

Garryowen

The Romance of a Race Horse

by Henry de Vere Stacpoole, 1863-1951

Published: 1909
George Newnes, Ltd., London

❦ ❦ ❦ ❦ ❦ ❦ ❦ ❦ ❦ ❦

Table of Contents

❦ PART I ...	
Chapter I ...	In the Roar of the Sea.
Chapter II ...	On the Cliffs.
Chapter III ...	Mr. Giveen.
Chapter IV ...	The Adventure at the Castle.
Chapter V ...	Garryowen.
Chapter VI ...	Effie.

Chapter VII ...	The Devil's Kitchen.
Chapter VIII ...	Effie's Secret.
Chapter IX ...	The Meet of the Hounds.
▣ PART II ...	
Chapter X ...	Mr. Mead.
Chapter XI ...	The Compact.
Chapter XII ...	The Warning.
Chapter XIII ...	Miss Grimshaw's Five Points.
Chapter XIV ...	Black Larry.
▣ PART III ...	
Chapter XV ...	A Bit of England.
Chapter XVI ...	Money Matters.
Chapter XVII ...	The Kiss.
Chapter XVIII ...	Mr. Dashwood Leaves.
Chapter XIX ...	Effie's Business.
Chapter XX ...	Effie's Business. (continued)
Chapter XXI ...	The Bundle of Letters.
Chapter XXII ...	The Bazaar.
Chapter XXIII ...	Miss Hitchen.
Chapter XXIV ...	Deportation.
Chapter XXV ...	The Letter.
Chapter XXVI ...	Marshland and Sea.
Chapter XXVII ...	The Story.
Chapter XXVIII ...	A Convert to Socialism.
Chapter XXIX ...	Bon Gré—Mal Gré.
Chapter XXX ...	Mr. Welsh.
Chapter XXXI ...	The City and Suburban.
Chapter XXXII ...	A Last Glance at French.
Chapter XXXIII ...	The Roman Road.



= PART I =

Chapter I

In the Roar of the Sea.

THE great old house of Drumgool, ugly as a barn, with a Triton dressed in moss and blowing a conch shell before the front door, stands literally in the roar of the sea.

From the top front windows you can see the Atlantic, blue in summer, grey in winter, tremendous in calm or storm, and the eternal roar of the league-long waves conies over the stunted fir-trees sheltering the house front, a lullaby or menace just as your fancy wills.

Everything around Drumgool is on a vast and splendid scale. To the east beyond Drumboyne, beyond the golden gorse, the mournful black bogs and the flushes of purple heather, the sun with one sweep of his brush paints thirty miles of hills.

Vast hills ever changing and always beautiful, gone now in the driving mist and rain, now unwreathing themselves of cloud and disclosing sunlit crag and purple glen outlined against the far-off blue and magical with the desolate beauty of distance.

The golden eagle stills haunts these hills, and lying upon the moors of a summer day you may see the peregrine falcon hanging in the air above, and watch him vanish to the cry of the grouse he has struck down and whose head he will tear off amidst the heather.

Out here on the moors under the sun, on a day like this, you are in the pleasant company of Laziness and Loneliness, and Distance and Summer. The scent of the gorse is mixed with the scent of the sea, and the silence of the far-off hills with the sound of the billows booming amidst the caves of the coast.

Except for the sea and the sigh of the wind amidst the heather bells there is not a sound, nor token of man except a pale wreath of peat smoke away there six miles towards the hills, where lies the village of Drumboyne, and that building away to the west towards the sea, which is Drumgool House.

The railway stops at Cloyne, fifteen miles to the east, as though civilisation were afraid of venturing farther.

Now, if you stand up and shade your eyes and look over there to the north, and beyond Drumgool House, you will notice a change in the land. There is the beginning of the four-mile track. Four miles of velvety turf such as you will get nowhere else in the whole wide world. The finest training ground in existence.

The Frénchs of Drumgool (no relation of any other Frenchs) have trained many a winner on the four-mile track. Once upon a time those big stables there at the back of Drumgool House were filled with horses. Once upon a time is not that the sorrowful motto of Ireland?

This morning, as beautiful a September morning as one could wish to see, a bath-chair, drawn by a spirited-looking donkey, stood at the front steps of Drumgool House.

By the donkey's head Moriarty, a long, foxy, evil-looking personage in leggings, stood with a blackthorn stick in his hand and a straw in his mouth. He was holding the donkey by the bridle whilst Miss French was being assisted into the bath-chair by Mrs. Driscoll, the cook and general factotum of the French household.

Miss French had on a black felt hat adorned with a dilapidated ostrich feather. Her pale, inconsiderable face and large eyes had a decidedly elfish look seen under this structure. She had also on a cloak, fastened at the neck by a Tara brooch, and Mrs. Driscoll was wrapping a grebe boa round her neck, though the day was warm enough in all conscience.

Miss French had a weakness of the spine which affected her legs. The doctors had given this condition a long Latin name, but the country people knew what was wrong with the child much better than the doctors. She was a changeling. Had Miss French been born of poor folk a hundred years ago she would have undoubtedly met with a warm reception in this world, for she would have been put out on a hot shovel for the fairies to take back. She was a changeling, and she looked it as she sat in the bath-chair, „all eyes like an owl,“ whilst Mrs. Driscoll put the boa round her throat.

„Jow keep the boa round you, Miss Erne,“ said Mrs. Driscoll, „and don't be gettin' on the cliffs, Moriarty, but keep in the shelter of the trees and go aisy with her. Be sure, whatever you do, to keep clear of them cliffs.“

Moriarty hit the donkey a blow on the ribs with his blackthorn stick, just as a drummer strikes a drum, with somewhat of the same result as to sound, and the vehicle started.

Mr. French had trained a good many winners, and Moriarty was Mr. French's factotum in stable matters; what Moriarty did not know about horses would be scarcely worth mentioning.

Very few men know the true inwardness of a horse what he can do under these circumstances and under these, his spirit, his reserve force, his genius.

A horse is much more than an animal on four legs. Legs are the least things that win a race, though essential enough no doubt. It is the soul and spirit of the beast that brings the winner along the last length of the Rowley Mile, that strews the field behind at Tattenham Corner, that, with one supreme effort, gains victory at the winning-post by a neck.

It is this intuitive knowledge of the psychology of a horse that makes a great trainer or a great jockey.

Moriarty was possessed of this knowledge, but he was possessed of many other qualities as well. He could turn his hand to anything, rabbit-catching, rearing pheasants, snaring birds, doctoring dogs, carpentry.

„Moriarty,“ said Miss French, when they were out of earshot of the house.

„Yes, miss,“ said Moriarty.

„Drive me to the cliffs.“

Moriarty made no reply, but struck the donkey another drum-sounding blow on the ribs, and pulling at its bridle turned the vehicle in the direction indicated.

„You'll be after loosin' thim things,“ said Moriarty, without turning his head as he toiled beside the donkey up the steep cliff path.

„I don't care if I do,“ said Miss French; „besides, we can pick them up as we go back come off!“ She was apostrophising the boa. The big hat, the flop of which falling on the ground had drawn Moriarty's attention, was now followed by the boa, and Miss French, free of her lendings all but the cloak, sat up a much more presentable and childlike figure, the wind blowing amidst her curls, and her brown seaweed-coloured eyes full of light and mischief.

„Now, Moriarty,“ said Miss French, when she had cleared herself sufficiently for action, „gimme the reins.“

Moriarty unwisped the reins from the saddle of the harness and placed them in the small hands of his mistress, who, as an afterthought, had unlatched the Tara brooch and slipped off the cloak.

„Arrah, what have yiz been aafter?“ said Moriarty, looking back at the strewn garments as though he had only just discovered what the child had been doing.

„Glory be to God, if you haven't left the half of yourself behind you on the road sure what way is that to be behavin'? Now look here, and I'll tell you onct and for good, if you let another stitch off you, back yiz'll go, dunkey and all, and it's Mrs. Driscoll will give you the dhressin' musha! but you're more thrubble than all me money let up wid thim reins and don't be jibbin' the dunkey's mouth!“

The last sentence was given in a shout as he ran to the donkey's head just in time to avert disaster.

Moriarty sometimes spoke to Miss French as though she were a dog, sometimes as though she were a horse, sometimes as though she were his young mistress. Never disrespectfully. It is only an Irish servant that can talk to a superior like this and in so many ways.

„I'm not jibbing his mouth,“ replied Miss French. „Think I can't drive! You can hold on to the reins if you like, though, and, see here, you can smoke if you want to.“

„It's not you I'd be axin' if I wanted to,“ replied Moriarty, halting the donkey on a part of the path that was fairly level, so as to get a light for his pipe before they emerged into the sea breeze on the cliff top.

Miss French watched the operation critically; she did not in the least resent the tone of the last few words. Moriarty was a character. In other words, he had a character. Moriarty would not have given the wall to the Lord-Lieutenant himself. Moriarty was not a servant but a retainer. He received wages, it is true, but he did not work for them; he just worked for the interests of the Frenchs.

He had a huge capacity for doing the right thing, and a knack of doing everything well.

The latter he proved just now by lighting his pipe with a single match, though the sea breeze, despite the shelter of the cliff top, was gusting and eddying around him.

The pipe alight, he set the donkey going, and the next minute they were on the cliff top.

Chapter II

On the Cliffs.

THE sea lay below, far below, and stretching like a sapphire meadow to the rim of the world.

You could hear the song of the breakers in the cave and on the sand, and the cry of the seagulls from the cliff and rock, and the breeze amidst the cliff grass, but these sounds only emphasised the silence of the great sunlit sapphire sea.

The sea is a very silent thing. Three thousand miles of pampas grass would emit more sound under the lash of the wind than the whole Atlantic Ocean; and a swallow in its flight makes more sound than the forty-foot wave, that can wreck a pier or break a ship, makes in its passage towards the shore.

Up here, far above the shore, the faint, sonorous tune of wave upon wave breaking upon the sands below served only to accentuate the essential silence of the sea.

Through this sound could be distinguished another, immense, faint, dream-like the breathing of leagues of coast. A sound made up of the boom of billows

in the sea-caves, and the bursting of waves on rock and strand, but so indefinite, so vague that, listening, one sometimes fancied it to be the wind in the bent grass, or a whisper from the stunted firs on the landward side of the cliff.

Away out on the sparkling blue the brown sails of fisher boats bound for Bellturbet filled to the light wind, and a mile out from shore, and stretching north-westward, the Seven Sisters rocks broke from the sea.

That was all. But it was immensely beautiful.

Nowhere else, perhaps, can you get such loneliness as here, on the west coast of Ireland. Loneliness without utter desolation. The vast shore, left just as the gods hewed it in the making of the world, lies facing the immense sea. They tell each other things. You can hear the billow talking to the cave and the cave to the billow, and the wind to the cliff and the wave to the rock, and the gulls lamenting. And you know that it was all like this a thousand years and more ago, when Maeldune set his sails to the wind and headed his ship for the Island of Shouting.

Moriarty, leaving the donkey to nibble at the scant grass on the cliff top, took his seat on the ground and began to cut a split out of the blackthorn stick, whilst Miss French, with the reins in her hands, looked about her and over the sea.

She could see a white ring round the base of each of the Seven Sisters rocks; it was a ring of foam, for placid though the sea looked from these heights, a dangerous swell was running. Now and then like a puff of smoke, a ring of seagulls would burst from the rocks, contract, dissolve and vanish. Now and then a great cormorant would pass the cliff edge, sailing along without a movement of the wings and sinking from sight with a cry.

The sea-breeze blew, bringing with it the crowning delight of the cliff-top the smell of the sea. The smell of a thousand leagues of waves, the smell of seaweed from the shore, the smell that men knew and loved ten thousand years ago, the smell which is freedom distilled into perfume, and the remembrance of which makes us turn each year from the land and seek the sea.

„Moriarty,“ said the child, „where are those ships going to?“

„Which ships?“ asked Moriarty.

„Those ships with the brown sails to them.“

„Limerick,“ replied Moriarty, without raising an eye from the job he was on, or knowing in the least which way the ships were going, or whether Limerick was by the sea or inland. Moriarty had a theory that one answer was as good as another for a child as long as you satisfied it, and the easiest answer was the best, because it gave you the least trouble. Moriarty was not an educationist; indeed, his own education was of the slightest.

„Why are they going to Limerick?“ demanded Miss French.

„Why are they goin‘ to where?“ asked Moriarty, speaking like a man in a reverie and whittling away with his knife at the stick.

„Limerick.“

„Sure what else would they be goin‘ for but to buy cods‘ heads.“

„Why?“ asked Miss French, who felt this answer to be both bizarre and unsatisfactory.

„I d‘nno. I‘ve never axed them.“

This brought the subject to a cul-de-sac and brick wall.

And if you will examine Moriarty's answers you will find that he had constructed an impregnable position, a glacis across which no child could get a „why?“

Miss French ruminated on this for a moment whilst Moriarty, having finished his operations on the stick, tapped the dottle out of his pipe, refilled it and lit it.

Then, leaning on his elbow, he lay watching the ships going to Limerick and thinking about stable matters, and Garryowen, the latest addition to Mr. French's stable, in particular.

Moriarty had spotted Garryowen. It was by his advice that Mr. French had bought the colt, and it was in his hands that the colt was turning into one of the fleetest things that ever put hoof to turf.

Miss French watched her companion, and they sat like this for a long, long time, whilst the wind blew, and the sea boomed, and the gulls passed overhead, honey-coloured where the sunlight pierced the snow of their wings.

„Moriarty,“ said the child at last, „how would you like to have a governess?“

This question brought Moriarty back from his reverie—and he rose to his feet.

„Come along,“ said he, taking the donkey's reins; „it's moidhered you'll be gettin“ with the sun on your head and you without a hat.“

„I'm going to have a governess,“ said the child; „she's coming this day week, and she's forty years old, what'll she be like, do you think, Moriarty?“

„Faith,“ said the evader of questions, „it's I that am thinkin' she won't be like a rosebud.“

Miss French drew a letter from the pocket of her skirt as Moriarty led the donkey towards the path. It was a letter written purposely in a large round hand that a child could easily read; each character was nearly printed, and though the contents were simple enough, the thing spoke volumes about the good heart of the sender.

Mr. French was in Dublin, but every day during his absence he wrote his little daughter a letter like this. A pleasant trait in a man living in a world the key-note of which is forgetfulness of the absent. The child read out the letter as Moriarty guided the donkey down the steep hill path.

It was a funny letter; it began as though Mr. French were writing to a child, it went on as though he were writing to an adult, and it finished as though the age of his correspondent had just occurred to him. It told of what he was doing in town, of a visit to Mr. Legge, the family solicitor, and of bother about money matters.

„However,“ said Mr. French in one passage, „Garryowen will put that all right.“

As Miss French read this aloud Moriarty emphasised his opinion on the matter by striking a drum note on the donkey's ribs with the butt of his stick.

„I've got a governess for you at last,“ said Mr. French; „she's forty, and wears spectacles. I haven't seen her, but I gather so from her letter; she's coming from England this day week. I'll be back to-morrow by the 5.30 train.“

„That's to-day,“ said Miss French.

„I know,“ replied Moriarty. „Mrs. Driscoll had a post-card. I'm to meet the train wid the car.“

„Now, Miss Effie, here's you cloak and on you put it.“

„Bother,“ said Miss French, as Moriarty picked up the discarded cloak from the ground.

She put it on and they resumed their way till they reached the boa.

This, too, was grumblingly put on, and they resumed their way till they came to the great hat lying on the ground.

Moriarty placed the elastic of this under the child's chin and gave the crown a slight twitch to put it straight.

With the putting on of the hat Miss French's light-hearted look and gaiety, which had dwindled on the assumption of the cloak and boa, completely vanished, like a candle-flame under an extinguisher, and they began the dead march to the house, Moriarty at intervals striking funereal drum notes on the donkey's ribs.

Mrs. Driscoll met them at the door.

„That's right, Moriarty,“ said she, „you haven't let the hat off her, have you?“

„She tuck it off,“ said Moriarty, „and I put it on her head again wid me own hands what's that you say? Have I kep' her out of the wind? Which wind d'y mane, or what are you talkin' about? Here you are, take her into the house, for I have me stables to look after and it's close on wan.“

Mrs. Driscoll disappeared into the house, bearing in her arms the last of the Frenchs. Poor child! If ever any one stood a chance of being killed by kindness it was she.

