polished periods, deploring that false reports should so easily be credited; explaining that the too sensitive Viceroy must be protected from his own softness, calling for their excellencies' coach without delay.

'Can nothing more be done for Orr? It is too awful!' the junior asked his chief, clinging to his coat with anxious hands.

'If aught could be done, should I have remained silent?' was

the dry rejoinder.

Then the lawyer bethought him of his child in the crush, and sallied forth in search of her.

Master Phil, with instinctive respect for a great man, stood aside when the chancellor made his exit, allowing the cloak-room to be flooded with eager inquirers. First entered Cassidy and Doreen, burning to hear news.

Terence roused himself from his reverie, and, clasping a hand of each, muttered in choking words:

'I have fought against conviction long enough. There are limits to an honest man's forbearance. Cassidy! I'll take the oath.'

The giant knitted his brows, and, staring at the cornice, whistled. Doreen darted forth such a golden flash from her cairngorm eyes as flooded the heart of the tempest-tossed young man with a gleam of sunshine.

'Oh, cousin!' he murmured. 'You who are my star! Forgive me for having mistrusted the direction of your guidance! I am easy-going, and not prone to believe evil. But my eyes are opened now. Ireland's soil is sick with the blood of centuries. A little while, and please God she shall bleed no more!'

'Mr. Cassidy!' the girl said, with heaving breast and such a joyous confusion as prevented her from reading the giant's face, 'did I not say to you just now that after darkness comes the morning? Surely night must be at its blackest now, Terence. I take you at your word. This change is a miracle wrought by heaven in the nick of time to prevent Theobald's efforts from

being frustrated. I see it, and am grateful. A champion must be tried, you know,' she whispered, smiling, 'and pass through the ordeal which is to prove his faith. I give you yours at once. It is urgently needful that some one should start forthwith for France, to act in concert there with Theobald. Can you make up your mind to this? Yes or no-there is no time for hesitation.'

Terence, a prey still to overmastering agitation, clasped the brown hand that was like a leaf in both of his, while the giant's frown was fixed on one and then the other.

'I told you one day,' the young man whispered, 'that for one reward I would set at naught the traditions of my family. If I succeed in the task which you assign to me-'

A shade passed across the sunlight of Doreen's enthusiasm. How persistently people tried to rehearse love-passages on the floor of the charnel-house!

'Do not let us talk of such things,' she faltered dreamily. 'Mr. Cassidy, you can see the oath administered this evening. Come straight home, Terence-and I'll manage to meet you when the rest are gone to bed. You will have to start betimes, *mon preux chevalier*; and return as quickly as you may, bearing good news. See to the taking of the oath, Mr. Cassidy, and for once do not make mistakes.'

'I will see to all!' ejaculated the giant, hoarsely; 'though I risk my neck in doing it.'

Another warm pressure of the hand-a lingering look-and Doreen was gone. My lady had harshly summoned her, dismayed

at Mr. Curran's recital of the scene, and had bade her don her mantle-wrapt herself in the contemplation of fresh troubles. Madam Gillin, too, had listened to his story, and her round, good-humoured face was drawn out as she listened to inordinate length.

'I can't stand this,' she said by-and-by, to Mr. Curran, as he cloaked her. 'That magnificent dowager who has trundled off in the grand carriage will-as I judge-leave difficulties to unravel themselves. She doesn't like the boy, and would be glad he should come to ruin for reasons buried in her stony heart. But I promised his father to be a guardian angel, and, please God, I will. You must keep him out of mischief-do you hear?'

Keep him out of mischief! Easier said than done; but it was worth trying for. Mr. Curran, unaware of the interchange of sundry tender glances in the cloak-room, did not despair of success. He elbowed in the throng till he met his junior, and bade him be in attendance early at the Four-courts.

'The Four-courts!' scoffed Terence, with lamentable disrespect. 'When justice dies, why dally with her empty robes? I've other fish to fry.'

'Sure it's Misthress Doreen that's been at him,' laughed big Cassidy, with rather forced indifference. 'Who'd be proof against the blarney of the Dhas Astore?'

'Has Miss Wolfe been up to anything? what?' demanded the lawyer, knitting his shaggy eyebrows.

'It's a match they'll be making of it-Lord love the purty pair!'

bawled the nettled giant. 'The gentleman's to be complimented who's thus favoured.'

'Is this true?' Curran inquired. 'Has she been persuading you to make a fool of yourself? I turned you out of my house, though I love you like a son, to withdraw you from what might prove a dangerous atmosphere. Maybe I'd better have kept you after all.'

'Perhaps, if I succeed in this mission, she may be mine!' Terence muttered in ecstasy, oblivious for the moment of the fate of the condemned.

'And for such a vague *perhaps*,' Curran retorted in disgust, 'these goslings will risk their lives!'

CHAPTER II.

DOREEN'S PLANS

It is proverbial that the preaching of the wisest sage may be reckoned as naught in its influence on a young man's fancy when opposed by a siren's smile. Doreen had never, during the years of her sojourn at the Abbey, tried to enlist Terence on the side of her oppressed people. It would have been disloyal to have done so. But now that his long-careless heart had taken the flame of its own accord, it was not likely she should attempt to extinguish it. Having communed with Tom Emmett, she directed her admirer to ride forthwith to Cork, ostensibly on professional business, slip thence with secrecy across the water to see Hoche, and then return with as little delay as might be. He was to tell the French general that ten thousand soldiers were expected—that less than five thousand would be useless—that arms without soldiers would be refused, because a rising would be the immediate consequence of a landing of arms, and it was not thought desirable to turn the attempt, which should be made in force, into a desultory species of Chouannerie. Further, he was to employ all his eloquence to ensure a speedy start, declaring that Erin yearned to break her bonds, that a small nucleus of regular troops was all that was required to start with, as the peasantry were prepared to rise if sure of being properly led.

These orders being succinctly given by a demure girl with rich dark hair and a touching sadness of expression, was it probable that the diatribes of an insignificant little person with shaggy elf-locks and questionable linen should meet with even common courtesy? Curran argued with his junior contrary to his own convictions, striving by forensic imagery to save him from the vortex if he could; declared that nothing but ruin could possibly come of a rising; that the popular cause was hopeless; that the French would possibly make a temporary disturbance to spite perfidious Albion, but that so soon as it should suit their interests, Erin would be blandly restored to the avenger, to reap the reward of her temerity. What sympathy could France have for Ireland? What recked the Directory, or Hoche, or Buonaparte (the clever young general who was becoming celebrated), whether Erin was a slave or not? Other nations as interesting as the Irish were slaves, and would remain so. Just now Hoche was warm upon the subject because he was jealous of Buonaparte and eager for rival laurels. Granted that he were victorious, he would soon weary of what to him must be a worthless and precarious possession, would carry it to market in a treaty of peace, and surrender it to expiate by yet more grinding servitude the false hopes which were born only to perish. But Mr. Curran (who didn't quite believe all this in his heart of hearts) might as well have talked to the trees in his own Priory orchard.

'You'll be dragged farther than you intend,' he urged. 'Your vanity will induce you to take an active part, and then you'll be

punished by the revolting slavery entailed by a mob command.'

It was all in vain. Terence went away, and his chief gave out that he had despatched him on business to Cork.

The unfortunate Orr was hanged, and the result quite pleased the chancellor. A thrill of horror ran through all but the most callous. The oath anent the bough was taken by hundreds in desperation. The toast 'Remember Orr!' became a watchword. People shook their heads, wondering what would come of it. Riots grew more frequent, which were suppressed or not according to caprice. Major Sirr's Battalion of Testimony lived on the fat of the land, for there was no difficulty in unearthing traitors, now that the spirit of recklessness had gone forth. Lord Clare pretended to be pained. The ingratitude and wickedness of his countrymen-their hardened fits of daring-made him blush, he vowed. The country was in danger, the yeomanry must bestir themselves, England must send regiments too steady to be undermined; if the people were so disgracefully unruly, martial law would have to be proclaimed. He deeply grieved to suggest such a thing, but the majesty of the executive, whose gravest sin was leniency, must at all hazards be respected.

The capital was quite in a fever, shivering as pigeons do in their cote when they feel the electric current. Every one was looking towards France. Was that armament which was assembling at Brest intended for their coasts? If the fleet were to appear in the offing, how would Government behave? It seemed evident enough how they would behave, for troops kept pouring in from

England. Hessians, Highlanders, Englishmen, under command of Lord Carhampton, arrived by shiploads, and, spreading over the counties, were placed at free quarters in the cottages. Dublin and the great towns undertook to look to themselves. The armed squireens, yeomanry, fencibles, strutted in scarlet in the streets, clothed in the bully airs which characterise brief authority.

The burning zeal of Orangeism was let loose in all its excess of wildness, and a fanatical orgy commenced—a saturnalia of fiends who acted in the name of religion—which endured for two whole years. Men, who in the past had made themselves objectionable to Government, were not forgotten now. Even the semblance of moderation was tossed aside. They were delivered to privileged marauders, to be kept under lock and key and ultimately sacrificed in the 'confusion of the times;' whilst as for private enemies, nothing was easier than to charge such an one with treason, and lay him low by purchasing the good offices of an informer. People went openly to the Staghous, where the 'band of testimony' were kennelled, just as in our modern days they go to Scotland Yard to engage the services of a detective.

In the military mania which revived (how different from the Volunteer movement! the first was an impulse towards good; the latter a carnival of demons), everybody sported a uniform. The Bar chose its special facings, so did the 'prentices, so did the adherents of each opulent grandee. My Lord Powerscourt armed his tenants, but retained them in the hills of Wicklow, declaring that his contingent was not to be made a rabble of

aggression. Even the Catholics deemed it prudent to don the red coat in self-defence, as a disguise; and went forth rebel-hunting, sometimes to lay violent hands on their own brethren. But the warriors somehow invariably took the wrong road, or discovered, upon reaching their destination, that gossoons had run forward to give warning. The Right Honourable Claudius Beresford, not to be outdone in zeal, set up a riding-school on Marlborough Green, which later on assumed infamous notoriety as a torture-chamber. Here the yeomen met to try their horses, to accustom them to the sound of drum and clarion, to break a friendly bottle. Dublin assumed the aspect of a garrison; the country of a vast camp.

Still my lord-chancellor vapoured airily of 'martial law;' not that it signified much practically whether such were declared or no, but it was as well to accustom polite ears to the words before they became legal facts.

The arch-conspirators being unaccountably set free, without any promises having been extorted from them, they naturally set to work at once to take advantage of the general simmering, and the peculiar condition of society was favourable to the attainment of their ends. More than ever now was the anomaly made manifest which has been hinted at before, namely, the promiscuous mixing in convivial intercourse of persons of the most opposite views. At time-serving Arthur Wolfe's, for instance, Clare hopped and nobbed with the disaffected; such, that is, as had not gone so far as to frighten the well-meaning attorney-general. At Strogue Abbey, again, he chatted quite

amicably with Curran, who was never weary of abusing him in Parliament, or strolled in the rosary with Cassidy, who was known to be a United Irishman. But the strangest scene of all was the *Beaux-walk* in Stephen's Green, more especially on a fine Sabbath, when the *beau monde* appeared in glory. The mall, where carriages paraded, ran at that time along the north side, between a low wall and an impregnable *haha*, or dyke; and there, on a Sunday afternoon, might be seen the strangest medley of muslins and chip hats, fine coaches and swinging noddies, mingled with cross-belts and helmets and military plumes and gear; might be heard the wildest diversity of opinions openly broached and bandied. Horse-races took place sometimes as an ostensible reason for the gathering, and none marvelled to behold those who were prisoned traitors a week ago arm in arm with Government officials, or to hear acquaintances joking each other on the inconvenience of getting hanged. Thus it failed specially to shock young Robert as a piece of bad taste, when, walking with other undergraduates, if a friend rallied him about his brother's newspaper, and the certain fate which must befall its owner; though it must be admitted that such was not the case with Sara, who moaned and shuddered with dismay, like a rabbit in a den of serpents. Tom Emmett's newspaper was openly published now twice a week, and no one interfered with it, though it sought out the joints of Lord Clare's harness; and the chief of the Directory was weak enough to imagine that his foe had grown afraid of him for his boldness in pointing at injustice. Other newspapers were

gagged or bribed; why should his be privileged? Tom Emmett and Bond and the rest held their secret meetings as heretofore, and strolled in the Beaux-walk, and talked treason, like hot-pated Patlanders, to the top of their bent, oblivious of the claw of the cat, because it remained uplifted-poor guileless band of mice! They met frequently and talked earnestly, and squabbled not a little among themselves, for their opinions were divided on a point-a most important point, upon which unanimity was essential-no less a one than the grand basis of future operations.