Muffled to death.

Many an invalid has gone through that martyrdom and sure process of extinction.

Chapter III

Mr. Giveen.

DRUMGOOL was a bachelor's, or rather a widower's household. The dining-room, where dead-and-gor Frenchs looked at one another from dusty canvases, was rarely used, the drawing-room never. Guns and fishing-rods found their way into the sitting-room, which had once been the library, and still held books enough to lend a perfume of mildew and leather the place, a perfume that mixed not unpleasantly with the smell of cigar smoke and the scent of ***

The house hummed with the sound of the sea; fling a window open and the roar of it came in and the smell of it, better than the smell of roses.

Room after room of Drumgool, had you knocked at the doors of them, would have answered you with echoes.

*„Here there was laughter of old,
There was weeping.“*

Laughter there was none now, nor weeping, just silence, dust; old furniture so used by the sea air that a broker's man would scarcely have taken the trouble to take possession of it.

In the sitting-room, which was also the library of Drumgool, on the morning of the day on which the governess was expected to arrive, Mr. French was talking to his cousin, Mr. Giveen, who, with his hat by his side, was seated on the sofa glancing over a newspaper.

The breakfast things were still on the table; the window was open to let in the glorious autumn day, and a blue haze of cigar smoke hung in the air, created by the cigar of Mr. French.

Mr. Giveen did not smoke; his head would not stand it. Neither did he drink, and for the same reason.

He looked quite a young man when he had his hat on, but he was not; his head was absolutely bald.

He was dressed in well-worn grey tweed, and his collar was of the Gladstone type. Cruikshank's picture of Mr. Dick in David Copperfield might have been inspired by Mr. Giveen.

This gentleman, who carried about with him a faint atmosphere of madness, was not in the least mad in a great many ways; in some other ways he was, well, peculiar.

He inhabited a bungalow half-way between Drumgool House and Drumboyne, and he had a small income, the exact extent of which he kept hidden. He had no profession, occupation or trade; no family French was his nearest relation, and continually wishing himself further away no troubles, no cares. He neither read, smoked, drank, played billiards, cards, or games of any description; all these methods of amusement were too much for Mr. Giveen's head. He had, however, two pastimes that kept his own and his neighbours hands full. Collecting news and distributing it was one of these pastimes, making love was the other.

Small as was Drumboyne, and few as were the gentry distributed around, Mr. Giveen's gossiping propensities had already created much mischief, and there was not a girl or unmarried woman within a range of fifteen miles that Mr. Giveen had not either made eyes at or love to.

The strange thing is that he could have been married several times; there were girls in Drumboyne who would have swallowed Mr. Giveen for the sake of the bungalow and the small income which popular report made big, but he was not a marrying man; on the other hand, he was a most moral man. He made love just for the sake of making love. It is an Irish habit. The question of bringing a governess to Drumgool House had been held in abeyance for some time on account of Mr. Giveen.

Mr. French knew quite well that anything with petticoats on it and in the way of a lady would cause his cousin to infest the house. However, Effie's education had to be considered.

„Sure,“ said Mr. French to himself, „it'll be all right if I get one old enough.“

It was only this morning that he broke the news.

„Dick,“ said Mr. French, „there's a governess coming for Erne.“

„A what did you say?“ asked Mr. Giveen, looking up from the newspaper, the advertisement page of which he had been reading upside down. (One of his not altogether sane habits was to sit and stare at a paper and pretend to be reading it, so that his thoughts might wander unperceived.) „A what did you say?“

„A governess is coming for Effie.“

„Oh,“ said Mr. Giveen, and relapsed into the study of the newspaper.

Now this appearance of indifference was a very ominous sign. The news that a new servant was coming would have caused this infernal tattler to break into a volley of questions, questions of the most minute and intimate description as to the name, age, colour, looks, height and native place of the newcomer, yet this important information left him dumb; but it was a speechlessness that only

affected the tongue. If you had watched him closely you would have noticed that his eyes were travelling rapidly up and down the columns of the paper, that his hand was tremulous.

Mr. French, who was not an observer, went on to talk of other matters, when suddenly Mr. Giveen dropped his paper.

„What’s she like?“ said he.

„What’s who like?“ replied Mr. French, who at the moment was discussing turnips.

„The governess.“

„I haven’t seen her yet,“ said Mr. French, „but her name is Grimshaw, and she’s over forty.“

At this news Mr. Giveen clapped his hat on his head and made for the open French window. „I’ll see you to-morrow,“ he cried back as he disappeared amidst the rose-trees.

Mr. French chuckled.

Then through the same window he passed into the garden and thence to the stable-yard, where he found Moriarty, who was standing at the harness-room door engaged in cleaning a bit.

„Moriarty,“ said Mr. French, „you’ll take the car to the station to meet the half-past five train.“

„Yes, sir,“ said Moriarty. „Any luggage?“

„Oh, I shouldn’t think much,“ replied Mr. French. „You’re to meet the lady that’s coming as governess for Miss Erne. You’re sure to recognise her, she’s elderly. If she has more than one trunk you can tell Brady to bring it on in the morning.“

As he went back to the house he took the letter he had received a week before from Miss Grimshaw from his pocket and re-read it.

„The question of salary,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „does not weigh particularly with me, as I am possessed of a small income of my own, to which I can, if I choose, add considerably with my pen. I am very much interested in the study of Ireland and the Irish, and would like to become more intimate at first-hand with your charming country, so I think we will waive the question of pounds, shillings and pence. Any instruction I can give your little daughter will be amply repaid by your hospitality.“

A nice letter, written in a nice, firm, sensible woman’s hand.

Miss Grimshaw had referred Mr. French to several highly respectable people, but Mr. French, with that splendid indifference to detail which was part of his nature, had not troubled to take Miss Grimshaw’s character up.

„Oh, bother her character,“ said he; „no woman has any character worth troubling about over forty.“

Chapter IV

The Adventure at the Castle.

„PORTER, porter, does this train stop at Tullagh?“

„You’re in the wrong train, mum; this train stops nowhere; this is the express all the way to Clyne out you get, for we want to be goin’ on. Right, Larry.“

Miss Grimshaw, dusty and tired, seated in the corner of a first-class carriage, heard the foregoing dialogue and smiled.

It came to her with a puff of gorse-scented air through the open window of the railway carriage.

„Now,“ said Miss Grimshaw to herself, „I really believe I am in Ireland.“

Up to this at Kingstown, in her passage through Dublin, and during the long, dusty, dull journey that followed, she had come across nothing especially national. It is not in the grooves of travel that you come across the spirit of Ireland.

Davy Stevens selling his newspapers on the Carlisle pier at Kingstown had struck her fancy, but nothing followed him up. The jarvey who drove her from station to station in Dublin was surly, and so speechless that he might have been English. The streets were like English streets, the people like English people, the rain like English rain, only worse.

But it was not raining here. Here in the west the train seemed drawing out of civilisation into a new world. Vast hills and purple moors, great spaces of golden afternoon, unspoiled by city or town, far mountain tops breaking to view and veiled in the loveliness of distance.

„And people go to Switzerland with this at their elbow,“ said Miss Grimshaw, leaning her chin upon her palm and gazing upon the view.

She was alone in the carriage and so could place her feet on the opposite cushions. Very pretty little feet they were too.

V. Grimshaw was dressed with plainness and distinction in a Norfolk jacket and skirt of Harris tweed, a brown Homburg hat and youth. She did not look more than eighteen, though she was in fact twenty-two. Her face, lit by the warm afternoon light, was both practical and pretty, her hair was dark and seemed abundant. Beside her, on the cushions of the carriage, lay several newspapers. The *Athenaeum* amongst others, and a book, *Tartarin of Tarascon*, in the original French.

This was the personage who had replied to Mr. French's advertisement. There was no deception. She had stated her age plainly as twenty-two in her first letter to him. The mistake was on his part. In reading the hundred and fifty or so replies to his advertisement he had got mixed somehow, and had got some other lady's age in his head attached to the name of Grimshaw.

As for the spectacles, he had drawn in his imagination the portrait of a governess of forty-four, named Grimshaw, and the portrait wore spectacles.

Miss Grimshaw didn't. Those clear grey eyes would not require the aid of glasses for many a year to come.

American by birth, born in the State of Massachusetts twenty-two years ago, Miss Grimshaw's people had „gone bust“ in the railway collapse that followed the shooting of Garfield. Miss Grimshaw's father, a speculator by nature and profession, had been one of the chief bulls in Wall Street. He had piled together a colossal fortune during the steady inflation of railway stock that preceded the death of Garfield. The pistol of Guiteau was the signal for the bottom to fall out of everything, and on that terrible Saturday afternoon when Wabash stock fell sixteen points without recovery, Curtis Grimshaw shot himself in his office, and V. Grimshaw, a tiny tot, was left in the world without father or mother, sister or brother, or any relation save an uncle in the dry goods trade.

He had taken care of her and educated her at the best school he could find. Four years ago he had died, and V. Grimshaw at eighteen found herself again

on the world, this time most forlorn. The happy condition remained, however, that Simon Gretry, the dry goods uncle, had settled a thousand dollars a year on his niece, this small income being derived from real estate in New York City.

Miss Grimshaw emigrated to Europe, not to find a husband, but to study art in Paris. Six months' study told her, however, that art was not her walk in life, and, being eminently practical, she cast aside her palette and took up with writing and literary work generally, working for Hardmuths' Press Syndicate and tiring of the work in a year.

Just after she had dropped Hardmuths, Miss Grimshaw came upon Mr. French's advertisement in a lady's paper. Its ingenuousness entirely fascinated her.

„He's not literary, anyhow,“ said she. „It's the clearest bit of writing I've come across for many a day might try it I've long been wanting to go to Ireland, and if I don't like it why, I'm not tied to them.“ Mr. French's reply to her application decided her, and so she came.

The train was now passing through a glen where the bracken leaped six feet high, a glen dim and dream-like, a vast glen, echo-haunted and peopled with waterfalls, pines and ferns that grow nowhere else as they grow here.

It is the glen of a thousand echoes. Call here and echo replies and replies and replies, and you hear your commonplace voice, the voice that you ordered a beef-steak with yesterday, chasing itself past fern and pine and dying away in Fairyland.

A tunnel took the train, and then out of the roaring darkness it swept into sunlight again and great plains of bracken and heather.

Miss Grimshaw undid the strap of her rug and packed her newspapers and books inside. The train was slowing. By the time she had got all her things together it was drawing up at a long platform whose notice-board read:

CLOYNE

The girl opened the door of the carriage and stepped on to the platform and into a world of sunlight, silence and breeze.

The air was like wine.

There were a few people on the platform, a woman in a red cloak, a priest who had stepped out of the train, a couple of farmers and several porters busily engaged in taking some baskets of live fowl (to judge by the sound, out of the guard's van, and a seedy-looking individual in a tall hat and frock coat who looked strangely out of keeping with his surroundings.

„Is there not a porter to take luggage out of the train?“ asked Miss Grimshaw of a long, squint-eyed, foxy-looking man half groom, half gamekeeper who was walking along the train length peeping into each carriage as if in search of something.

„Porthers, miss,“ replied the foxy person, „thim things that's gettin' the chickens out of the van calls themselves porthers, I b'lave.“

Without another word he stepped into the carriage and whipped the travelling-bag, the bundle of rugs, and other small articles on to the platform.

„You didn't happen to see an ouldish lady in the train anywhere between here and Dublin, miss,“ said Moriarty for Moriarty it was as he deposited the last of the bundles.

„No,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „I didn't.“

„Begorra, then,“ said Moriarty, „she’s either missed the train or tumbled out of it. Billy,“ to a porter who was coming leisurely up, „when you’ve done thinkin’ over that prize you tuk in the beauty show, maybe you’ll atind to the company’s business and lift the young lady’s luggage.

„I expected a trap to meet me from Mr. French of Drumgool,“ said Miss Grimshaw, as Billy took the luggage.

„Mr. French did you say, miss?“ said Moriarty.

„Yes, Mr. French of Drumgool House; he expected me by this train.“

Moriarty broke into a grin that broadened and spread over his ugly face like the ripple on a pond.

„Faith, thin,“ said he, „it’s Mr. French will have a most agrayable surprise. (Moriarty,) says he to me, (take the car and meet the lady that’s comin’ by the ha’f-pas’ five thrain. You can’t mistake her,) he says, (for she’s an ouldish lady in spicticles.)“

Miss Grimshaw laughed. „Well,“ she said, „it was Mr. French’s mistake. Let us find the car. I suppose you are going to drive me?“

„It’s fifteen miles to Drumgool, miss,“ said Moriarty. „Mr. Frinch tould me to say you were to be sure and have some tay at the hotel here afther your journey; it’s only across the road.“

„Thanks,“ said Miss Grimshaw.

She followed Moriarty and the porter to the station gate; an outside car, varnished, silver-plated as to fittings, and very up to date, stood near the wicket. A big roan mare with a temper was in the shafts, and a bare-footed gossoon was holding on to the bridle.

The station inn across the road flung its creaking sign to the w’md from the moors, seeming to beckon, and Miss Grimshaw came.

The front door was open and a dirty child was playing in the passage. Miss Grimshaw passed the child, knocked at a door on the left of the passage, and receiving no answer opened it to find a bar-room, smelling vilely of bad tobacco and spirits. She closed the door and opened one on the right of the passage, to find a stuffy sitting-room with a stuffed dog under a glass case for its presiding genius.

Two clocks stood on the mantelpiece, one pointing to three, the other to twelve, neither of them going; a sofa covered with American cloth, chairs to match, a picture of the Day of Judgment, some dusty sea-shells and a drugget carpet completed the furniture of the place. Miss Grimshaw was looking around her for a bell when the following dialogue between Moriarty and some female unknown struck her ears.

„Mrs. Sheelan,“ came Moriarty’s voice, evidently from the backyard.

„What do you want?“ came the reply, evidently from an upper room.

„What are you doin’?“

„I’m clanin’ meself.“

„Well, hurry up clanin’ yourself and put the kittle on the fire, for there’s a young lady wants some tay.“

„Oh, glory be to God! Moriarty.“

„Well?“

„Shout for Bidy she’s beyant there in the cow-house. Tell her the kittle’s on and to stir the fire and make the tay, I’ll be wid ye in wan minit.“

Miss Grimshaw took her seat and waited, listening to the stumping noise upstairs that told of speed, and wondering what Mrs. Sheelan would be like when she was cleaned.

Almost immediately Biddy, fresh from the cow-house, a girl with apple-red cheeks, entered the room, altogether, whisked the stuffed dog on to a side-table, dumped down a dirty table-cloth which she had brought in rolled up under her arm, dragged out the drawer of a cupboard, and from the drawer knives, forks, spoons, a salt-cellar and a pepper-castor of pewter.

„You needn't lay all those things for me,“ said the traveller, „I only want tea.“

„Oh, it's no thrubble, miss,“ replied Biddy, with an expansive smile. She finished laying the cloth and then hung at the door.

„Well?“ asked Miss Grimshaw.

„I thought, miss,“ said Biddy, in a diffident voice, „you might be wantin' to change your hat afther the journey.“

As Miss Grimshaw was sitting at her tea some ten minutes later a knock came to the door. It was Moriarty who entered on the knock and stood hat in hand.

„I'm sendin' your trunk by Brady, the carrier, miss,“ said Moriarty, „and I'm takin' your small thraps on the car.“

„Thank you.“

„If you plaze, miss,“ said Moriarty, „did you see a man step out of the train wid a long black coat on him and a face like an undertaker?“

„I did,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „if you mean a man in a tall hat.“

„That's him,“ said Moriarty, „bad luck to him! I knew what he was afther when I set me eyes on him, and when I was puttin' your bag on the car he ups and axes me did I know of a Mr. Frinch living here away. (Which Mr. Frinch?) says I. (Mr. Michael Frinch,) says he. (Do I know where he lives?) says I. (Sure, what do you take me for, me that's Mr. Frinch's own man.) (How far is it away?) says he. (How far is what?) says I. (Mr. Frinch's house,) says he. (A matter of fifteen miles,) says I. (Bad luck to it,) says he, (I'll have to walk it.) (Up you get on the car,) says I, (and sure I'll drive you.) And up he gets, and there he's sitting now, waitin' to be druv, bad cess to him!“

„But who is he?“ asked the girl, not quite comprehending the gist of this flood of information.

Moriarty lowered his voice half a tone. „He's a bailiff, miss, come down to arrist the horses.“

„Arrest the horses!“

„It's this way, miss. Mr. Frinch had some dalin's wid a Jew money-lender in Dublin be the name of Harrison, and only this mornin' he said to me, (Moriarty,) he says, (keep your eye out at the station, for it's I that am afraid this black baste of a Harrison would play us some trick, for them money-lenders has ears that would reach from here to Clontarff,) says he, (and it's quite on the cards he's heard from his agent I've sold Nip and Tuck, and if he has, he says,) it's sure as a gun he'll have a bailiff in before I can get them off the primises!“

„Are Nip and Tuck horses?“ asked Miss Grimshaw, who was beginning to find a subtle interest in Moriarty's conversation.

„Yes, miss, as clane a pair of hunters as you'd find in Galway.“

„Yes, go on.“

„Well, miss, the horses were due to be taken off be the nine train to-night. Major Sherbourne has bought thim and paid for thim, and now if this chap

nails thim Mr. Frinch will have to refund the money, and sure wouldn't that be a black shame."

"And this man has come down to arrest the horses?" said Miss Grimshaw.

"Yes, miss; and that's why I've come to ax you to let him drive with us. For I'm going to play him a trick, miss, with your leave and licence, and that's why I've got him on the car."

Miss Grimshaw laughed.

"I'm no friend of money-lenders," said she.

"Sure I could tell that by your face, miss."

"But I do not wish to see the man injured or hurt."

"Hurt, miss!" cried Moriarty, in a virtuous voice. "Sure, where would be the good of hurtin' him unless he was kilt outright, you lave it to me, miss, and I'll trate him as tender as an infant. I've tould him I'll drive him to Mr. Frinch's house, and I will, but he won't get Nip nor Tuck."

"Very well," said Miss Grimshaw, "as long as you don't hurt him I don't care."

Moriarty withdrew and Mrs. Sheelan appeared. The cleaning process was evident in the polish of her face. She would take nothing for the tea; it was to go down to Mr. French's account by his own express orders.

Having bestowed a shilling upon Bidy, the traveller left the inn.

The seedy personage in the tall hat was comfortably seated on the outside car reading a day before yesterday's Freeman's Journal, and a new gossoon was holding the mare's head vice the old gossoon, who had been sent on horseback hot foot to Drumgool to give warning to Mr. French.

Miss Grimshaw got on the side of the car opposite to the bailiff, Moriarty seized the reins, the gossoon sprang away and the mare rose on end.

"Fresh," said the man in the tall hat.

"Faith, she'll be stale enough when I've finished with her," said Moriarty. "Now then, now then, what are yiz afther? Did you never see a barra of luggage before? Is it a mothor-car you're takin' yourself to be, or what ails you, at all, at all? Jay up, y'divil."

The Dancing Mistress, such was her ominous name, having performed the cake-walk to her own satisfaction, turned her attention to a mixture of the Washington Post and the two-step.

"Hit her with the whip," said Miss Grimshaw.

"Hit her with the whip!" replied Moriarty. "Sure it's kicked to matches we'd be if she heard me draa it from the socket now then, now then now then."

"That's better," said Miss Grimshaw.

"Yes, miss," replied Moriarty; "once she's started nothin' will stay her, but it's the startin' is the divil."

It was getting towards sunset now, and in the east the ghost of a great moon was rising pale as a cloud in the amethyst sky.

The moors swept away for ever on either side of the road, moor and black bog desolate and silent but for the wind and the cry of the plover. Vast mountains and kingly crags thronged the east, purple in the level light of evening, and peaceful with the peace of a million years; away to the west, beyond the smoke wreaths from the chimneys of Cloyne, the invisible sea was thundering against rock and cliff, and the gulls and terns, the guillemots and cormorants, were wheeling and crying, answering with their voices the deep boom of the sea caves.

Miss Grimshaw tried to imagine what life would be like here fifteen miles from a railway station. Despite the beauty of the scenery, there was over all, or rather in it all, a touch of darkness, desolation and poverty, a sombre note rising from the black bog patches, the wretched cabins by the way, the stone walls, the barren hills.

But the freshness of the air, the newness of it all, made up to the girl for the desolation. It was different from Fleet Street, and anything that is different from Fleet Street must have a certain beauty of its own. She tried to imagine what trick Moriarty was going to play on the gentleman whose tall hat was so extremely out of keeping with the surroundings. That person, who had left the refreshments of the inn untried, had not come unprovided ; he produced a flask from his pocket at times, fouling the air with the smell of bad brandy, but not a word did he speak as mile after mile slipped by and the sun sank and vanished, and the moon glowed out, making wonderland of the world around them.

„We're more than ten miles on our road now, miss,“ said Moriarty, speaking across the car to Miss Grimshaw. „Do you see that crucked tree beyant on the right be the bog patch?“

„Yes.“

„It was half-way betune that and thim bushes they shot ould Mr. Moriarty two years ago come next June.“

„Shot him?“

„Faith they filled him so full of bullets that the family had to put a sintry over the grave for fear the boys would dig him up to shtrip him of his lead.“

„But who shot him?“

„That's what the jury said, miss, when they brought it in not guilty, against Billy the Rafter, Long Sheelan and Mick Mulcahy, and they taken with the guns smokin' in their hands, the black-guards!“

„Good heavens, but why did they shoot him?“

„Well, he'd got himself disliked, miss. For more than five years the boys had been warning him; sure they sent him enough pictures of coffins and skulls to paper a wall with, and he, he'd light his pipe with them. Little he cared for skulls or cross-bones. (To blazes with them,) he'd say. (All right,) says the boys, (we'll give you one warnin' more.) (Warn away,) says he, and they warned. Two nights after they laid him out do you see away beyant those trees, miss, them towers there, you see them poppin' up.“

„Yes.“

„That's Mr. Frinch's house.“

„Why, it's a castle.“

„Yes, miss, I b'lave they called it that in the old days.“

At a gateway, where the gate was flung wide open, Moriarty drew up.

„Now,“ said he to the person in the tall hat, „that's your way to the back primises, down with you and in with you and sarve your writ, for it's a writ you've come to sarve, and you needn't be hidin' it in your pocket, for its stickin' out of your face round with you to the back primises and give me complements to the cook and say I'll be in for me supper when I've left this lady at the hall dure.“

The man in possession, standing now in the road under the moonlight, examined the car and the horse that had brought him.

„The horse and car are Mr. French's?“ he asked.

„They are.“

„Well, when you've put 'em in the stables," said he, „mind and don't you move 'em out again; all the movables and live stock are to be left in statue quod till my business is settled."

„Right y'are, sorr," replied Moriarty, cheerfully, and the man in the tall hat strode away through the gate and vanished in the direction of the back premises.

Miss Grimshaw felt rather disgusted at this spiritless fiasco; she was quite without knowledge, however, of Moriarty's thorough methods and far-reaching ways.

„I thought you were going to play him a trick," said she.

Moriarty, who had got down for a moment to look at the mare's off fore shoe, sprang on to the car again, turned the car, touched the mare with the whip and turned to the astonished Miss Grimshaw.

„This isn't Mr. Frinch's house at all, miss."

„Why you said it was."

„It's his house, right enough," said Moriarty, „but it hasn't been lived in for a hundred and tin years; it's got nothin' inside it but thistles and bats. He axed me for Mr. Frinch's house; well, I've driv him to Mr. Frinch's house, him and his ow-de-cologne bottle, but Mr. Frinch doesn't live here; he lives at Drumgool."

„How far is Drumgool from here?"

„It's fifteen miles from here to Cloyne, miss, and fifteen from Cloyne to Drumgool."

„Oh, good heavens!" said Miss Grimshaw, „thirty miles from here."

„There or thereabouts, miss; we'll have to get a new horse at Cloyne. The ould mare is nearly done, and she'd be finished entirely, only I gave her a two-hours' rest before I tuk you up at the station."

„Look!" groaned the girl.

Far away behind them on the moonlit road a figure had appeared; it was running and shouting and waving its arm.

„That's him," said Moriarty. „Faith, he looks as if he had seen the Banshee look, miss, there's his hat tumbled off."

Running was evidently not the bailiff's forte, but he continued the exercise manfully for a quarter of a mile or so, hat in hand, before giving up. When he disappeared from view Miss Grimshaw felt what we may suppose the more tender-hearted of Alexander Selkirk's marooners felt when Tristan d'Acunha sank from sight beyond the horizon.

„What will he do with himself?" asked she, her own grievance forgotten for a moment, veiled by the woes of the other one.

„Faith, I don't know, miss," replied Moriarty; „he can do what he plazes for what I care, but there's one thing he won't do, and that's lay finger on the horses, and it's sorry I am, miss, to have dhriven you out of your way, but sure, wouldn't you have done it yourself if I'd been you and you'd been me and that black baste of a chap puttin' his ugly foot in the master's business?"

Miss Grimshaw laughed in a rather dreary manner.

„But it isn't his fault."

„Whose fault, miss?"

„That man's; he was only doing his duty."

„Faith, and that's the truth," said Moriarty, „and more's the pity of it, as Con Meehan said when he was diggin' in his pitata garden and the pleeceman came to arrist him. I'm disremembrin' what it was he'd done chickens I think it was

he'd stole but the pleeceman says to him, 'Come off wid you to gaol,' says he. 'It's sorry I am to have to take you,' says he, 'but it's me painful duty.' 'The more's the pity it gives you such pain,' says Con; 'and where does it hurt you most, may I ax?' 'In me feelin's,' replies him. 'Faith, I'll aise you,' says Con, and wid that he knocks him sinsless with the flat of the spade."

"That was one way of relieving him of his painful duty."

"Yes, miss," said Moriarty, and they drove on in silence for awhile, Miss Grimshaw trying to imagine how the case of Con Meehan bore extenuation to the case of the bailiff and failing.

A long hill brought them to a walk, and Moriarty got down and walked beside the mare to "aise" her.

Half-way up the hill a man tramping on ahead halted, turned and stood waiting for them to come up. He had a fishing-rod under his arm, and Miss Grimshaw, wondering what new surprise was in store for her, found it in the voice of the stranger, which was cultivated.

"Can you tell me where I am?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sorr," said Moriarty, halting the mare.

"You're eleven miles and a bit from Cloyne, if you're going that way."

"Good God," said the stranger, half beneath his breath; then aloud, "Eleven Irish miles."

"Yes, sorr, there aren't any English miles in these parts were you going to Cloyne, sorr?"

"Yes, I'm staying at the inn there, and I came out to-day to fish a stream over there between those two hills, and a fool of a fellow I took with me got lost at least he went off and never came back, and I'll break his neck when I catch him."

"Was it Billy Sheelan of the inn be any chance, sorr?"

"Yes, I believe that was his name."

"Then he hasn't got lost, sorr, he's got drunk. This is Mr. Frinch's car, and if you'll step onto it I'll drive you back to Cloyne, if the young lady has no objection."

"Not in the least," said Miss Grimshaw.

The stranger raised his cap. He was a good-looking youth, well dressed, and his voice had a lot of character of a sort. It was a good-humoured, easy-going, happy-go-lucky voice, and it matched his face, or as much of his face as could be seen in the moonlight.

"It's awfully good of you," he said. "I'm dead beat been on my legs since six; had good luck too, only I lost all my fish tumbling into one of those bog holes. Just escaped with my life and my rod." He mounted on the same side of the car as the girl and continued to address his remarks to her as Moriarty drove on. "I believe I ought to introduce myself. Dashwood is my name; I came over for some fishing, and the more I see of Ireland the more I like it; your country."

Miss Grimshaw laughed.

"It's not my country, I'm American."

"Are you?" said Mr. Dashwood in a relieved voice; "how jolly. I thought you might be Irish. I say," in a confidential tone of voice, "isn't it a beastly hole?"

"Which?"

"Ireland."

"Why, I thought you said you liked it."

„I thought you were Irish. I do like it in a way. The mountains and the whisky aren't bad, and the people are jolly enough if theyd only wash themselves, but the hotels oh, my!“

„You're staying at the inn near the railway station at Cloyne?“

„I am,“ said Mr. Dashwood.

„Then you know Bidy and the stuffed dog.“

„Intimately, have you stayed there?“

„I had tea there this afternoon.“

„You live near here?“

„I believe I am going to live for awhile near here. I only arrived this afternoon.“

„Only this afternoon. Excuse me for being so inquisitive, but where did you arrive at I mean.“

„Cloyne.“

„But you're driving to Cloyne now.“

„I know I've been driving all over the country. We had to leave a gentleman at a castle and now we are going back to Cloyne. Then I have to go on to a place called Drumgool, which is fifteen miles from Cloyne.“

„To-night?“ said Mr. Dashwood, looking in astonishment at the wanderer.

„I don't know,“ said the girl, with a touch of hopelessness in her voice. „I expect they'll have to tie me on to the car, for I feel dropping off now no, thanks, I can manage to hold on by myself; I was speaking metaphorically.“

Mr. Dashwood said nothing for a few minutes. There was a mystery about Miss Grimshaw that he could not unravel and which she could not explain.

Then he said, „We've both been travelling round the country, seems to me, and we're both pretty tired and we've met like this, funny, isn't it?“

„Awfully,“ said Miss Grimshaw, trying to stifle a yawn.

„Do I bore you talking?“

„Not a bit.“

„That's all right. I know you must be tired, but then, you see, you can't go to sleep on an outside car, so one may as well talk. How far are we from Cloyne now?“ to Moriarty.

„Nine miles, sorr.“

„Good. I say, you said this car belonged to a Mr. French. I met a Mr. French six months ago in London a Mr. Michael French.“

„That's him, sorr.“

„Well, that's funny,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I met him at my club, and he told me he lived somewhere in Ireland, a big man very big man goes in for horses.“

„That's him, sorr.“

„Awfully rummy coincidence,“ said Mr. Dashwood, turning to his companion. „I lost two ponies to him over the Gatwick Selling Plate.“

„That's him, sorr,“ said Moriarty, with conviction.

„Awfully funny do you know him?“

„No,“ replied Miss Grimshaw, „at least only by writing to him. I'm going there for a while to act as governess,“ she explained.

„And of course I'll call there to-morrow and look him up. Well, it's extraordinary, really. Joke if we met some one else going to see him that had been lost and wandering about all day sort of Canterbury Pilgrimage, you know, and we could all sit round the fire at the inn and tell tales.“

„I hope not,“ said Miss Grimshaw, devoutly, thinking of the gentleman they had left at the old castle and the tale he'd have to tell.

Moriarty was now talking to the Dancing Mistress, telling her of the feed of corn waiting for her at the inn, and they jogged along rapidly, till presently a few glowworm sparks before them indicated the lights of Cloyne.

„How long will you be getting the other horse?“ asked Miss Grimshaw of Moriarty as they drew up at the inn, which was still open.

„I don't know, miss. I'll ax,“ replied Moriarty.

Mr. Dashwood helped his companion down and she followed him into the passage and from there to the sitting-room.

A bright turf fire was burning and the table was still laid, and almost immediately Bidly appeared to say that Mr. French had sent word that the lady was to stay at the inn and make herself comfortable for the night and to come on to Drumgool in the morning, and to say he was sorry that she should have been put to any inconvenience on account of the horses; all of which seemed as wonderful as wireless telegraphy to Miss Grimshaw, inasmuch as she knew nothing of the gossoon Moriarty had dispatched to his master earlier in the evening, with a succinct message stating his plan against the bailiff, and the absolute necessity of taking the governess along, lest the said bailiff, seeing the governess and luggage left behind at the inn, might smell a rat.

„And what will you be plazed to have for supper, miss?“ asked Bidly.

„What can you give us?“ asked Mr. Dashwood.

„Anything you like, sorr.“

„Well, get us a cold roast chicken and some ham. I'm sure you'd like chicken, wouldn't you?“ turning to the girl.

„Yes,“ said she, „as long as they haven't to cook it. I'm famished.“

Bidly retired. There was no cold chicken and there was no ham on the premises, but the spirit of hospitality demanded that ten minutes should be spent in pretending to look for them.

They had fried rashers of bacon, there were no eggs and tea, and when Miss Grimshaw retired for the night to a stuffy bedroom ornamented with a stuffed cat, she could hear the deep tones of Moriarty's voice colloquing with Mrs. Sheelan, telling her most likely of the trick he had played on the bailiff man.

She wondered how far that benighted individual had wandered by this on his road to Cloyne, and what he would say to Moriarty, and what Moriarty would say to him when they met.