Bond and Russell and others argued that misgovernment had come to such a pass, that it might be endured no more without merited disgrace. These bully squireens, these venal, brow-beating grandees, must be shown, before more harm was done, that there must be a bound to their arrogance.

If a tide be bravely stemmed, it will rage awhile; then settle within its limits. Were the French coming? French or no French, the people must rise; observant Europe would applaud, for even unfortunate heroism commands respect and pity; pike-heads by thousands lurked beneath potato plots, pike-poles in myriads were stacked under thatched roofs. Surely the spirit of the ancient kings would animate their sons in this emergency!

Most of the conspirators were for doing something definite at once. Tom Emmett and his brother were in favour of delay.

'We have waited so long,' Tom said, 'that a few weeks more will make little difference, save in the increased exasperation of the people. Lord Clare was obliged by public opinion to set

us free. We must do our duty as men. With French assistance success is certain; without it, more than doubtful. Wait, at least, till Terence Crosbie's return—the young aristocrat who has taken up our cudgels. We shall be none the worse for waiting; and now that he has been baptised into the true cause, his presence will be valuable in our councils. The labourer who entered the vineyard at the last hour was not deprived of his reward. We are terribly weak in military capacity; maybe Heaven, who has awakened so late in the day a scion of a noble house, may point to him as a future leader. Wait at least and see him.'

Young Robert enthusiastically seconded his brother's motion, for his instinctive dread of bloodshed impelled him to postpone the decisive moment; and he was possessed, besides, with a strong belief in Terence, whom he had known intimately during his sojourn at the Priory. Russell and the others obstinately combated the point, urged thereto by youthful jealousy and wounded self-esteem. True, none of the council were of mature years; but to be lectured and prated at by this boy Robert, who was yet a student in Alma Mater, was an indignity which it behoved them to resent.

Doreen, who, after her noteworthy row upon the bay, threw aside the appearance of apathy she had assumed, saw this new danger with concern. Torn well-nigh to death already by factions of many kinds, was Erin to sit by and see her last forlorn hope, her last bodyguard of champions, scattered by the same curse? Miss Wolfe became seized by a frenzy for galloping across country.

Her horses were constantly brought back to the stable with their coats turned, their flanks heaving, their skins reeking with foam.

'No doubt the girl was crazed,' my lady averred, as constantly as she marked the grooming of the animals from her bedroom window-seat. 'Why could she not ride like a well-brought-up young person in the green alleys of the Phoenix, or amble on the mall of Stephen's Green?'

My lady did not know that Doreen met separately, at certain cottages, the different members of the Directory; that she prayed and exhorted each one, as though he were alone to blame, to wisdom and a sacrifice of paltry vanity; and that she came away from each interview with such a dread of impending failure—a distrust of these budding generalissimos—that it required the most reckless gallops, with a dangerous fence or two *en route*, to calm her nerves sufficiently to meet my lady's scrutiny with the accustomed mask of composure on her face.

At the Abbey she had little to complain of now, for all were too busy to take much heed of her. Shane, with a prospect of departing northward, which rumours of accumulating outrages seemed to make more and more urgent, shilly-shallied and delayed, and selected guns and fishing-rods, and invited little knots of Cherokees, and spent more and more time at the Little House, as though the effort to tear himself away from Dublin delights and beloved Norah were too much for his resolution.

Under the circumstances he was not likely to trouble his cousin with attentions; and Doreen breathed freely again so far as her

private affairs were concerned, for she perceived that this project of her aunt's was fading into a vision which never would and never could be realised. Any one who watched might see that Shane was desperately smitten with Norah, and Doreen was in no wise jealous. Norah was a nice girl, Doreen determined, who was worthy to become a countess, and she would help to make her happy as much as she could.

My lady's fancies were mere whimsies. If the marriage could be accomplished, she would of course come in time to like her new daughter-in-law. Many domineering old ladies object to eligible maidens, merely because they have not fixed on them themselves.

Miss Wolfe, in her regained independence of thought, felt half inclined to carry it beyond her own concerns, to speak openly to Shane, to go and call on Norah, or meet her as if by chance, and declare that she had come over to the enemy.

But the little love-idyl was destined to an interruption, whether she interfered or not; for Glandore was pledged to go to the north-to tear himself from the arms of metaphoric Capua. Would he remain faithful to his lady-love, when removed from the direct influence of her attractions? The notion of his going, Doreen remembered with a quiet sense of fun, was her own; and selfishly glad she was to have been so inspired, for away at Ennishowen his thoughts would be diverted into a new channel. Even if he did not learn there to forget Norah, his mind would certainly be freed from vague visions of his absent cousin. Thus she, in any case,

would be safe. Situated as the concerns of the patriots were, all her own energies would be needed on the spot-for without some one to threaten and cajole, the bundle was sure to fall to pieces.

She would be glad, therefore, when the establishment at the Abbey should break up, when all the vans and horses and carriages should migrate to Donegal, leaving her-a waif-behind, with nothing to attend to but serious business.

Of course when my lady and her son started for Ennishowen, she would return to her old home in Dublin. She would inhabit once more her little bedroom in Molesworth Street, and would make herself so necessary to her father by fond artful prodigalities of love and tenderness, as to prevent him from ever allowing her to leave him any more. It was all very well, when she was a child, to send her to abide with her aunt, but now she was a woman, and her place was with her father. Then a small inward voice whispered, which caused her heart to beat quick time:

'What if, by my loving influence, I might change at length his views? He is weak, but so kind and excellent; he leans on my aunt because hers is the more masculine nature of the two; and he yearns for support and countenance. Why should he not come to lean on me? My will is as strong as hers-our mutual affection unstained by a difference, unruffled by a ripple! Oh! if I could persuade him that there are nobler aspirations than mere gathering of gold. That if, instead of money-grubbing to make me a fortune (well-meaning, tender father!) he would spend all he has freely for his country's sake, I would love him all the more

dearly for my beggary; what if, by constant dropping on the stone of obstinacy, I could bring him to feel this-how happy, how truly happy, we might come to be together!"