She could not but perceive that the commercial morality of the house she was going to was of an old-fashioned type dating from somewhere in the times of the buccaneers, and she felt keenly interested in the probable personality of Mr. French.

Moriarty she liked unreservedly, and in Mr. Dashwood, her fellow-stranger in this land unknown, she felt an interest which he was returning as he lay in bed, pipe in mouth, and his head on a pillow stuffed presumably with brick-bats.

Chapter V

Garryowen.

ANDY MEEHAN was a jockey who had already won Mr. French three races. He was a product of the estate and a prodigy, though by no means an infant.

Nobody knew his age exactly; under five feet, composed mostly of bone with a little skin stretched tightly over it, with a face that his cap nearly obliterated, Andy presented a problem in physiology very difficult of solution. That is to say, in Mr. French's words, the more he ate the lighter he grew. In the old days, before Mr. French took him into his stable as helper, when food was scarce and Andy half starved, he was comparatively fat. Housed and fed well, he waxed thin, and kicked for a better job, and got it. He was a heaven-born jockey. He possessed hands, knees, and head. He was made to go on a horse just as a limpet is made to go on a rock. Nothing on the ground, he was everything when mounted. He was Insight, Dexterity, Coolness, Courage and Judgment.

Several owners had tried to lure Andy away from his master. Prospects of good pay and advancement, however, had no charm for Andy. French was his master, and to all alien offers Andy had only one reply, „To hell wid them.“ I doubt if Andy's vocabulary had more than two hundred words. Except to Mr. French or Moriarty he was very speechless. „Yes“ and „No“ for ordinary purposes, and when he was vexed, „To hell wid you,“ served him for almost all everyday needs.

Last night he had single-handed taken Nip and Tuck to the station and entrained them, returning on foot, and this morning he was mending an old saddle in the sunshine of the stableyard when Mr. French appeared at the gate. Mr. French had come out of the house without his hat. He had a cigar in his mouth and his hands in his pockets. He gave some directions to Andy to be handed on to Moriarty when that personage arrived, and then with his own hands opened the upper door of a loose-box.

A lovely head was thrust out. It was Garryowen's. The eyes so full of kindness and fire, the mobile nostrils telling of delicate sensibilities and fine feeling, the nobility and intelligence that spoke in every line of that delicately-cut head; these had to be seen to be understood.

Garryowen was more than a horse to Mr. French. He was a friend, and more even than that. Garryowen was to pull the family fortunes out of the mire, to raise the family name, to crown his master with laurels.

Garryowen was French's last card, on which he was about to speculate his last penny. In simpler language, he was to run in the City and Suburban in the ensuing year, and to win it. I daresay you have already gathered the fact that Mr. French's financial affairs were rather involved. The Nip and Tuck incident, however, was only a straw showing the direction of the wind which threatened in a few months to strengthen into a gale. Only an incident, for the debt to Harrison was not considerable, and it would not require more, than a week or so to collect the money to satisfy it.

The bother to Mr. French was that in the spring of next year he would have to find fifteen hundred pounds to satisfy the claims of a gentleman named Lewis, and how he was to do this, and at the same time bear the expense of getting the horse to England and running him, was a question quite beyond solution at present.

Not only had the horse to be run but he had to be backed.

French had decided to win the City and Suburban. He wished sometimes, now, that he had made Punches-town the limit of his desires; but having come

to a decision, this gentleman never went back on it. Besides, he would never have so good a chance again of winning a big English race and a fortune at the same time, for Garryowen was a dark horse, if ever a horse was dark and a flyer, if ever a creature without wings deserved the title.

„Oh, bother the money! We'll get it somehow,“ French would say, closing his bank-book and tearing up the sheet of notepaper on which he had been making figures. He calculated that, gathering together all his resources, he would have enough to run the horse and back him for a thousand. To do this he would have to perform the most intricate evolutions in the borrowing line. It could be done, however, if Lewis were left out of the calculation.

The fifteen hundred owing to Lewis was a debt which would have to be paid by the end of March, and the City and Suburban is run in April. If it were not paid then Lewis would seize Garryowen with the rest of Mr. French's goods, and that unfortunate gentleman would be stranded so high and dry that he would never swim again.

The one bright spot in his affairs was the fact that Effie had two hundred and fifty a year, settled on her so tightly by a prescient grandfather that no art or artifice could unsettle it or fling it into the melting-pot.

This was French's pet grievance, and by a man's pet grievance you may generally know him.

Garryowen blew into his master's waistcoat, allowed his ears to be stroked, nibbled a lump of sugar, and replied to some confidential remarks of his owner by a subdued, flickering whinny. Then Mr. French barred the door, and, leaving the stable-yard, came out into the kitchen garden, from whence a good view could be had of the road.

The adventure of the governess on the preceding night had greatly tickled his fancy. The idea of a sedate, elderly lady assisting, even unwillingly, in the marooning of the bailiff, had amused him, but that was nothing to the fact that Moriarty had used her for bait.

This morning, however, the amusement had worn off, and he was reckoning uncomfortably on an interview with an outraged elderly female, who would possibly carry her resentment to the point of renouncing her situation and returning home.

He looked at his watch. It pointed to half-past ten. He looked at the road winding away, a white streak utterly destitute of life or sign of Moriarty, the car, or the dreaded governess. The fine weather still held, and the distant hills stood out grand in the brave morning light.

The gossoon sent by Moriarty the previous day had announced that Moriarty was going to drive the bailiff to the „ould castle“ and drop him there, at the same time giving full details of the plan. The arrival of the outraged bailiff had to be counted on later in the day, and would, no doubt, form a counterpart to the arrival of the outraged governess.

To a man of French's philosophical nature, however, these things were, to quote Sophocles, „in the future,“ non-existent at present, and not worth bothering about till they materialised themselves.

As he stood, casting a leisurely glance over the great sweep of country that lay before him, a black, moving speck far away on the road caught his eye. He watched it as it drew nearer and developed. It was the car. He shaded his eyes as it approached. Three people were on it : Moriarty and two others a woman and a man.

The idea that the bailiff and the governess were arriving together, allied forces prepared to attack him, crossed his brain for one wild instant. Then he dismissed it. Moriarty was much too clever a diplomat to allow such a thing as that.

Then, as the car came up the drive, he saw that the woman was a young and pretty girl, and the man youthful and well-dressed, and, concluding that the governess had vanished into thin air, and that these were visitors of some sort, he hurried back to the house and shouted for Norah, the parlourmaid.

„Open the drawing-room and pull up the blinds,“ cried Mr. French. „There’s visitors coming. Let them in, and tell them I’ll be down in a minute.“

He ran upstairs to make himself tidy, being at the moment attired in a shocking old shooting-coat gone at the elbows, and, as to his feet, in a pair of carpet slippers.

As he changed he heard the visitors being admitted, and then Norah came tumbling up the stairs and thumped at his door.

„They’re in the drawing-room, sir.“

„All right,“ said Mr. French. „I’ll be down in a minute.“

Mr. Dashwood and his companion had breakfasted together at the inn. The double freemasonry of youth and health had made the meal a happy affair despite the teapot with a broken spout, the bad, sad, salt bacon, and the tea that tasted like a decoction of mahogany shavings.

It was Miss Grimshaw who proposed that as Mr. Dashwood was going to see his friend, and as she was bound on the same errand, they might use the same car.

Moriarty, who was consulted, consented with alacrity.

„He’s not turned up yet, miss,“ said Moriarty, as he held the horse whilst Miss Grimshaw got on the car.

„I wonder what’s become of him,“ said the girl, settling the rug on her knees.

„Faith, and I expect he’s wonderin’ that himself,“ said Moriarty, taking the reins; „unless he’s tuck a short cut across the country and landed in a bog-hole.“ All of which was Greek to Mr. Dashwood.

In the drawing-room of Drumgool House they were now awaiting the arrival of Mr. French.

„I say,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „I hope he is the man I met in London.“

„I hope so too,“ said the girl, looking round the quaint old room, with its potpourri vases, its antimacassars, its furniture of a distant day. The place smelt like an old valentine with a tinge of must clinging to it. Pretty women had once sat here, had played on that rosewood piano whose voice was like the voice of a harp in the bass, like a banjo in the treble; had woven antimacassars, had read the romances of Mr. Richardson, had waited for the gentleman after dinner the claret-flushed gentlemen whose cheery voices would be heard no more.

„I hope so too,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „I’m all right, for I’m the governess, you know. If he isn’t it will look very strange us arriving together, so you must explain, please. Are you good at explaining things?“

„Rather! I say, is he a family man? I mean, are there a lot of children?“

„No. Mr. French has only one little daughter, an invalid. I’m not a real governess. I don’t take a salary and all that. I’ve just come over to, well, I want a home for a while, and I want to see Ireland.“

„Strikes me you'll see a lot of it here,“ said Mr. Dashwood, looking out at the vast solitudes to the east, where the hills stood ranged like armed men guarding a country where the bird shadow and the cloud shadow were the only moving things.

„Yes,“ said Miss Grimshaw, and yawned. She liked Mr. Dashwood, but his light-hearted conversation just now rather palled on her.

„And won't you catch it in the winter here!“ said he, as he watched Croag Mahon, a giant monolith, sunlit a moment ago, and now wreathing itself with mist just as a lady wreathes herself with a filmy scarf. „What on earth will you do with yourself when it rains?“

„I don't know,“ replied Miss Grimshaw. „Don't be gloomy. Ah!“

The door opened, and Mr. French entered the room, a gentleman that Bobby Dashwood had never seen in his life before.

Chapter VI

Effie.

THE master of Drumgool, genial and easy and the very personification of welcome, had scarcely taken in with a glance the two pleasant-looking young people who had invaded his drawing-room when the explainer of situations rushed into the breach.

„I'm awfully sorry,“ said he, „but I've made a mistake. I met this young lady at the inn at Cloyne, and, as she was coming here, I came on the same car, for I thought you were a Mr. Michael French I'd met in London. I've been fishing down here.“

„You expected me last night,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „My name is Grimshaw.“

„Faith,“ said Mr. French, „this is a pleasant surprise. Sit down, sit down.“

„I ought to say my name is Dashwood,“ put in the explainer.

„Sit down, sit down. I'm delighted to see you both. Staying at the inn, are you? And how do you like Mrs. Sheelan? And you met at the inn? Of course you did. Miss Grimshaw, I don't know how in the name of wonder I'm going to apologise to you for driving you all over the country. Is that chair easy? No, it's not, take this one. Look at it before you sit in it. Dan O'Connell took his seat in that chair when he was here for the elections, in my grandfather's time, and I have the bed upstairs he slept in. Which Michael French, I wonder, was it you met? Was it a man with a big black beard?“

„Yes,“ replied Mr. Dashwood. „And gold-rimmed spectacles?“

„Yes.“

„And bawls like a bull?“

„He had rather a loud voice.“

„That's him. He's my cousin, bad luck to him. No matter. I'll be even with him some day yet. He's the biggest black, I mean, we have never been friends; but that's always the way between relations. And that reminds me I've never bid you welcome to Drumgool, Miss Grimshaw. Welcome you are to the house and all it holds, and make yourself at home. And here we are sitting in the old drawing-room that's only used for company once in a twelvemonth. Come down to the sitting-room, both of you. There's a fire there, and Effie will be in in a

minute. She's out driving in the donkey-carriage. This isn't a bad bit of an old hall, is it?" continued he, as they passed through the hall. „It's the oldest part of the house. Do you see that split in the panelling up there? That's where a bullet went in the duel between Counsellor Kinsella and Colonel White. Black White was his nickname, and well he deserved it. They fought here, for it was snowing so thick outside you couldn't see a man at ten paces. Eighteen hundred and one that was, and they in their graves all these years! No, no one was killed. Only a tenant that had come in to see the fun, and he got in the line of fire. He recovered, I believe, though they say he carried the bullet in his head to the end of his days. This is the sitting-room. It's the warmest room in winter. The old house is as full of holes as a cullender; but you'll never get a draught here. Norah!“ putting his head out of the door.

„Yes, sir?“

„Bring the decanters. You don't mind smoking, Miss Grimshaw? That's a good job. Are you fond of horses, Mr. Dashwood?“

„Rather!“

„Well, there's the hoof of the Shaughraun. He carried everything before him in Ireland; he was my grandfather's, and he was entered for the Derby, and some blackguards poisoned him. It would be before your time, and his death made more stir than the death of anything that ever went on four legs, except, maybe, old Nebuchadnezzar. They made songs about it, and I have a ballad upstairs in my desk a yard long my father bought from an old woman in Abbey Street. Here's the whisky. Sure, Norah, what have you been dreaming about, and why didn't you bring the wine for the young lady? Not drink wine! Well, now, just say the word and I'll get you some tea. Or would you like coffee? Well, well. Say when, Mr. Dashwood.“

„I like this room,“ said Miss Grimshaw, looking round at the books and the oak panelling. „It's so cosy, and yet so ghostly. Have you a ghost?“

„A which? I beg your pardon,“ said Mr. French, pausing in his operations with a soda-water syphon.

„A ghost.“

„I believe there's an old woman without a head walks in the top corridor by the servants' bedrooms. At least that's the story, but it's all nonsense, though it does to frighten the girls with and get them to bed early. Who's that?“

„If you please, sir,“ said Norah, speaking through the half-open door, „Miss Erne's back from her drive and upstairs, and she's wild to see the young lady.“

„That's me, I suppose,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „I'll go up if I may.“

„Sure, with pleasure,“ said Mr. French, holding the door open for her with all the grace of a Brummell, whilst the girl passed out.

Then he closed the door, waited till she was well out of earshot, and then, sitting down in an armchair, he „rocked and roared“ with laughter.

„Don't speak to me,“ said he, though Mr. Dashwood had not said a word. „Did you see me trying to keep my face? Sure, man, she's the governess, and I thought it was an old lady in spectacles that would be coming. Faith, and I'll have to get a chaperon. You might have blown me away with a fan when she said who she was. But I didn't let on, did I? I didn't show the start she'd given me? Are you sure?“

Assured on this point, Mr. French poured himself out another glass of whisky. He explained that he'd got Miss Grimshaw „out of an advertisement.“ Then, much to the edification of Mr. Dashwood, he went into the bailiff

business, the beauty of Nip and Tuck, the price Colonel Sherbourne had paid, explaining that it was not the money he cared about so much as the injury it would have done him in Sherbourne's estimation if the horses had not been delivered.

It was an adventure after the heart of Bobby Dashwood, who, in his short life, had dealt freely and been dealt with by money-lenders. Mr. Dashwood was what women call a „nice-looking boy,“ but he was not particularly intellectual when you got him off the subjects he had made particularly his own. He had failed for Sandhurst. If a proficiency in cricket and fives had been allowed to count he would have got high marks, but they wanted mathematics, and Mr. Dashwood could not supply this requirement; in French, too, he was singularly deficient. The deficiencies of Mr. Dashwood would have furnished out half a dozen young men well equipped for failure in business, and that is why, I suppose, he managed to make such a success of life.

The joy Mr. Dashwood managed to extract from that usually unjoyful thing called life hinted at alchemy rather than chemistry. Joy, too, without any by-products in the way of headaches or heartaches. Utterly irresponsible, but without a serious vice, always bright, clean and healthy and alert for any sort of sport as a terrier, he was as good to meet and have around one as a spring morning that is to say, when one was in tune for him.

He had five hundred a year of his own (with prospects of great wealth on the death of an uncle), and even out of this poverty he managed to extract pleasure of a sort in the excitement of settling with creditors and trying to make both ends meet which they never did.

„What a joke!“ said Mr. Dashwood. „And she never split. She said she'd been leaving a gentleman at an old castle and she never grumbled though she was nearly dropping off the car. I say, isn't she a ripper?“

„Here's to her,“ said French. „And now, come out and have a look at the stables and grounds. Lunch is at one and we have an hour.“

The youth and prettiness of Miss Grimshaw, after the first pleasing shock, did not trouble him in the least. A straight-minded man and the soul of honour in everything not appertaining to bill discounters, the propriety or impropriety of the situation did not cause him a moment's thought. The only thing that worried him for a second or two was the remembrance of Mr. Giveen. How would that gentleman act under the intoxication sure to be produced by the new-comer's youth and prettiness?

„She'd have been down herself to see you, miss,“ said Norah, as she led the way upstairs, „only she's gone in the legs. This way, miss, along the passidge this is the door.“

A scuffling noise made itself evident as Norah turned the door handle, and Miss Grimshaw, entering a bright and pleasantly-furnished room, found herself face to face with Miss French, who was sitting up on a sofa, flushed and bright-eyed, and with the appearance of having suddenly returned to her invalidhood and position on the couch after an excursion about the apartment.

„Hullo,“ said the child.

„Hullo,“ said Miss Grimshaw.

„Oh, will you look at her!“ cried Norah. „And the rug I put round her legs all over the place! You've been off the couch, Miss Effie.“

„I only put my feet on the ground,“ protested the child. „You needn't be going on at me. Bother my old legs! I wish they were cut off.“

„And so you are Effie,“ said Miss Grimshaw, taking her seat on the edge of the couch. „Do you know who I am?“

„Rather,“ replied Miss French. „You’re Miss Grimshaw.“

There was a subdued chuckle in the tone of her voice, as though Miss Grimshaw was a joke that had just come off rather than a governess who had just arrived, a chuckle hinting at the fact that Miss Grimshaw had been the subject of humorous dis- cussion and speculation in the French household for some time past.

„You’ll ring, miss, when you want me to show you your room,“ said Norah. Then she withdrew, and Miss Grimshaw found herself alone with her charge.

The room was half nursery, half sitting-room, papered with a sprightly green-sprigged and rose-patterned paper. Pictures from Christmas numbers of the Graphic and pictures of cats by Louis Wain adorned the walls; there were a number of yellow-backed books on a book-shelf, and in one corner a pile of old comic papers Punchs, Judys and Funs all of an ancient date.

All the light literature in Drumgool House found its way here and remained. The yellow-backed books were the works of Arthur Sketchley, a most pleasing humorist whose name has faded almost from our memories. Mrs. Brown’s *‘Ooliday Outings, Mrs. Brown in Paris, Mrs. Brown at the Seaside* all were here. They had been bought by some member of the French family with a taste for humour, as had also the comic papers.

To Miss French in her captivity the dead-and-gone artists, the dead-and-gone jokes, the fashions and manners of the ‘Eighties, which are as Thebes to us, were fresh and vigorous. Up-to-date papers and books came little in her way, for French was not a reading man.

„Where’s your spectacles?“ asked Effie, after they had conversed for a while, tucking the rug round herself and speaking with the jocularly and familiarity which generally is associated with long acquaintanceship.

„I beg your pardon,“ said Miss Grimshaw.

„Father said you’d be in spectacles.“

„Oh, my spectacles? They are coming by the next train, also my snuff-box and a birch-rod.“

„Get out with you,“ said Miss French, moving under the rug as if some one had tickled her. „Your snuff-box and your birch rod! Get out with you!“

It was the first time that Miss Grimshaw had come across a child brought up almost entirely by servants and Irish servants at that but there was an entire good-humour about the product that made it not displeasing.

„So that’s how you welcome me, telling me to get out almost as soon as I have come! Very well, I am going.“

„Off with you then,“ replied the other, falling into the vein of badinage as easily as a billiard ball into a pocket. „Potwallop along with you. I don’t care. Hi! come back!“

„What is it?“ inquired Miss Grimshaw, now at the door, with her hand on the door handle.

„I want to tell you somethin’.“

„Well?“

„I want to whisper it.“

Miss Grimshaw came to the couch.

„Bend down closer.“

She bent; two small arms flung themselves tentacle-wise round her neck, and she was nearly deafened by a „Boo“ in her ear, followed and apologised for by a moist and warm-hearted kiss.

Chapter VII

The Devil's Kitchen.

„SINCE I last wrote to you young Mr. Dashwood has left. He stayed three days. Mr. French insisted on his staying sent for his luggage to the inn at Cloyne, put him up in the best bedroom, where I believe Dan O'Connell once slept, and kept him up till all hours of the morning, drinking far more whisky than was good for his constitution, I am sure.

„We had an awfully good time whilst he was here, and the house seems a little dull now that he is gone. He asked me, before he left, might he write to me and tell how how he was getting on? But he hasn't written yet. He was a nice boy, but irresponsible. And, talking of irresponsibility, the word does not even vaguely describe the affairs of this household.

„I told you of the bailiff man. Well, he arrived in a closed carriage from Cloyne next day, and has been in bed ever since, with influenza caught by exposure on the moors. He is convalescent now, and I met him in the garden this morning, *taking the air on a stick*, to use Mr. French's expression. I believe the debt is paid to Mr. Harrison, but the bailiff is staying on as a guest. Mr. French gets me at night, sometimes, to help him in his accounts. He tells me all his affairs and money worries. His affairs are simply appalling, and he has a mad scheme for running a horse next spring in a big English race the Suburban something or other by which he hopes to make a fortune. When I point out the impossibility of the thing he closes up his account-books and says there is no use in meeting troubles half-way.

„Erne is a bright little thing, but there is something about her I can't quite understand. She has a secret which she tells me she is going to tell me some day, but what it is I can't make out. Now I must stop. Oh I but I forgot. How shall I say it? how shall I tell it? I have an admirer. He is a little mad a cousin of Mr. French's. You remember those pictures of Sunny Jim we used to admire on the posters? Well, he is not like that much stouter and more serious-looking, and yet there is a family resemblance. He has taken to haunting me. Mr. French has warned me not to mind him. He says he is sure to propose to me, but that I'm not to be offended, as it's a disease *the poor creature is afflicted with, just as if he had epileptic fits*, and that he would make eyes at a broomstick with a skirt on it if he could get nothing else; all of which is interesting but scarcely complimentary! Things are so dull just at present that I really think I must lead him on. I am sure when he does do it it will be awfully funny. His name is Giveen. Everything is queer about him. It rained yesterday and the day before, but to-day is simply glorious. And now I must stop in earnest. Ever yours lovingly,

„VIOLET.“

Miss Grimshaw had been writing her letter at the writing-table in the sitting-room window. The sitting-room was on the ground floor, and as she looked up from addressing the envelope Mr. Giveen, at the window and backed by the glorious September afternoon, met her gaze.

He was looking in at her. How long he had been standing at the window gazing upon her it would be impossible to say. Irritated at having been spied upon, Miss Grimshaw frowned at Mr. Giveen, who smiled in return, at the same time motioning her to open the window.

„Well?“ said Miss Grimshaw, putting up the sash.

„Come out with me,“ said Mr. Giveen. „Michael is off at Drumboyne, and there’s no one to know. Put on your hat and come out with me.“

„Go out with you? Where?“

„I’ll get the boat and take you to see the seals on the Seven Sisters rocks. The sea is as smooth as a smooth as a smooth as a what’s-its-name? I’ll be thinking of it in a minit. Stick on your hat and come out with me.“

„Some other day, when Mr. French is at home. I don’t understand your meaning at all when you talk about nobody knowing. I never do things that I want to hide.“

„Sure, that was only my joke,“ grinned Mr. Giveen; „and if you don’t come to-day you’ll never come at all, for it’s the end of the season, and it’s a hundred to one you won’t find another day fit to go till next summer and I’ll show you the big sea cave,“ finished he, „for the tide will be out by the time we’ve had a look at the seals. It’s not foolin’ you I am; the boat’s on the beach, and it won’t take ten minutes to get there!“

„I’ll come down and look at the sea,“ said Miss Grimshaw, who could not resist the appeal of the lovely afternoon, „if you’ll wait five seconds till I get my hat.“

„Sure I’d wait five hundred years,“ replied the cousin of Mr. French, propping himself against the house wall, where he stood whistling softly and breaking off every now and then to chuckle to himself, after the fashion of a person who has thought of a good joke or has got the better of another in a deal.

Five minutes later, hearing the girl leaving the house by the front door, he came round and met her.

„This way,“ said Mr. Giveen, taking a path that led through the kitchen garden and so round n clump of stunted fir-trees to the break in the cliffs that gave passage to the strand. „Now down by these rocks it’s a powerfully rough road, and I’ve told Michael time out of mind he ought to have it levelled; but much use there is in talking to him and him with his head full of horses. Will you take a hold of my arm?“

„No, thanks; I can get on quite well alone.“

„Well, step careful. Musha I but I was nearly down there myself. Do you know the name they give this crack in the cliffs?“

„No.“

„It’s the Devil’s Keyhole.“

„Why do they call it that?“

„Why? Faith, you’ll know that when you hear the wind blowing through it in winter. It screeches so you can hear it at Drumboyne. Do you know that I live at Drumboyne?“

„That’s the village between here and Cloyne?“

„That’s it. But do you know where I live in Drumboyne?“

„No.“

„Well, now, by any chance, did you see a bungalow on the right before you left Drumboyne, as you were driving here that day on the car with the young chap Mr. What’s-his-name?“

„Dashwood. Yes, I did see a bungalow.“

„That’s mine,“ said Mr. Giveen, with a sigh. „As nice a house as there is in the country, if it wasn’t that I was all alone in it.“

„Don’t you keep a servant?“

„A servant! Sure, of courser I keep a servant too. But it wasn’t a servant I was meaning. Shall I tell you what I was meaning?“

„I’m not much interested in other people affairs,“ said Miss Grimshaw hurriedly. „Ah! there’s the sea at last.“

A turn of the cleft had suddenly disclosed the great Atlantic Ocean.

Blue, and smooth as satin, it came glassing in, breaking gently over and around the huge black rocks shaggy with seaweed, holding amongst them pools, where at low tide you would find rock cod, lobsters and crabs.

In winter, during the storms, this place was tremendous and white with flying foam; the waves bursting to the very cliff’s base, the echoes shouting back the roar of the breakers, the breakers thundering and storming at the echoes, and over all the wind making a bugle of the Devil’s Keyhole; but to-day nothing could be more peaceful, and the whisper of the low-tide waves seething in amidst the rocks was a lullaby to rock a babe to sleep.

Just here, protected by the rocks, lay a tiny cove where French kept his boat, which he used for fishing and seal-shooting. And here to-day, on a rock beside the boat, which was half water-borne, they found Doolan, the man who looked after the garden and hens and did odd jobs, amongst which was the duty of keeping the boat in order and looking after the fishing tackle.

„What a jolly little boat!“ said the girl, resting her hand on the thwart of the sturdy little white-painted dinghy. „Do you go fishing in this?“

„Michael does,“ replied Mr. Giveen, „but I’m no fisherman. Doolan, isn’t the sea smooth enough to take the young lady for a row?“

He shouted the words into the ear of the old weather-beaten man, who was as deaf as a post.

„Say smooth enough to take the young lady for a row?“ replied Doolan in a creaky voice that seemed to come from a distance. „And what smoother would you want it, Mr. Dick? Say smooth enough to take the young lady for a row? Sure, it’s more like ile than say water it is to-day. Is this the young lady you tould me you were goin’ to take to say the sales?“

„I don’t want to see any seals,“ cut in Miss Grimshaw. „I only came down to look at the sea.“

„There you are!“ burst out Mr. Giveen, like a child in a temper. „After I get the boat ready for you, thinking to give you a bit of pleasure, and take Doolan away from his work and all, and now you won’t go.“

„But I said I wouldn’t go.“

„You didn’t.“

„I did,“ searching her memory. „At least, I didn’t say I would go.“

„Well, say you will go now, and into the boat with you.“

„I won’t.“

„Well, then, all the fun's spoiled,“ said Mr. Giveen, „and it's a fool you've been making of me. Sure, it's hundreds of girls I've taken out to see the caves, and never one of them afraid but you.“

„I'm not afraid,“ said Miss Grimshaw, beginning to waver, „and I don't want to spoil your fun. How long would it take us to see the caves?“

„Not more than an hour or two, less, maybe.“

„Well,“ said the girl, suddenly making up her mind, „I'll come.“

It was a momentous decision, with far-reaching effects destined to touch all sorts of people and things, from Mr. French to Garryowen a decision which, in the ensuing April, might have changed the course of racing events profoundly.

So slender and magical are the threads of cause that the fortunes of thousands of clerks with an instinct for racing, thousands of sportsmen and innumerable bookies, all were swept suddenly that afternoon into the control of an event so simple as a boating excursion on the west coast of Ireland.

She stepped into the boat and took her seat in the stern; Mr. Giveen and Doolan pushed the little craft off, and just as she was water borne Mr. Giveen tumbled in over the bow, seized a scull and poled her into deep water.

The rocks made a tiny natural harbour, where the dinghy floated with scarcely a movement, whilst the oarsman got out both sculls.

„Isn't he coming with us?“ asked Miss Grimshaw.

„Who?“

„The old man Doolan what's his name?“

„Sure, what would we be bothered taking him for?“ replied the other, turning the boat's nose and sculling her with a few powerful strokes to the creek's mouth, where the incoming swell lifted her with a buoyant and balloon-like motion that brought a sickening sense of insecurity to the heart of the girl.

„Well, I thought he was coming with us or I would not have got in.“

„Well, you're in now,“ said Mr. Giveen, „and there's no use crying over spilt milk.“

He had taken his hat off, and his bald head shone in the sun. Snow-white gulls were flying in the blue overhead. The profound and glassy swell, which was scarcely noticeable from the shore, out here made vales and hills of water, long glass-green slopes in which the seaweed floated like mermaids' hair.

Far out, now, the loveliness of the scene around her made the girl forget for a moment her sense of insecurity. The whole beauty and warmth of summer seemed gathered into that September afternoon, and the coast showed itself league upon league, vast cliff and silent strand, snowed with seagulls, terns, guillemots, and fading away twenty miles to the north and twenty miles to the south in the haze and the blueness of the summer sky.

The great silence, the vast distances, the happy blue of sea and sky, the voicelessness of that tremendous coast all these cast the mind of the gazer into a trance in which the soul responded for a moment to that mystery of mysteries, the call of distance.

„There's the Seven Sisters,“ said Mr. Giveen, resting on his oars and pointing away to the north, where the peaked rocks stood from the sea, cutting the sky with their sharp angles and making froth of the swell with their spurs.

Broad ledges of rock occurred here and there at their base, on these ledges the seals on an afternoon like this would be sunning themselves, watching with liquid human eyes the surging froth, and ready to dive fathoms deep at the approach of man.

Miss Grimshaw, coming back from her reverie, heard borne on the breeze, which was blowing from the north, the faint crying of the gulls round the rocks. It was the voice of the Seven Sisters for ever lamenting, blue weather or grey, calm or storm.

„Where are you going to?“ asked she.

„Wherever you please,“ said he. „If we were to go on as we’re going now, do you know where we’d land?“

„No.“

„America. How’d you like to go to America with me? Say the word now,“ went on Mr. Giveen, with a jocularly that was quite lost on his companion. „Say the word and on we’ll go.“

„Turn the boat round,“ said Miss GrimsHaw, suddenly and with decision. „We are too far out. Row back. I want to go home.“

„And how about the seals?“

„I don’t want to see them. Go back.“

„Well, now, listen to me. Do you see over there, behind us, that hole in the cliffs, quarter of a mile, or maybe less, from the Devil’s Keyhole?“

„Which? Where? Oh, that! Yes.“

„Well, that’s the big sea cave that every one goes to see. Faith, you haven’t seen Ireland at all till you’ve been in the Devil’s Kitchen, that’s the name of it. Shall I row you there?“

„Yes, anywhere, so long as we get close to the shore. It frightens me out here.“

„And, what call have you to be afraid when I’m with you?“ asked Mr. Giveen in a tender tone of voice, turning the boat’s head and making for the desired shore.

„I don’t know. Let us talk of something else. Why do they call it the Devil’s Kitchen?“

„Faith, you wouldn’t ask that if you heard the hullabaloo that comes out of it in the big storms. You’d think, by the frying and the boiling, it was elephants and whales they were cooking. But in summer it’s as calm as a calm as a what’s-its-name? Musha, I’ll be remembering it in a minit.“

Mr. Giveen grumbled to himself in thought as he lay to his oars. Sometimes the brogue of the common people, with whom he had colloqued from boyhood, and which underlay his cultivated speech as a stratum of rock underlies arable land, would crop up thick and strong, especially when he was communing with himself, as now, hunting for a metaphor to express the sea’s calmness.