Then, in less exalted moments of reflection, she felt that she deceived herself, that this might never be; that if she elected, in theory, to embrace for a holy cause the vow of poverty in her own person, she had no right to force her convictions upon a man whose glass of life was more than half run out, whose life ran in a groove, and who had so distinct a predilection for flesh-pots. Well, without going to extremes, it would be a joy to guide him just a little, to prevent his truckling too glaringly to Castle influence. If only he were not attorney-general and prosecutor for the Crown!" When the French expedition shall have arrived,' she thought, 'and swept this wicked Government into the sea, how intense a satisfaction will it be to say to the Irish Directory, "Spare at least my father, for my sake! I have worked heart and soul in the cause; you owe me this boon, the only one I ask of you!"'

Certainly, from every point of view it seemed necessary for the young lady to separate herself from the Abbey and her prejudiced aunt with all speed, and assume her proper place in her own home.

Hence for more reasons than one she looked forward to the forthcoming break in the Abbey *ménage* as to the commencement of a new era of reviving hope and usefulness, and quite longed for Shane's departure with all his bags and

baggage.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLOVEN HOOF

My lady's preparations were completed at last, and, thanks to her maternal supervision, so were those of her favourite son. Though so close at hand, she went little into Dublin; for the sight of many strange uniforms reminded her of a past time, the associations connected with which she did her best to bury. She knew only, therefore, by rumour what was passing-by the reports of the *Gazette*, by conversations with Lord Clare. As for Curran, there was nothing to be got from him. He was as surly and morose as possible; said rude things about the Orange Societies; told her details of atrocities which, she felt sure, must be exaggerated; quarrelled with her about the scarlet woman; showed signs of becoming as bigoted on one side as she half admitted herself to be on the other.

She grew almost reconciled to the necessity of going northwards, for Shane's conduct gave her serious alarm. He almost lived at the Little House, and she saw the possibility, if the journey were delayed much longer, of his declining to go at all. For all Norah's influence was evidently thrown into the scale against her, and she bitterly regretted now having shot off that arrow at Crow Street.

The artful damsel was striving to instil into her lover's mind

that it was cowardly to go away at this juncture; and it was only by pretending to have private intelligence from the chancellor that his mother could soothe his *amour propre* to sleep.

She was credibly informed, so she declared, that Paris spies had told Dublin spies, who had whispered it at the Castle, that the French fleet would certainly make for the north. It stood to reason they would not sail into Cork Harbour or Dublin Bay, where their foe was ready to receive them. Not a bit of it. They would make for the lonely, rock-bound coast of Donegal or Antrim, and young Lord Glandore would cover himself with glory by appearing at the head of the yeomanry in the neighbourhood to harass the landing of the troops.

This was just such a wild idea as suited the youthful fire-eater. He saw, in his mind's eye, the shattered vessels on his iron rocks of Ennishowen; a feeble resistance and surrender—for a mere handful could do anything on those cliffs—and gave way, as usual, to his mother. But she felt that, if they were to go, they must be off as speedily as possible, or even her influence would fail at the last moment, and that which she most dreaded might take place, despite her efforts.

Her indignation against the lady of the Little House knew no bounds. That she should immolate her own daughter for the mean purpose of revenging herself upon a rival, was too horrible! It was really amazing to consider what these Catholics were capable of! They had no consciences. They were ready to commit any enormity, because when it was done they could

go to confession, wipe the stain off the slate, and come back smiling. Lord Clare was perfectly right about the scarlet woman, and Mr. Curran in his dotage. For every sort of reason these Catholics must be kept down. No punishment was bad enough for them-they should be locked in cages like wild beasts-they were absolutely incorrigible-at least, so thought the Swaddler. Doreen was turning out abominably. If she too were not soon caged, she would be running off some day with a groom-or a United Irishman, which was worse, breaking her father's heart, and dragging his name through the mire. She preached to her brother on this subject, making him very uneasy, and gave up looking after her poor, lest, meeting Mrs. Gillin, she might forget herself.

Her preparations were complete, yet still she lingered at the Abbey. Society was in such a state of suspense that freedom of action seemed paralysed. The lady-lieutenant was frightened, and talked of fleeing to London, yet she delayed her journey. The mall and the Beaux-walk were both as full as ever. People went thither in hopes of decided news one way or other-which never came; and being there, they rode and gossiped and joked, because it was the habit to do so.

Emmett and his friends were becoming grievously troubled, for the split in their camp widened daily. Were the French playing with their Irish allies? This continued inaction on their part was incomprehensible; for summer had faded to autumn, autumn was shrivelling into winter-it was almost too late to

expect assistance now. Must the effort be postponed till next year? or a forlorn hope be attempted single-handed? To make it now would be madness, for rains were pouring down with Hibernian vehemence-the country was sodden-would soon be frozen-the exposed patriots would die off like rotten sheep. To wait till next year was a bad prospect-who can calculate what may happen in six months? The evil acts of the executive were piling up with terrible velocity. A sense of treachery and of dismay seemed to hang over the capital, for none could be certain who had taken the oath and who had not. Fathers were known to be loyalists whose sons had received the tonsure. Peasant mothers had put pikes in hiding whose daughters were living with the soldiers. Friends met and dined, and laughed with each other about the wide divergence of their views, just as they had done for some time past; but the feeling that though they differed their friendship would not wane was beginning to be shaken, for Major Sirr and his sinister band were abroad. No one was safe from the informer.

There was a dinner-party at the Abbey-a party of typical incongruity. The chancellor was there, all smiles and airiness. Mr. Curran was there, who was becoming strangely absent and sour; his little primrose Sara too, who looked delicate and nervous, and shrank, as if in pain, from conversation, which of course turned on politics. Cassidy was there too, in humble attendance on Doreen; and young Robert Emmett, whom the chancellor condescended to twit scornfully on his behaviour.

'Keep your head out of the noose, my dear young friend!' he said. 'No one is so small as to escape the vigilant eye of a paternal government. Do you suppose we are not informed of your pratings within Trinity? Your bursts of baby-eloquence, which are flowery but foolish? It is a harmless amusement possibly within those aged walls, and the wild talk of undergraduates is of little moment, yet I warn you that it will not be permitted much longer. Oh dear no! We won't do you the honour of arresting you. That would give you too much importance. But it may become my painful duty, as chancellor of that university as well as of this realm, to erase your name with others from its books, unless you mend your manners-that's all; so be warned and wise in time.