Miss Grimshaw, passionately anxious to be on land again, was not the less so as she watched him muttering and mouthing and talking to himself. She had now been contemplating him at close quarters in the open light of day for a considerable time, and her study of him did not improve her opinion of him; in fact, she was beginning to perceive that in Mr. Giveen there was something more than a harmless gentleman rather soft and with a passion for flirtation. She saw, or thought she could see, behind the Sunny Jim expression, behind the jocularly and buffoonery and sort stupidity which made him sometimes mildly amusing and sometimes acutely irritating, a malignant something a spirit vicious and little, a spirit that would do a nasty turn for a man rather than a nice one, and perhaps even a cruel act on occasion. Whatever this spirit might be it was little. A thing more to dislike than fear.

They were now in close to the cliffs, and the entrance to the Devil's Kitchen loomed large, a semi-circular arch beneath which the green water flooded, washing the basalt pillars with a whispering sound which came distinctly to the boat. The cliff above stretched up immense, and the crying of the cormorants filled the air and filled the echoes.

Wheeling about the rocks away up, where in the breeding season they had their nests, they seemed to resent the approach of the boat. On a ledge of rock near the cave mouth something dark moved swiftly and then plashed into the sea and vanished. It was a seal.

„I'll take you into the cave to have a look at it,“ cried Mr. Giveen, raising his voice to shout to the cormorants. „You needn't be a bit afraid. The devil's not here to-day, it's too fine weather for him.“

„Don't go far in,“ cried Miss Grimshaw, and as she spoke the words the boat, urged by the rower, passed into the gloom beneath the archway.

She saw the bottle-green water of the rising and falling swell washing the pillars and the walls, from which the seaweed hung in fathom-long ribbons; then they were in almost darkness, and as Mr. Giveen rested on his oars she could hear the water slobbering against the walls, and from far away in the gloom, every now and then, a bursting sound as the swell filled some hole or shaft and was spat out again.

After a moment or two, her eyes becoming accustomed to the darkness, the vast size of the place became apparent. Far greater than the inside of a cathedral, given over to darkness and the sea, the Devil's Kitchen was a place to make one pause.

In the storms of winter, when, like the mouth of some giant fighting the waves, it roared and stormed and spat out volumes of water, filled now almost to its roof, now blowing the sea out in showers of spray, the horror of it would be for a bold imagination to conceive.

Even to-day, in its best mood, it was not a place to linger in.

„Now I've brought you in,“ said Mr. Giveen, his voice finding echoes in the darkness, „and what will you give me to bring you out?“

„Nothing. Turn the boat. I don't like the place. Turn the boat, I say!“ She stamped on the bottom boards, and her voice came back to her ears with a horrible cavernous sound, as did the laughter of Mr. Giveen.

He turned the boat so that she was fronting the arch of light at the entrance; but he did not row towards it. Instead, he began rocking the boat from side to side in a boyish and larky way that literally brought the heart of Miss Grimshaw into her mouth.

„Stop it!“ she cried. „We'll be upset! Oh, I'll tell Mr. French! Stop it! Do, please please stop it!“

„Well, what will you give me if I stop it? Come now; don't be shy. You know what I mean. What will you give me?“

„Anything you like.“

„Then we'll make it a kiss?“

„Yes anything! Only take me out of this.“

„Two kisses?“ asked Mr. Giveen, pulling in his oars and making to come aft.

„Twenty! Only not here. You'll upset the boat. Don't stand up! You'll upset us!“

„Well, when we get back then?“ said the amorous one.

„Yes.“

„And you won't tell Michael?“

„No, no, no!“

„On your word of honour?“

„Yes.“

„Swear by all's blue.“

„Yes.“

„But that's not swearing.“

„I don't know what all's blue is—ouch!“

The boat, drifting, had drifted up against the wall of the cave, and the swell, which had a rise and fall of eighteen inches or more, was grinding the starboard thwart lovingly against the seaweed and rock.

„I swear by all's blue!“ shrieked the girl. „Anything! Quick! Push her off, or we'll be over.“

„Faith, and that was a near shave,“ said Mr. Giveen, shoving the boat off with an oar.

He got the sculls in the rowlocks, and a few strokes brought them out under the arch into daylight again.

„Mind, you've sworn,“ said Mr. Giveen, who evidently had a very present and wholesome dread of his cousin, Michael French.

„Don't speak to me,“ replied his charge, whose lips were dry, but whose terror had now, on finding herself in comparatively safety, turned into burning wrath.

„Don't speak to me, you coward! You—you beast—or I'll hit you with this.“

A boat-hook of ash and phosphor-bronze lay at her feet, and she seized it.

Mr. Giveen eyed the boat-hook. It did not promise kisses on landing, but it was a very efficient persuader, in its way, to a swift return.

Now Mr. French, that day after luncheon, had ridden into Drumboyne about some pigs he was anxious to sell. He had failed to come to terms with the pig-merchant and had returned out of temper.

In the stable-yard he met Moriarty.

„If you please, sorr,“ said Moriarty, „I've just heard from Doolan that Mr. Giyeen has taken the young lady out in a boat.“

The contempt which Moriarty had for Mr. Giveen, and the dislike, were fully expressed in the tone of his words.

„You mean to say that damned fool has taken Miss Grimshaw out in the dinghy?“ cried Michael French, letting himself down from the saddle.

„Yes, sorr.“

„To blazes with Doolan! What the what the what the did he mean not telling me!“

„I don't know, sorr. Here he is himself. Micky, come here. The master wants to speak wid you.“

Mr. Doolan, who was passing across the yard with a tin basin of fowls' food it had a wooden handle, and he was holding it by the handle approached, deaf to what Moriarty said, but answering his gesture.

„What did you mean by letting Mr. Giveen take the young lady out in the dinghy without telling me, you old fool?“ asked his master.

„Sure, he tould me not to tell you, sorr,“ creaked Micky.

„To the devil with you!“ cried Mr. French, giving the tin basin a kick that sent the contents flying into Micky's face, spattering it with meal and soaked bread and finely-chopped bits of meat, till it looked like a new form of pudding. „Off with you and clean your face, and not another word out of you, or I'll sent you

flying after the basin. Come on with me, Moriarty, down to the cove, till we see if we can get sight of them.“

„Think of the fool letting the girl go out with that egg-headed ass of a Dick!“ grumbled French, half to himself and half to Moriarty, as he made down the Devil’s Keyhole, followed by the other. „He’s been hanging after her for the last week, popping in at all hours of the day, and as sure as he gets a girl into the boat alone with him he’s sure to be making a fool of himself and maybe upsetting her and the both of them drowned. Not that he’d matter, not that he’d drown, either, for that bladder of a head of his would keep him afloat. Do you see any sight of them, Moriarty?“

They had reached the shore, and Moriarty, standing on a rock and shading his eyes, was looking over the sea.

„No, sorr.“

„Come on to the cove. He’s sure to come back there, if he ever comes back. If you can’t see them from there they must have gone down the coast to the caves. I tell you what it is, Moriarty, relations or no relations, I’m not going to have that chap hanging round the premises any longer. He comes to Drumgool and he sits and reads a newspaper, and he pretends to be a fool, and all the time he’s taking everything in, and he goes off and talks about everything he sees, and I believe it’s him and his talk that’s knocked my bargain with old Shoveler over those pigs. He heard me say I’d take two pounds less than I was asking Shoveler, and to-day the old chap was stiff as a rock.“

„I don’t think he’s any good about the place, sorr,“ said Moriarty. „Yesterday, when Andy was giving Garryowen his exercise on the four-mile track, there he was, pottin’ about with his eye on the horse. You know, sorr, Andy has no likin’ for him, and as Andy was passin’ the big scrub, there was Mither Giveen, and he up and calls to Andy. ‘That’s a likely colt,’ says he, ‘and is me cousin thinkin’ of runnin’ him next year?’ he says.“

„Good Lord!“ said Garryowen’s owner, taking his seat on a rock. „I hope Andy didn’t split.“

„Split, sorr! ‘To hell wid you,’ says Andy, and on he goes, and Buck Slane, who was up on The Cat and be the same token, sorr, Garryowen can give The Cat two furlong in a mile and lather her. Buck says the black blood come in his face, and he shuck the stick he was holdin’ in his hand after Andy and the colt, as if he’d like to lay it on thim.“

„Well, I’ll lay a stick on him,“ said French, „if he comes round asking his questions. Moriarty, only you and me and the young lady she’s safe and Buck Slane and he’s safe know what we’re going to do with Garryowen and where we’re going to run him. If we want to keep him dark we mustn’t have fellows poking their noses about the place.“

„That young gentleman from over the water, sorr, is he safe?“

„Mr. Dashwood? Yes, he’s a gentleman. Even so, I did not tell him anything about it. He saw the colt, and, by gad, didn’t he admire him! But I said nothing of what I was going to do with him.“

„Here they are, sorr,“ cried Moriarty, who was standing up, and so had a better view of the sea.

Mr. French rose to his feet.

The dinghy was rounding the rocks. Mr. Giveen, at the sculls, was evidently remonstrating with the girl, who, seeing help at hand, and vengeance in the forms of the two men on the beach, was standing up in the stern of the boat at

least, half standing up; now almost erect, now crouched and clutching the thwart, she seemed ready to jump on the rocks they were passing, to jump anywhere, so long as she got free of the boat and her companion.

One might have thought that fear was impelling her. It was not fear, however, but anger and irritation.

French and Moriarty rushed into the water up to their knees, seized the dinghy either side the bow, and ran her up on the sand, whilst Mr. Giveen, with his coat in his hand and his hat on the back of his head, tumbled over the side and made as if to make off.

„Stop him!“ cried the girl. „He’s insulted me. He has nearly drowned me. He frightened me into swearing I wouldn’t tell—“

„I didn’t,“ cried Mr. Giveen, now in the powerful grasp of his cousin. „It wasn’t my fault. Let loose of me! Let up, or I’ll have the law of you!“

„Didn’t you?“ replied French, who had caught his kinsman by the scruff of his neck and was holding him from behind, shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat. „We’ll soon see that. Moriarty, run for a policeman. Take a horse and go for the constable at Drumboyne. Well, then, what do you mean, eh? What do you mean, eh? you blackguard, with your philandering! You bubble-headed, chuckle-headed son of a black sweep, you! Call yourself an Irish gentleman! Insulting a lady! Miss Grimshaw, say the word and I’ll stick the ugly head of him in the water and drown him.“

„No, no!“ cried the girl, taking the words literally. „Perhaps he didn’t mean it. I don’t think he is quite right. He only wanted to kiss me. He rocked the boat perhaps it was only in fun.“

„Now, listen to me,“ cried French, accentuating every second word with a shake, „if I ever catch you within five miles of Drumgool again I’ll give you a lambasting you won’t get over in a month. That’s my last word to you, and off you go.“

The last words were followed by a most explicit kick, that sent Mr. Giveen racing and running across the bit of sand till he reached the rocks, over which he scrambled, making record time to the mouth of the Devil’s Keyhole. Near that spot he turned and shook his fist at his kinsman.

„I’ll be even with you yet, Mick French!“ cried Mr. Giveen.

„Away with you,“ replied the threatened one, making as if to run after him. At which the figure of Mr. Giveen vanished into the Devil’s Keyhole as a rat vanishes up a drain.

French burst into a laugh, in which Miss Grimshaw joined.

„Now he’ll be your enemy,“ said the girl, as Moriarty flung the sculls over his shoulder and they prepared to return to the house.

„Much I care!“ replied the owner of Garryowen.

Chapter VIII

Effie’s Secret.

THE first and most pressing necessity of a woman’s life is what? Love? No, a home. A home implies love and everything in life worth having.

A girl without a home and without relations is the loneliest thing on earth, simply because she is a woman, and nothing has such a capacity for loneliness as a woman.

Give her anything in the way of a tie and she will crystallise on to it and take it to heart, just as the sugar in a solution of barley-sugar takes the string.

So it came about that Violet Grimshaw found herself, in less than three weeks after her arrival at Drumgool, not only acclimatised to her new surroundings but literally one of the family. She had caught on to them, and they had caught on to her. French, with that charming easiness which one finds rarely nowadays, except in that fast-vanishing individual, the real old Irish gentleman, had from the first treated her as though he had known her for years. Guessing, with the sure intuition of the irresponsible, the level-headedness and worth behind her prettiness, he now talked to her about his most intimate affairs, both financial and family.

In him and in the other denizens of Drumgool was brought home to her the power of the Celtic nature to imagine things and take them for granted.

„Now, where’s me cullender?“ Mrs. Driscoll would say (as for instance, in a dialogue which reached the girl one afternoon with a whiff of kitchen-scented air (through a swing-door left open). „Where’s me cullender? It’s that black baste of a Doolan. I b’lave he’s taken it to feed the chickens. I’ll tie a dish-cloth to his tail if he comes into me kitchen takin’ me cullenders! Doolan! Doolan! come here wid ye and bring me me cullender. I’ll tell the mather on you for takin’ me things. You haven’t got it? May God forgive you, but I saw you with the two eyes in me head, and it in your hand. It’s forenint me nose? Which nose? Oh, glory be to God! so it is! Now out of me kitchen wid you, and don’t be litterin’ me floor with your dirty boots.“ The connection of Doolan with the missing cullender based on a pure assumption.

Just so French had adorned the portrait of Miss Grimshaw, which he had painted in his own mind, with spectacles. And he would have sworn to those spectacles in a court of law.

Just so, by extension, he saw Garryowen passing the winning-post despite all the obstacles in his path. But it was the case of Erne that brought home to Miss Grimshaw this trait with full force.

„Mr. French,“ said she one morning, entering the sitting-room, where he was writing letters, „do you know Effie can walk?“

„I beg your pardon what did you say?“ asked Mr. French, dropping his pen and turning in his chair.

„The child’s not a cripple at all. She can walk as well as I can.“

„Walk! Why, she’s been a cripple for years! Walk! Why, Mrs. Driscoll never lets her on her feet by any chance—“

„Yes, but when she’s alone she runs about the room, and she’s as sound on her legs as I am.“

„But Dr. O’Malley said with his own mouth she was a cripple for life.“

„How long ago was that?“

„Four years.“

„Has he seen her lately?“

„Seen her lately! Why, how could he see her, and he in his coffin three years come last October?“

„Have you had no other doctor to see her?“

„Sure, there’s no one else but Rafferty at Cloyne, and he’s a fool and she won’t see doctors; she says they are no use to her.“

„Well, all I can say is that I’ve seen her walking. She can run, and she tells me she has been able to for years, only no one will believe her. Whenever they see her on her feet, she says, they pop her back on the couch. The poor child seems to have become so hopeless of making any one believe her that she has submitted to her fate. I believe she half believes herself that she oughtn’t to walk that it’s a sort of sin she does it more out of perversity than anything else. She’s been coddled into invalidhood, and I’m going to coddle her out of it,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „And if you will come upstairs with me now I’ll show you that she’s as firm on her legs as you are yourself.“

They went upstairs. As Miss Grimshaw turned the handle of the door of Effie’s room a scuffling noise was heard, and when they entered the child was sitting up on the couch, flushed and bright-eyed.

„Why, what’s all this, Effie?“ cried her father. „What’s all this I’ve been hearing about your running about the room? Stick your legs out and let me see you do it.“

Effie grinned.

„I will,“ said she, „if you promise not to tell Mrs. Driscoll.“

For three years the unfortunate child had been suffering from no other disease but Mrs. Driscoll’s vivid imagination and the firm belief held by her that the child’s back would „snap in two“ if she stood on her legs. Vivid and vital, this belief, like some people’s faith, refused to listen to suggestion or criticism.

„I won’t tell,“ said Effie’s father. „Up with you and let’s see you on your pins.“

„Now,“ said Miss Grimshaw, when the evolutions were over and Miss French had demonstrated her soundness in wind and limb to the full satisfaction of her sire, „what do you think of that?“

„But how did you find it out?“ asked the astonished man.

„She told me it as a secret.“

„But why didn’t she tell any one else, with a whole houseful of people to tell, this three years and more?“

„She did, but no one would believe her would they, Erne?“

„No,“ replied Effie.

„You told Mrs. Driscoll over and over again you could walk, and what did she say to you?“

„She told me to hold my whisht and not to be talking nonsense. She said she’d give me to the black man that lives in the oven if I put a foot to the ground; and I told papa I was all right and could walk if they’d let me, and he only laughed, and told me not to be getting ideas in my head.“

„Faith, and that’s the truth,“ said her papa. „I thought it was only her fancies.“

„Well,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „I examined her back this morning, and there is nothing wrong with it. Her legs are all right; she’s in good health, well where’s your invalid?“

„Faith, I don’t know,“ said French. „This beats Bannagher.“ He went to the bell and pulled it.