Robert chafed and choked at such language as this, which seemed to mark him for a schoolboy before his wistful love; but he stood in such awe of the stately dowager that he only reddened and hung his head. Then Lord Clare, feeling merry, felt disposed to break a lance with his ancient enemy of the Bar; he therefore gaily asked if he might take a glass with Colonel Curran of the Lawyer's Corps-whose military skill would soon be brought into play, considering that the paternal Government had decided at last to propose a suspension of Habeas Corpus. The United Irishmen were behaving so badly-were declaiming in so provoking a fashion about their bonds, that it was as well to show them for a moment what slavery really meant. But this pleasant little sally fell dismally flat; for Curran was already aware of this dreadful resolve, and did not rise in vehement

expostulation, as the other expected. So had Doreen heard of it. Her eye brightened a little, but her hand never shook as she leisurely peeled a peach.

When the news had first gone forth, she had ridden over to the Priors, lest haply some one might be there who could advise what might best be done. She found Curran on his doorstep, putting on his gloves.

'I knew they'd do it,' was all he said to her. 'You stop here till I return. I am going to Mr. Grattan.'

Presently he came cantering back on his shaggy pony, and said to the anxious girl:

'There is nothing for it but patience. Mr. Grattan expected this, and so did I. We shall oppose the bill, but that will make no difference. This wretched land is doomed. If the bill is carried, Mr. Grattan will retire from parliament, and so shall I. We are both sick of the murderous farce.' Then, drumming his fingers on the window, in an attempt to keep down his agitation, he muttered forth at intervals: 'Habeas Corpus! the very last guardian of our liberties! They'll bring in the knife when every one's asleep, and stab our guardian in the dark!'

So the lawyer-not taken unawares-only smiled, and, bowing stiffly over his glass, asked quietly:

'Did you ever read Æschylus, my lord? I know you are a fine scholar. You always remind me of Mercury in "Prometheus Vincit," who was constantly abusing the poor martyr for howling, when his only grievance was a stake of adamant through

his breast!

The party broke up early, as both of the elder gentlemen were due at the House, and the social atmosphere was stormy. My Lord Clare whispered to his old friend at starting that he would call round in the morning, as he had something very particular to say to her. Doreen took the opportunity of imploring Curran to send a message to the shebeen, with intelligence as to the fate of the bill (care of red-polled Biddy), that she might know from him what happened with as small a delay as possible.

That astute person turned out but too true a prophet. The bill which was to close the courts of law, and place power over life and property in the hands of military despots (and such despots!), was shuffled into the House by the attorney-general at 2 a.m., and read for the second time after *grave and mature deliberation* at 2.10 a.m.; and Doreen, when she read the note which informed her that it was carried by 137 against 7, had an extra douche of sorrow poured over her, in that her too facile parent had been its godfather!

So martial law was declared, and the humane and benignant soldiery, whose good feeling had already been proven at Armagh and elsewhere, were to work their wicked will unrestrained. Doreen was too much upset to appear at breakfast, so my lady picnicked alone on the window-seat which looked upon the stable-yard, watching for her vagrant darling, keeping a keen look-out, too, as to whether her niece went out for a scamper. For my lady had passed a sleepless night-one of those terrible

nuits blanches much worse than any nightmare—when all our sins sit heavy on our chests; when our brains throb to bursting, and we hope there is no hereafter. She tossed—listening for Shane's return—growing more feverish as hour after hour passed silently. Still at the Little House! This was maddening. The vision of Shane and Norah arriving to throw themselves upon their knees, danced before her eyes. Once or twice, when sinking into a doze, she sat up with a start, clutching the luxuriant braids of white hair which gave her in her looking-glass such an odd look of winter and autumn united. Manfully she had quelled any shrinking on her own account about returning to Ennishowen. To her who had borne so much, what mattered a little extra suffering? It was excellent advice that her niece had given her. The way, and the only way, out of the labyrinth was to transfer the establishment *en bloc*; she had recognised the fact, and had resolved, for her dear boy's sake, not to spare herself. But now, in dead of night, when the past stood out in phosphorescent light, and the future loomed even yet more ghastly, she had to fight the old weary moral fight again, in which she had so frequently been worsted. Again she saw her husband on that bed of chairs at Daly's. Again she heard him say, ere the last rattle stopped his voice for ever, 'Make right that wrong while there is time!' Again she welled over with impotent rage, whimsically mixed with penitence, in that she must wear the Nessus shirt which he had shuffled off long since. She realised, as she ruminated, that she had been deceiving herself as to the motives which kept her still at Strogue.

It was a terror of the island of Glas-aitch-é at Ennishowen-of the tales which each twig and shrub would tell her there-of the songs which the waves would sing to her as they dashed against the cliffs-which had really delayed her starting. But there must be an end of this weakness. All was ready. For Shane's sake she would like to start upon the morrow, for the sooner she drank her dose the better; but, unfortunately, a promise had been given to attend their excellencies at a great ball which was to take place at the Castle-and to retire suddenly, in ticklish times like these, would certainly be construed as big with political import. But after all, this fête (which was to show the scum that their betters did not fear them) would be past in a few days. Till that time arrived my lady would continue to wait; but in order to underline for herself in her midnight self-communing the determination that there was to be no more cowardice, she then and there resolved that the great coach should take them upon the very same evening within the Castle-yard, and spirit them forward on their way, instead of making a fresh start from the Abbey on the morrow. This resolution being come to, my lady's mind became calmer. As the blue light of wintry morning struggled in she felt quite relieved, and got up presently-as imperious as usual-to await Lord Clare's communication, and watch the stable-yard for Shane's return.

It was fully eleven o'clock before Lord Clare's carriage wheezed up the avenue-the casket which held Ireland's great man. For once Doreen had not bucketed forth on one of her wild rides. Shane had not yet come in.

My lady swept out upon the narrow terrace in front of the hall-door to receive her guest. He must stand in need of refreshment; what would he please to take?

He would take nothing for the moment. Yes-he would. It was a strange conceit in one who had visited there as a familiar gossip during so many years. He would take a view of Strogue Abbey-he would be shown over the mansion by its chatelaine. My lady was surprised. Indeed, she had not been over the quaint place herself for ages. What did my Lord Clare desire to see? Was it the dungeon? or the ancient kitchen and buttery, with its black woodwork, or the water-tower?