„Send up Mrs. Driscoll,“ said the master of Drumgool. „Send up Mrs. Driscoll. And what are you standing there with your mouth hanging open for?“

„Sure, Miss Effie, and what are you doin’ off the couch?“ cried Norah, shaken out of her respect for her master by the sight of Effie on her legs.

„Doing off the couch? Away with you down and send up Mrs. Driscoll. You and your couch! You’ve been murdering the child between you for the last three years with your couches and your coddling. Off with you!“

„Don’t be harsh to them,“ said Erne’s saviour, as Norah departed in search of the housekeeper. „They did it for the best.“

Half an hour later Mrs. Driscoll, with her pet illusion still perfectly unshattered, returned to her kitchen to conduct the preparations for dinner, whilst Effie, freed for ever from her bonds, sat on a stool before the nursery fire reading Mrs. Brown’s Adventures in Paris.

Miss Grimshaw, coming down a little later, found three letters that had just come by post awaiting her. One was from Mr. Dashwood.

It was a short and rather gloomy letter. He had asked permission to write to her, and she had been looking forward to a letter from him, for she liked him, and his recollection formed a picture in her mind pleasant enough to contemplate; but this short and rather gloomy screed was so unlike him that she at once guessed something wrong in his affairs.

Woman-like, she was not over-pleased that he should permit his private worries to take the edge off his pen when he was writing to her, and she determined to leave the letter unanswered.

Chapter IX

The Meet of the Hounds.

IT was November, and it had been raining for a week.

The sun had vanished, the hills had vanished, the land had all but vanished; nothing remained but the wind and the rain, the rain and the wind.

Erne’s short lessons only consumed a couple of hours of each rain-soaked, wind-blown day. No one ever came to Drumgool except, maybe, a farmer now and then to see Mr. French, and the long-drawn „hoo-hoo“ of the wind through the Devil’s Keyhole, the rattling of windows fighting with the wind, and the tune of waste-pipes emptying into over-full water-butts were beginning to prey upon Miss Grimshaw’s nerves.

Even Mr. Giveen would have been a distraction these times; but Mr. Giveen was now at open enmity with his kinsman, and spoiling with all the bitterness of his petty nature to do him an injury.

And Giveen was not French’s only enemy just now. The United Irish Patriots were against him. He had let farms on the eleven months’ system, and he had let farms for grazing, two high offences in the eyes of the Patriots.

„The time has come to put an end to the big grazing ranches and to plant the people on the soil,“ say the Patriots as though the people were seed potatoes. „You mustn’t take a farm on an eleven-month agreement,“ goes on this Areopagus of plunderers and short-sighted politicians. „For,“ continue the Patriots, „if you do, we’ll drive the cattle off your land with hazel sticks, and on you we will commit every dirty, petty outrage that the black heart of a low-down Irishman can invent. Begob!“ And they do.

The Law of the Patriots is the law of the West of Ireland. The King does not reign there in the least.

„Come down here,“ cried Mr. French one morning, standing in the hall and calling up the stairs, where he had caught the flutter of Miss Grimshaw's skirt. „Come down here till I show you something you've never seen before. Come in here.“

He led the way into a small room where he received farmers and tenants, and there, sitting on a chair, was an old man with a face furrowed like a ploughed field. His battered old hat was on the floor, and he held in his hand two cows' tails; and there he sat, half purblind, and twisting the tails in his hands, a living picture of age and poverty and affliction.

„Don't get up, Ryan. Sit you down where you are,“ said French, „and tell the young lady what you have in your hands.“

„Sure, they're me cows' tails,“ piped the old fellow, like a child saying a lesson. „Me beautiful cows' tails that the blackguards chopped off wid a knife devil mend them! And I lyin' in me bed in the grey of the mornin'. (Listen,) I says to me wife. (What ails the crathurs and they boohoo in' like that?) (Get up an' see,) she says. And up I gets and slips on me breeches and coat, and out I goes, and finds thim hangin' over the rail, dhrippin' wid blood, and they cut off wid a knife. Oh, the blackguards to chop their knives into the poor innocent crathurs and lave me widout a cow, and the rint comin' due and me wife sick in her bed and all. Sure, what way is that to be thratin' a man just bekase I niver answered their divil's notice to quit?“

„Cut off his cows' tails!“ cried the girl in horror.

„Were they alive?“

„Yes,“ said French. „It's little those ruffians care for an animal or a man either.“

„Oh, but what a cruel, sneaking thing to do! Why did they do it?“

„Because he would not give up his bit of a farm. And they call themselves Irishmen; and the worst of the business is, they are. Well, Ryan, keep your seat and I'll send you in a drop of whisky. And don't bother about the rent. I expect the next thing will be they'll visit me. Faith, and they'll get a warm reception if they do!“

He left the room, followed by the girl. „That's the sort of thing that's been the ruin of Ireland,“ said he, as he pulled the sitting-room bell for Norah. „Talk of landlords! Good God! when was there ever a landlord would cut a cow's tail off? When was there ever a landlord would mutilate horses? Did ye ever hear of a landlord fire a gun through the window of a house where a lonely old woman was, and nearly blow the roof off her skull, all because her son refused to *strip his farm*, as they call it? And that was done ten miles from here a month before you came. Norah, get the whisky and give old Ryan a glassful and a bite to eat. He's sitting there in the little study, with his two cows' tails those blackguards have cut off in his hand. Take him into the kitchen and dry him, and let him sit by the fire, and tell Mrs. Driscoll to give him something for his old wife, for she's sick in bed. Yes, that's what Ireland has come to. A lot of poor ignorant people like Ryan, ruled by a syndicate of ruffians that make their own laws and don't care a button for the law of God or the law of the land. It's unbelievable, but there it is. And now they'll be going for me. I've had several anonymous letters in the last month, threatening boycotting, or worse, if I don't amend my ways. Much I care for them! Look, the rain's cleared off. I'm going to the meet of the hounds at Drumboyne. Would you care to drive with me? If you had a riding-habit we might have ridden.“

„But I have a riding-habit. It's pretty old, but—“

„Up with you and put it on, then,“ said Mr. French; „and I'll tell Moriarty to saddle the grey mare for you. She'll be round at the door in ten minutes.“

Twenty minutes later, Miss Grimshaw, in a riding-habit and covert coat, relic of her money-making days with Hardmuth, was accompanying Mr. French down the drive, she on the grey mare, he on a raw-boned hunter with a head which had suggestions about it of a fiddle and the devil.

She was a good horsewoman. In London her only extravagance had been an early-morning canter in the park on a hired hack. It was for this she had bought the habit.

They struck the road. It was twenty minutes past nine, and as the meet was at half-past ten they had plenty of time.

The clouds had ceased raining, had risen to an immense height, and there, under the influence of some wind of the upper atmosphere, had become mackerelled, a grey, peaceful sky, showing here and there through a rift the faintest tinge of blue.

The air smelt of the rain and the rain-wet earth, and the hills lay distinct, grey, peaceful, wonderfully clear.

Nowhere else in the world but in Ireland do you get such weather as this; it pays for weeks of rain, damp, sad, clear, grey and exhilarating as wine.

Hennessey, the master of the hounds, lived at a place called Harrington Court, seven miles south of Drumboyne. He was a young man, a bachelor and a pretty fast liver; he owned a good bit of land, and, like every other landowner in the county, was pretty much under the thumb of the Tyrant. But he was, unlike French, a diplomat.

„That's Hennessey,“ said Mr. French, when the turning of the road suddenly showed them the long, straggling street of Drumboyne, the market cross, the hounds, then master and his whips, and about two dozen horsemen, mounted on all sorts and conditions of nags, all congregated about the cross. „We're just in time. The first meet of the season, too, and a grand day for the scent.“

Violet Grimshaw, who had never until this seen a meet of the hounds, except in the illustrated papers, looked before her with interest, not unmixed with amusement, at the crowd surrounding the cross.

All sorts of rabble had gathered from north, south, east and west. Gossoons without a shoe to their feet; chaps from „over beyant the big bog“ in knee-breeches, and armed with shillelaghs; dirty little girls dragging younger sisters by the hand to have a look at the „houn's“; Father Roche, from Cloyne, who had stopped to say a cheery word to Hennessey; Long Doolan, the rat-catcher, in an old red waistcoat; Billy Sheelan of the station inn, the same who had directed Mr. Dashwood on his fishing expedition, and who, by popular report, was ruining his mother and „drinking the inn dry,“ all these, and a lot more, were chattering and laughing, shouting one to the other and giving advice to the Hunt servants, when French and his companion, rounding the turn of the road, made their appearance.

The effect was magical. The talking and the laughing ceased. Men fell away from one another and, as French rode up to the master, three farmers who had been talking to him turned their horses so that their backs were presented to the new-comers.

By the inn door, of which was directly opposite the cross French perceived Mr. Giveen. Mr. Giveen vanished into the inn, but a moment later his face appeared at the bar-room window, and remained there during all that followed.

„Well, Hennessey,“ said the master of Drumgool, appearing to take no notice of the coldness of his reception, „you’ve a fine day for the first meet. Allow me to introduce you to a young lady who is staying with me. Mr. Hennessey, Miss Grimshaw. And where are you going to draw?“

„Barrington scrub, I believe,“ replied Hennessey, saluting the girl. „Yes, it’s not a bad day. Do you intend to follow?“

„No. We’ll go to see you draw the scrub, that’s all. Why, there’s Father Roche! And how are you to-day? Faith, it’s younger you’re looking every time I meet you. And why haven’t I seen you at Drumgool these months?“ As he turned to talk to the priest several of the hunt drew close to Hennessey, and spoke to him in a low tone, but so vehemently that Violet, observing everything, overheard several of their remarks.

„Not a fut does he follow the houn’s. What do I care about him? Sure, Giveen said he swore he’d fling the whole of the Castle French property into grazing land to spite us. Listen now, and it’s the last time I’ll say it. If he goes we stay.“

„French,“ said the master, detaching himself from the group.

„Hullo?“ replied Mr. French.

„Just a word with you.“

He drew him aside.

„There’s a lot of bad blood here. It’s not my fault, but you know these chaps, and they have a down on you, every one of them and they say if you follow to the scrub they’ll all stay behind. Now, don’t get waxy; you know it’s not my fault, but there it is.

French’s eyes blazed.

„Follow you to the scrub!“ said he in a loud, ringing voice. „Thank you for the hint, Dick Hennessey. Follow you with that pack of half-mounted rat-catchers! I was going to ride to the scrub to see if there was ever a fox white-livered enough to turn its tail on them, and, sure, if he did, he couldn’t run for laughing. And talking of tails,“ said Mr. French, turning from the master and addressing the market-place, „if the gentleman who cut off the tails of old Ryan’s cows will only step forward I’ll accommodate him with my opinion of him here and now. And it’s not the whip-end of my hunting-crop I’ll do it with either.“

No gentleman present was at all desirous of being accommodated, for French turned the scale at fourteen stone, all muscle, and he was a match for any two men present.

He waited a moment. Then he took off his hat to Miss Grimshaw.

„I must apologise to you,“ he said, „for losing my temper. Let us on to Cloyne, for this is no place for a lady to be at all.“

He touched the fiddle-headed devil he was riding with the spur, making him plunge and scatter the ragamuffins who were hanging on the scene with open mouths, and, cannoning against and nearly unseating one of the „half-mounted rat-catchers,“ he took the road to Cloyne, followed by the girl.

It was the first time he had come in clash with his countrymen; the storm had been brewing a long time, but it had burst at last. To think that he, Michael French, in his own country, had been ordered not to follow the hounds, by a herd of dirty-fisted, petty farmers, was a thought to make his blood boil. Petty spite, needle-sharp, that was the weapon the Patriots were using against

Michael French by day. In their own disgusting language he was a „First Offender.“ Even yet, if he chose to give in and eat humble pie out of the grimy hands of the men who would be his masters, he might find forgiveness. If not, would follow boycotting, and who knows what else.

He knew this, and he knew that he had no hope of help from the law. The police might arrest his tormentors if they were caught trying to do him an injury, but the jury, if they were tried, would be pretty sure to let the offenders slip. And it was a hundred to one they would never be caught, for these people are trained sneaks; no area sneak is more soft-footed or cunning than the gentleman with the black cloth mask and the knife, who comes like a thief in the night to work brutal mutilation on cattle.

Garryowen was the only thing he was afraid of; but in Moriarty he had a rock of strength to depend upon.

„Did you see Dick Giveen?“ said he, as the girl ranged alongside of him. „He’s had a finger in this pie. Did you see him at the inn window with his nose to the pane? He knew I’d come to the meet, and he came to see those chaps get the better of me.“

„They didn’t get that,“ said Violet. „They looked like whipped puppies when you were talking to them. Yes, I’m sure that man has been doing you injury. I heard one of the farmers say to Mr. Hennessey that Giveen had said you would do your best to spite them. I wish I hadn’t gone with him in the boat that day. If I hadn’t this would not have occurred.“

„I don’t care for those chaps so much as for Dick Giveen,“ said he. „He’s a bad man to vex. These fools always are. He’ll be on my tracks now like a stoat, trying to do me some dirty trick. He’ll watch and wait. I know him. But if he comes within five miles of Drumgool I’ll put a bullet in him, or my name’s not Michael French.“

They rode on through the grey, still day. Now and again a whiff of turf smoke from a cabin by the way made the air delicious; over the black bog patches and wild, broken land a soft wind had risen, blowing from the south and bringing with it the scent of the earth, and far ahead of them a trace of smoke from the chimneys of Cloyne went up against the background of hills.

They stopped at the station inn at Cloyne and put the horses up. French ordered some bread and cheese. „And now,“ said he, „whilst they’re getting it ready, would you like to see a real old Irish cabin? I’ll take you to see old Mrs. Moriarty down the road, and you can amuse yourself talking to her for a minute whilst I run in and see James, my agent. Mrs. Moriarty is a witch, so they say, but she’s true to the Frenchs. She was a kitchen-maid at Drumgool in my grandfather’s time. She believes in fairies and leprechauns, and all that nonsense. Here we are.“

He stopped at the door of a cabin a hundred yards away from the inn and knocked; then, without waiting for an answer he lifted the latch and opened the door.

„Are you there, Kate?“ cried he into the dark interior of the place.

„Sure, and where else would I be?“ replied a wheezy voice. „Who are you, lettin’ the draught in on me? Oh! glory be to God, it’s Mr. Michael himself.“

„Come in,“ said French, and the girl followed him into the one room where Mrs. Moriarty kept herself and her hens, two of them were roosting on the rafters, and where she was sitting now over a bit of fire, with her bonnet on to keep the „cowld“ from her head, and a short black pipe between her teeth. It

was an appalling place, considered as a human dwelling. The floor was of clay, the window had only one practicable pane, the rest were broken and stuffed with rags. A heap of rags in the corner did duty for a bed. By the fire, and beside the old lady, who was sitting on a stool, a bantam hen brooding in the warmth cocked one bloodshot eye up at the visitors.

„I've brought a young lady to see you, Kate,“ said Mr. French. „Talk to her and tell her of the fairies, for I'm going down the road to see Mr. James, and I won't be a minute, and I'll send you a drop of whisky from the inn to warm your gizzard when I get back.“

„Sure, it's welcome she is,“ said the old woman. „But it isn't a seat I have to ask her to sit on, and I stuck to this ould stool wid the rheumatiz in me legs. Get out wid you, Norah,“ making a dive with a bit of stick at the bantam, which, taking the hint, fluttered into a corner, „and make way for the young lady. You'll excuse her, miss; she's the only one of siven I brought up wid me own hand. Sure, it's not from anywhere in these parts you've come from?“

She was peering up from under her bonnet at the girl's face, and Violet, fascinated by that terrible purblind gaze, thought that she had never seen tragedy written on a human countenance so plainly as on the stone-like mask which the red glimmer of the turf fire showed up to her beneath the bonnet of the old woman.

„No,“ said she; „I come from America.“

„Ohone!“ cried Mrs. Moriarty. „Sure, it's there me boy Mike went forty years ago forty years ago, and niver a word or a letter from him for twenty long years. Maybe you never chanced to hear of him, miss? He was in the bricklayin'. Six fut six he stood widout his brogues, and the lovely red hair on the head of him was curly as a rethraver's back. And, sure, what am I talkin' about? It's grey he'd be now ohone! afther all thim years.“

„No,“ said the girl, „I never heard of him, but America is a big place. Cheer up. You may hear of him yet, and here's something that may bring you luck.“

She took a shilling from the pocket of her covert coat and put it in the hand of the old woman, who took it and blessed her, and wrapped it in a scrap of paper.