He would see everything while he was about it, he said. In the first instance the young men's wing, with its museum of fishing-rods and guns-and-what was that over it-an armoury? Oh, indeed! he would like to look at it.

'But perchance I should disturb the young gentlemen,' her guest said with hesitation. 'By-the-bye, has your son gone out?'

To Lord Clare's genuine astonishment, my lady reddened and looked away. Could she know the mission on which he had come? If so, then she was a greater mistress of her face than he supposed. If not, what troubled her? He forgot that shrined in her love there was but one son. That while he was hinting of the second, she, with sorrow, was thinking of the first-who was dallying-where?

The twain wandered in the young men's rooms-in Shane's, whose bed was smooth and neat-in Terence's, where faithful Phil

was sitting, deeply engrossed in fly-making, as innocently as if he had never heard of a bough in England's crown.

'Both boys out, then? so much the better,' gaily quoth the chancellor, who chose for a moment to ignore Terence's mysterious absence. 'I hope Terence is safe; I can assure you Shane is; I saw him not an hour since. He roystered with the Blasters all night, and of course had to fight a duel in the morning. Is not the motto of their gay society "Nemo me impune lacessit"? But he didn't get a scratch-indeed he's a splendid swordsman-such a tactician-so sharp and quick of eye! I must really congratulate him when he comes in by-and-by. Those spiral stairs? Ah! That's the armoury.'

Phil dropped his flies, and leapt up from his seat. My lady and her guest, taking no heed of him, climbed upward, opened the armoury-door, went in and shut it. He could hear the creaking of their feet above. What could he do? Nothing! He sank panting on his seat, bewildered-then, stealing out, made the best of his way to the shebeen.

'By-the-bye, where is Terence?' asked Lord Clare. 'You don't know? I do. My poor old friend, prepare yourself for a shock. Sit down.'

With a gentleness which would have astonished his numerous enemies, the chancellor laid his two hands on my lady's shoulders and pressed her into a seat. The pupils of her eyes assumed that look, as of a startled hare, which shone in them sometimes. She sat down silently and waited.

Had Terence been guilty of something base? That was her first thought, in which there was a touch of remorse. Then came a feeling of anger in that he existed at all. Oh that he had never been born, or had died in his early childhood! This in its turn was followed by intense self-loathing; but her face remained immovable, while she looked up with inquiring gaze.

'I have most unpleasant news for you,' said Lord Clare kindly, for he liked my lady better than any one except himself, 'and thought it would come best to you from me. For we'll hush the matter up—rest easy on that score, trusting that no worse may come of it. Terence, as you know, was rude to me at Crow Street, t'other day. I didn't mind his petulance, of course; but for your sake I was hurt that he should have gone astray and made an exhibition of himself in public. It's your rough diamond Curran's fault, with his romantic balderdash about his country. He threw the young man into dangerous society, forgetting that it takes a seasoned head to weigh the hollowness of enthusiasm. Terence has been bitten by the prevailing rabies; the fever's hot upon him, and being of a higher breed than his companions, has rushed straightway into action, instead of merely prating like the others. As his mother, you should have greater influence over him than any one. Argue him out of his dangerous course. You think he's at Cork on law business? He's strutting up and down the landing-stage at Brest, with Tone and Hoche, and all the rest of the jays in peacock-plumes. He's urging the bevy of juvenile generals there to come across the water, despite the lateness of the season; in

fact, he's beginning the risky game which brought Balmerino, Kilmarnock, Lovat, to the block. I'm sure of what I state-trust me for that. Why! these hot-pated fools do nothing that we're not informed of; and Mr. Pitt's staff in France is every whit as sharp as ours here. Do you desire a proof that I speak with authority? What are these things stacked here, under these cloths, within these presses, even piled, as you see, right up the chimney!' Lord Clare moved about the room with the precision of one who is sure of what he does. 'Pikeheads, my lady-rough but efficient-which are to rip his Majesty's soldiers when the struggle shall begin. It was an ingenious notion to store them under the roof of a known loyalist. Who placed them here? Your ingenuous boy, Terence, with the assistance of the people at the shebeen below. That "Irish Slave," by the way, must have a visit from us; also the fair dame on whose ground it stands. Look at this paper. A design for a pikehead, precisely like these, with written directions-in whose hand? Terence's! I gave five hundred guineas for that piece of paper. See! do not tremble-it's destroyed-the evidence is gone.'

My lady sat upright in her chair without moving, staring up at the speaker, scarcely comprehending what he said, through the singing in her ears. Terence, her son, had actually joined the disaffected-these deluded persons whose proceedings shocked all her prejudices-whom she sincerely believed were only fit for Bedlam. He might come to an ignominious death unless she put forth all her influence to drag him from the danger. What influence could she expect to have? Whose fault was it that

she had none? Her sin was finding her out in an unexpected fashion. A great cry rose up within her, that her fortitude was near its end. It broke from her bosom in a sigh of weariness. She looked old and haggard as she stared up at the chancellor. Her ancient friends poke of the situation: of how the commander-in-chief my Lord Carhampton must inaugurate a new régime, now that martial law was declared; of how, all things considered, in the complications which were arising, it would be wise for the denizens of the Abbey to depart shortly. Terence might be expected back in a day or two; then his mother must speak to him and take him with her if she could. It would be well to take Miss Wolfe away too, as she was playing the fool most egregiously. She, too, had a hand in this pike-stacking.

My Lord Clare laughed in his disagreeable manner as he recounted how he had succeeded in terrifying poor vacillating Arthur Wolfe about her. At all events it was most wise that Lord Glandore should go; for it would be a terrible thing-supposing Terence proved obstinate-if the brothers should come to be in rival camps upon the scene of action.

'My dear lady,' he concluded, 'we shall have a hot time of it before we've done, I do assure you. Take your measures as I advise. Now I must be off to turn the screw upon the "Irish Slave."' "

The coach rolled citywards. My lady, face to face with a new trouble, clung to the one speck of brightness which glittered like a star. Gillin certainly was committing herself. There was to

be a search upon her premises. Her ruin would surely follow. The pressure from that side would be removed. Thank heaven for that! Yes! This was a real ray of light shining from out the gloom. Things at their worst must mend. With firm step the countess swept along the passages, striving to stifle the remorse which whispered that if evil came to Terence, she would be responsible. She would follow her friend's sage advice to the letter, she determined. It was time to do battle with Doreen, as to her proposed visit to the north.

Miss Wolfe was bending over the sun-dial in her little flower-plot, which was sad-looking with quaint-toned chrysanthemums, her head bowed upon her arms—a statue of despair. An open letter lay crumpled at her feet. My lady saw it and smiled grimly. Indeed, the poor maiden had received a terrible blow—one heavy enough to stagger even her firmly-knit nature. The beautiful *Château en Irlande*, which she had been so busy building, had come crashing down. Its gargoyles and turrets were admirable to behold—but, alas! its foundations were of sand. It had toppled bodily upon her head, and she was stunned by the completeness of the ruin. Her fond parent had indited her a note bidding her pack up her clothes; for, that she might be removed from danger, she was to go to Glas-aitch-é with her aunt.

She was caught in her own trap. Those dainty visions of returning to her father, of weaning him from the flesh-pots, of bolstering him up in the buckram of her love against his weak sensual self, were vanished. 'She was to be taken away out of

danger,' her cruel father wrote, as though she did not pant for danger as doth the war-horse! The misfortunes which might result from this unlooked-for arrangement rose up before her one by one, each armed with its separate shiver. The struggle would come. She, whose heart was wrapped in it—who had made up her mind in which direction duty lay—would be a prisoner far away in a desert island, to which news would trickle slowly: that was bad enough. But of late she had become morbidly anxious, on account of the disorganisation which delay was causing among the United Irishmen. It was only by her own personal influence that Russell and Bond had bowed to Tom Emmett's dictum, and consented to await Terence's return. Were the French coming, or were they not? If not, would the society fling down the gauntlet alone? If it should do so, what would be the result? Would Emmett continue to carry his point as to delay? If he failed in his endeavours, what could be expected to take place? Even if he should be able to control the unruly, how fraught with danger was the prospect. Help from France was the willow that bound the sticks; that band removed, with what ease might each separately be broken!

At sound of my lady's footstep, Doreen started from her crouching attitude. Her aunt's were the last eyes on earth which she would wish to pry into her despair. She was vaguely suspicious too that her aunt's wild projects of matrimony had something to do with this last arrangement. It was, beside the others, a mild phase of annoyance no doubt, but it certainly

was annoying to consider that in Donegal she would find herself shut up well-nigh alone with Shane, who, urged by his mother, might tease her dreadfully. Taken altogether, her future looked black as Styx. She promised herself to make one effort more to remain behind in Dublin. Then it flashed upon her that perchance some one had warned her father of the prominence which she had assumed of late. Yet who would tell him? Her precautions were always well taken. In public she acted with extreme reserve towards Tom Emmett and the rest. Private interviews had always been held at obscure cottages, whose owners she knew would be hanged ere they betrayed her. There was no doubt though, she reflected with sore foreboding, that there were traitors somewhere. If only they could be unmasked. Well, well! time unravels many tangles.

'I see your father has written to you,' my lady said, stepping down into the garden. 'He must even defend you against yourself. Upon my word, the Irish are all insane. I shall have the honour to be your keeper for awhile-in a most impregnable asylum.'

Then it was her aunt who had suggested this step. At this instant how bitterly she hated her!

'I have yet to learn,' she said with hauteur, 'what business you have to interfere with me. I am of age, and not your daughter.'

'You will not presume to disobey your father, I suppose?' the countess inquired coldly. 'Though I ought rather to be surprised if for once you are dutiful.'

'My duty is to my mother's people!' Doreen murmured

absently.

'I told you once before,' her aunt went on, unheeding, 'that you would disgrace the family and break your father's heart. For both reasons it is my distinct business to interfere with you. The friends whom you have chosen to make, are rushing like sheep to the slaughter. You shall not be one of the flock if I can help it. I have spoken gravely to your father about you; and so has some one else-Lord Clare.'

'Lord Clare!' echoed Doreen, astonished. 'What does he know about me?'

'Too much,' retorted her aunt, dryly. 'He showed me, just now, a delectable sight in the armoury, a discovery which cost him five hundred guineas. For shame! It is kindness to deem you mad.'

'How did he know of the pikes?' startled Doreen inquired.

'Through Terence,' replied my lady, shortly-for she knew not how much or how little her niece and son were mixed up in this affair, and always instinctively avoided talking of the latter to the former. There was a long pause, during which the dowager continued to eye her niece.

'Aunt, I will go with you to Donegal!' Miss Wolfe said slowly, her large eyes peering with vague terror into space. 'I think now I will take a walk, for I am rather upset;' and quietly taking her garden-hat from the bench hard-by, she knotted its ribbons under her chin, and disappeared between the beech hedges of the rosary.

There are moments in most lives when so sharp a pang shoots

through our hearts, that we feel there is nothing left but to seek a remote covert and wait for death. Such strokes age us suddenly and surely. To few is it given to become old by slow and imperceptible steps. We remain in the solitude of our covert without speech; almost without feeling. Presently we perceive that we were mistaken about death (for the White Pilgrim comes not for the bidding); and emerge into the world again, apparently the same as before-young outwardly, and smooth-browed, but really altogether different. Poets have sung much of broken hearts, at which cynics have scoffed, time out of mind. Hearts have broken under a sudden mental shock, but seldom. They are more usually turned inside out and changed.

Doreen had just received such a shock as calls imperatively for solitude. Then the snake in the grass-the Judas-was Terence-her own cousin! Rapidly she walked through the rosary, and out by the wooden gate into the open-away-inland across the fields, for miles.

She was surprised to find that she felt more grieved than was at all necessary, in that the snake was Terence. Only a few minutes ago she had been praying heaven to unmask the villain, with the laudable intention of pointing him out to the reprobation and contempt of the society. But Terence! The open-visaged, careless youth who exasperated her, as a woman, chiefly because he was prodigal of promise which was not likely to be fulfilled. He had been so importunate in blundering puppy fashion (really almost as ridiculous as Cassidy), heaving absurd sighs, carrying

on his intermittent wooing in so ludicrously naïve a manner, as to provoke scorn in so high-spirited a mistress. Looking within herself, she discovered that behind her light estimate of his amatory ravings there was a genuine liking for the lad. Could she have been entirely mistaken in him? Could her judgment have been utterly at fault when she decided, that if feebly endowed by nature, he was at least honest and true? For the more she considered the subject as she trudged across country, the more she felt that it would be indeed grievous if that fine open face, which had looked so noble in its indignation on account of the martyr Orr, should turn out to be only a grinning mask.

Terence the Judas-the betrayer of the innocent-the snarer of the unwary! Terence, her cousin, whose jocund visage she admitted to be rather dear to her. If he proved so base a scoundrel, in whom then might an earnest soul place trust? Was his perfidy a fall, or original sin? She remembered how she had read wise thoughts in books, wherein sages had explained that our nature is unstable, liable to trip-that none can resist temptation if clothed in the fittest garb. Is not the prayer which should be oftenest on our lips, 'Lead us not, O God, into temptation?' Women are perverse, choosing always the left one, when they ought to take the right turning; and with the perversity of women Doreen chose at once to accept the most distasteful phase of the situation. She took it for granted that Terence was in the wrong, instead of more prudently suspending her judgment till his return from France.

The feet of her cousin were cloven. He wore a tail and smelt of brimstone. She stood still beside a paling as she thought of him, and shook it in a rage with both her hands, while a vague feeling of uneasiness came over her in that she should care so much that Terence should prove the Judas. Yet was she not quite justified in her dismay? Was it not natural that her faith in truth and goodness should be thrown out of gear by such low calculating turpitude? Clutching the gnarled paling, the unhappy lady bowed her face on it and burst into sobs which shook her to the centre.

Five hundred guineas! That was the sharpest of the many thongs which smote her. She had declined to look at the sordid motive-it was so very mean and vile. But now it clamoured with open palms at the gates of her brain, and shouted deafeningly. Vulgar money troubles are at the bottom of everything that's base! What a pity that there should be such a thing as money! Five hundred guineas! How small-how miserable a sum! He was always in debt, she knew: to such easy-going creatures as he always seemed to be, debt was a state of nature. But could he have sunk so low as this? Was he capable, for five hundred guineas, of suddenly assuming a noble love of motherland, which was a farce-of laying a gin for the feet of persons who had never injured him-nay, whom he reckoned among his dearest friends? For the wretched price of five hundred guineas, could he look her-his cousin, almost his sister-in the face, and endeavour to steal her heart, that he might stick it on a pole for the amusement of fellow-traitors? Traitor! Arch-traitor-wretch! Tears having come to her

relief, Doreen sat on the grass and wept, and felt like the wounded beast within the covert.

Piecing scraps together, with the key which my lady had furnished, many cloudy matters became clear. My lady was proud and prejudiced, but her pride revolted against treachery. If not, why had she suddenly warned her niece to see that her correspondence was not tampered with? Who should tamper with it? Not Jug, or Biddy, or Phil. They were children of the soil, who knew not treachery. How could my lady know of any tampering of theirs? No! It was against Terence-the son whom my lady loved not-whose unworthy proceedings filled her aristocratic soul with repugnance-that she had warned her niece. Lord Clare knew the very wording of Theobald's last letter-through whom? Through Terence, of course-for five hundred guineas-alas! alas!

All of a sudden a new idea struck Doreen, and she sat up, her cheeks blanched and tear-stained. The traitor had worked well for the degrading pittance. He had succeeded in hoodwinking the society as well as herself. He was now at Brest, with every secret in his possession-every detail-every aspiration-cut and dried-in cold black and white-and she it was who had despatched him. The Emmetts, Russell, Bond, were doomed men. Their young lives were unconsciously sacrificed by her. There was no end to the blood for which she would be answerable. The cycle of her frenzied thoughts came back to the point at which she started. She had been trifling like some innocent child with burning

brands which had scorched her. Not herself alone. Her life was her own, for better or for worse. When she should be called to appear before the throne to account for her deeds, she would be asked, 'Why broke you your father's heart for a chimera? why did you lead Emmett, Russell, Bond, by your wiles to the scaffold? Who were you to set yourself up as a teacher? To lure honest men, like a siren, to destruction? What could her faltering answer be? I meant well. I acted for the best. I was presumptuous. I am sorry... Can regret undo the injuries which are due to our presumption? No. The wretched Doreen was crushed by an overwhelming sense of her own littleness and failure. There was nothing for it but to kneel down and cry, 'I have sinned;' to clasp her sorrow and take it to the north, there to hold vigils of unfruitful repentance, whilst praying humbly to be released from earth. The wilds of Glas-aitch-é should be her covert. Into it she would creep like a stricken doe. If the White Pilgrim would obey her summons, with what gratitude she would cling to his filmy raiment! If he refused to hearken to her pleading-why then she must, kneeling on the stones, endure unto the end with such meekness as a vengeful heaven might vouchsafe to her.

The wild paroxysm past, she got up and returned with trailing feet towards the Abbey. Her limbs were aching from contact with dank herbage: her brogues and stockings soiled with clinging mud. A drizzling veil was settling on the earth, which looked, as far as ken might reach, dun-toned and colourless. Raising dazed eyes, she beheld a slim figure moving with rapid strides, and

recognised young Robert from afar.

What could he be doing? Was he also crushed in spirit, as weary of the world as she; wandering in search of peace? or on one of his many missions of private charity?

He had been to the Abbey in quest of her; was told by a garden-lad that she had passed through the wooden postern, and had tracked her wanderings from hut to hut.

'They are going too far!' he said abruptly, with bent brows, as he turned to walk back with her. 'Already the squireens are abroad, imitating their fellows in the north. Dublin's in a ferment. It needs but the coming of the French to settle the affair at a blow. Every magistrate has received orders to raise twenty men to preserve the peace in place of the militia, should these be ordered to the coast. But they overreach themselves. Decent people are so furious at the tactics of Lord Clare, that even the militia are dying to turn against the Government. Cassidy says so, who should know, seeing that he keeps up a friendship with the Castle. I speak to-night at the Debating Club. Look at these notes,' he added, smiling. "'Recipe to make a Rebel! Take one loyal subject uninfluenced by pension; burn his house over his head; murder his wife and babes before his eyes; march away with such plunder as you choose to save from the flames-" But what is the matter? You look ill!'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.