„The blessin's of God on you, and may the devil bile his pot wid the man that decaves you. Oh, sure, it's the face of a shillin' I haven't seen for more than a twel'month, and I feared to say a word, for the guardians do be strugglin' to get me into the House. Ha'ff-crown a week and a bandage for me poor leg is all I've had out of the blackguyards, and they sittin' on the poor wid one hand and fillin' their bellies wid the other. Atin' and dhrinkin' and havin' the height of fine times they do be wid the money of the parish. May it stick in their livers till the divil chokes their black mouths with burnin' turves an' bastes them wid the bilin' tears of the poor they do be defraudin'. And they're all up against Mr. Michael. Whisht now, and I'll tell you somethin'. Shusey Gallagher, she's servant beyant over there at Blood the farrier's, she tould me to kape it saycret they was going to play their tricks on Mr. Michael's horses if he went on lettin' his land to the graziers; she said they was going to—“

At this moment the cabin door was flung open, and a ragged urchin popped his head in, shouted „Boo!“ and clapped the door to again. It was a favourite pastime with the Cloyne children to shout through old Mrs. Moriarty's door and then watch her raging through the window.

„Away wid yiz!“ yelled Mrs. Moriarty, forgetting Violet, Mr. French’s enemies, and everything else in her excitement, turning to the window, where she knew her tormentor would be, and shaking her fist at the grinning face peeping in at her. „Away wid yiz, or I’ll cut your lights out, comin’ shoutin’ through me dure, you divil’s baboon wid your ugly gob stuck at me winda there! Gr-r-r! Out wid you, you basthard you, or I’ll lay you flat so your mother won’t know you wid a sod of turf. Off wid you and ax your father what he meant gettin’ such a monkey-faced parrit, and lettin’ it loose on the parish widout a chain to it, you cross-eyed misbegot son of a—“

All of which was better than pearls to the one at the window.

Horrified at the language, and fearing a stroke for Mrs. Moriarty, the girl ran to the door and opened it, only to see a small gossoon, bare-legged and bare-footed, vanishing round the corner.

Then she came back, anxious to get out of Mrs. Moriarty more information concerning the plans against French, but the source had dried up. The old lady declared herself to be moidhered and her wits to be all astray.

„Well, listen to me,“ said Violet. „If you hear any more of those men going to harm Mr. French or his horses let me know, and I’ll give you a silver five-shilling piece for yourself.“

Mrs. Moriarty understood that.

At this moment the door opened and Mr. French appeared, and, leaving the old lady to her pipe and the prospect of a glass of whisky, they went back to the inn for luncheon.

The hideous old-fashioned Irish custom of dinner at four o’clock had been put aside on account of Miss Grimshaw. Seven o’clock was the dinner hour at Drumgool now, and after dinner that night, Effie having departed for bed in charge of Norah, Violet, with a ball of red wool and two long knitting-needles, took her seat at a corner of the fireplace in the sitting-room. The idea of a red knitted petticoat for old Mrs. Moriarty had occurred to her on the way home, and she was putting it now into practice.

French had been rather gloomy on the way home and at dinner. It was evident that the incident at the meet had hit him hard. Money worries could not depress the light-hearted, easy-going gentleman, who had a soul above money and the small affairs of life. It was the feeling of enmity against himself that cast him out of spirits for the first time in years. For the first time he felt the presence, and the influence against him, of the thing we call Fate. His whole soul, heart and mind were centred on Garryowen. In Garryowen he felt he had the instrument which would bring him name and fame and fortune. It was no fanciful belief. He knew horses profoundly; here was the thing he had been waiting for all his life, and everything was conspiring to prevent him using it.

First, there was Lewis and his debt that was bad enough. Secondly was the fact that he would have to complete the training of the horse in a hostile country, and that country the Ireland of to-day, a place where law is not and where petty ruffianism has been cultivated as a fine art. With Giveen for a spy on his movements, with a hundred scoundrels ready to do him an injury, and with Lewis only waiting to put out his hand and seize the horse, he was, it must be admitted, in a pretty bad way to the attainment of his desires.

But he had a friend, and as long as a man has a friend, however humble, he is not altogether in the hands of Fate. The girl sitting by the fire, knitting a red petticoat for old Mrs. Moriarty, had been exercising her busy mind for the past

few days on the seeming hopelessness of the problem presented to her in French and his affairs. She had inherited a good deal of her father's business sharpness; she was not the niece of Simon Gretry for nothing, and a way out of the difficulty had presented itself before her; at least, she fancied it was a way.

At nine o'clock, after a look round the stables, Mr. French came in, and, sitting down in the arm-chair opposite the girl, opened the *Irish Times* and began to read it, listlessly skimming the columns without finding anything of interest, moving restlessly in his chair, lighting his pipe and letting it go out again.

Miss Grimshaw, without pausing in her rapid knitting or dropping a stitch, watched him.

Then she said, „Do you know, I've been thinking.“

„What have you been thinking?“

„That I've found a way out of your difficulty about Garryowen.“

„And what's that?“ asked French, who, since the affair of Effie, had conceived a deep respect for Miss Grimshaw's cleverness and perspicacity.

„Well, it's this way,“ said she. „That man Lewis is your stumbling-block.“

„Call him my halter,“ said the owner of Garryowen, „for if ever a man had a blind horse in a halter it's me and him.“

„No, I will not call him any such thing. He's only a money-lender. You owe him the money. Garryowen will belong to him after the end of March. Well, let him have Garryowen.“

„Faith, there's no letting about it.“

„Let him have Garryowen, I say, but not until after the race.“

„Why what do you mean?“

„I mean this. Would it not be possible to take Garryowen away from here secretly? He does not belong to Mr. Lewis yet. Take him away to some lonely place, train him there, and run him for the race. If he wins you will make money, won't you? And if he loses, why, he will belong to Mr. Lewis.“

French rose up and paced the floor.

„That's not a bad idea,“ said he. „By George, it's good, if we could do it. Only, could we keep it hid?“

„Does Mr. Lewis know you are running him for the race?“

„No. He doesn't know I've got him, and the debt's not due till a fortnight before the event. And, by Jove, if he does see my name in the racing lists he'll put it down as my cousin Michael French's, the one Mr. Dashwood met for Michael runs horses in England every day in the week, and his name's as well known as the Monument. Faith, and it's a bright idea, for I'd get rid of all this crew here at one sweep.“

Mr. French went to the door, opened it, and called:

„Norah!“

„Yes, sir?“

„Bring the whisky. But the only question is, where could I take the horse? Faith, and I have it! Todd Mead he's a man you've never heard of has an old shanty down in Sligo. He uses it for breeding polo ponies, and there's a hundred square miles of heath that you could train a dromedary on and not a soul to see. He lives in Dublin and keeps a manager there, and he'd give me stabling there, maybe, for nothing, for he has more room than he wants. It's a big streeling barn of a place.“

„You say the debt to Mr. Lewis only comes due a few weeks before the race?“

„Yes.“

„Will he seize your things immediately the debt is due, or might he give you a few weeks' grace?“

„Not an hour's. I borrowed the money, giving him the house and live stock as security, and the bit of land that's unmortgaged, and he'll clap a man in as soon as ever he can after the money is due.“

„But if you have borrowed the money on the live stock, surely, since Garryowen is part of the live stock, it would be unlawful to remove him?“

„Listen to me,“ said Mr. French. „I borrowed the money before I owned Garryowen. Sure, the main reason I borrowed it was to buy him. He's not part of the security.“

„Well, then, Mr. Lewis can't touch him.“

„Yes, maybe by law. But how long does it take to prove a thing by law? Suppose he puts a man in. Well, the man will seize the colt with everything else, then the lawyers will go to work to prove the colt's not part of the security, and they'll prove it, maybe, about next June twelvemonth, and by that time two City and Suburbans will have been run and Garryowen will be good for nothing but to make glue of. Besides, these blackguards here may do him an injury.

„No, the plan is to slip out by the back door. Major Lawson, an old friend of mine, has a stable at Epsom. We can bring the colt there two days before the race. I'm beginning to see clear before me, and, faith, it's through your eyes I'm seeing.“

„You are sure Mr. Lewis can't come down on you before April?“

„No. I paid him his half-year's interest last month. I paid him close on two hundred pounds.“

„Well, if you paid him his interest next April wouldn't he be satisfied?“

„Of course he'd be satisfied, but how am I to do it? I tell you it will take me every penny I have for the expenses; there's no margin for paying money-lenders.

„I've made my calculations. By scraping and screwing, with some money I've hid away, I can just manage to run the colt, pay expenses, and back him for a thousand and that's all.“

„But, see here. Why not back him for only eight hundred and pay Mr. Lewis his two hundred?“

„Now, there you are,“ said French. „And that shows you haven't grasped the big thing I'm after. Suppose I pay Lewis his two hundred and only back the colt for eight hundred, do you know what that would make me lose if he starts at, say, fifty to one and wins? I'd lose ten thousand pounds. It's on the cards that for every thousand pounds I lay on Garryowen I'll win five thousand.“

„So that if he wins and you have the full thousand on him—“

„I'll win fifty thousand.“

„And if he loses?“

„Faith, I'll be stripped as naked as Bryan O'Lynn.“

There was a fine sporting flavour in this deal with Fortune that pleased Miss Grimshaw somehow.

„There is one more thing,“ said she. „Please excuse me for asking you the question but if you lose the thousand it will be all right, I suppose I mean, you will be able to meet your liabilities?“

„Sure, do you take me for a black-leg? Of course I'll be able to pay. Isn't it a debt of honour?“

„Good. Then go in and win. Isn't that what the boys say when they are fighting? I'll help as far as my power will allow me. Will you write to Mr. Todd what's his name?“

„No,“ said Mr. French. „I'll go to Dublin to-morrow and see him.“

= PART II =

Chapter X

Mr. Mead.

„VI'LITS, vi'lits, vi'lits, your arner!“

„Oh, bother violets!“ said Mr. French. He had just come down the steps of the Kildare Street Club, he had lost five pounds at cards, the afternoon was drizzling, and he was being pestered to buy violets.

The violet vendor, a fantastically filthy old woman in a poke bonnet, heedless of the rebuke, pursued her avocation, and Mr. French, trotting like a dog behind him, chanting her wares, her misfortunes, his good looks.

„Sure, they're only a penny the bunch, sure, they're only a penny the bunch. Oh, bless your han'some face! Sure, you wouldn't be walkin' the sthreets widout a flower in yer coat. Let your hand drap into your pocket and find a penny, and it's the blessin's of God will be pourin' on you before the night's out. Sure, it's a bunch I'll be givin' you for nothin' at all but just the pleasure of fixin' it in your coat, an' they as big as cabbiges and on'y a penny the bunch.“

It was a kind of song, a recitative, an invocation.

„I tell you I have no change,“ flashed the flowerless one. „I tell you I have no change.“

The priestess of Flora halted and sniffed.

„Change!“ said she; „no, nor nothin' to change.“

Mr. French laughed as he opened his umbrella and hailed a passing outside car. „Faith,“ said he, as he mounted on the side of the car, „she's about hit the bull's eye.“

„Did you spake, sir?“ said the jarvey.

„No, I was only thinking. Drive me to 32 Leeson Street. And where on earth did you pick up this old rattletrap of a horse from?“

„Pick him up!“ said the jarvey with a grin. „Faith, the last time I picked him up was when he tumbled down in Dame Street yesterday afternoon, wid a car-load of luggidge dhrivin' to Westland Row.“

„You seem to have a talent for picking up rubbish then,“ said Mr. French.

„It's the fault of the p'leece,“ replied the other, with an extension of the grin that Nature, whisky, and the profession of car-driving had fixed upon his face. „It's the fault of the p'leece, bad 'cess to them.“

„And how's that?“ asked Mr. French, incautiously.

„Sure, they forbids me to refuse a fare. Jay up, y'divil! what are yiz shyin' at? Did y'never see a barra of greens before? Now thin, now thin, what are you takin' yourself to be, or what ails you at all, at all?“

The car stopped at 32 Leeson Street. Mr. French descended, gave the jarvey a shilling for his fare and sixpence for a drink, and knocked at the hall door.

Mr. Mead was in, and the old butler who opened the door showed the visitor straight into the library, a comfortable, old-fashioned room, where before a bright fire Mr. Mead, a small, bright-eyed, apple-cheeked, youthful-looking person of eighty or so, was seated in an arm-chair, reading Jorrocks' *Jaunts and Jollities*.

„Why, there you are,“ cried Mead, jumping up.

„And there you are,“ said Mr. French, clasping the old fellow's hand. „Why, it's younger you're growing every time I see you. Did you get my wire? Oh, you did, did you? Two o'clock! The scoundrels! I sent it off from the Shelbourne at twelve. No matter. And how's the family?“

„All right,“ replied Mead, putting Jorrocks on the mantelshelf and ringing the bell. „Billy married last winter. You remember I wrote to you? And Kate's engaged. James, a bottle of the blue seal port. And what's the news?“

„News,“ said French, with a short laugh. „What news do you expect from the west of Ireland except news of men being plundered and cattle maimed? News! I'm leaving the place, and that's why I wanted to see you. See here, Mead.“

Mead, who was opening a bottle of the blue seal port, an operation which he always conducted with his own hands, listened whilst French poured into his attentive ears the tale of his woes.

„The blackguards!“ said the old man, when French had finished. „And do you mean to say you've gone off and left the horse behind you for these chaps to maim, maybe?“

„Oh, Moriarty is there,“ replied French. „He's sleeping in the stable, and Andy is sleeping in the loft. But it's on my mind that some dirty trick will be played before we get the colt to England, and that's why I've called to see you. Look here; you've got that place for your polo ponies down in Sligo. Will you let me take Garryowen over there and finish his training?“

„You mean my stables at Ballyhinton?“

„Yes.“

„I've sold it. Didn't you know?“

„Sold it!“

„Eight months ago!“

„Good Lord!“ said French. „That does me. And I've come all the way to Dublin to see you about it. Was there ever such luck?“

„You see,“ said Mead, „I'm not as young as I was. Bryan, the chap I had there, was swindling me right and left, so I sold off lock, stock, and barrel. I'm sorry.“

„Faith, and so am I,“ said French.

The big man for the first time in his life felt knocked out. Never for a moment did he dream of giving in, but he was winded. Besides all the worries we know of, a number of small things had declared against him, culminating in his loss at cards. He felt that he was in a vein of bad luck, under a cloud, and that until the cloud lifted and the luck changed it was hopeless for him to make plans or do anything.

He took leave of Mead and returned to the Shelbourne on foot. The rain had ceased, and as he drew near the hotel the sun broke through the clouds.

As he entered the hotel he ran almost into the arms of a young man dressed in a fawn-coloured overcoat, who, with his hat on the back of his head, was standing in the hall, a cigarette between his lips and a match-box in his hand.

„I beg your pardon,“ said Mr. French; then starting back, „Why, sure to goodness, if it isn't Mr. Dashwood!“

Chapter XI

The Compact.

„COME into the smoke-room,“ said Mr. Dashwood when they had shaken hands. „This is luck! I only came over by the morning boat. I'm coming down West. Oh, I'll tell you all about it in a minute. Come on into the smoking-room and have a drink.“

Mr. Dashwood seemed in the highest of good spirits. He led the way into the smoking-room, rang the bell, ordered two whiskies and an Apollinaris and cigars, chaffed the Hibernian waiter, who was a „character,“ and then, comfortably seated, began his conversation with French.

„Here's luck!“ said Mr. Dashwood.

„Luck!“ responded French, taking a sip of his drink.

„This is the first drink I've had to-day,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I've felt as seedy as an owl. It was an awfully rough crossing, but I didn't touch anything. I tell you what, French, since I saw you last I've been going it hard, but I've pulled up. You see,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „I'm not a drinking man, and when a fellow of that sort goes on the jag he makes a worse jag of it than one of your old seasoned toppers.“

„That's so,“ said French. „And if you start to try to match one of those chaps it's like matching yourself against a rum barrel. What drove you to it?“

„A woman,“ said Mr. Dashwood.

Mr. French laughed.

„Two women, I should say. I got tangled up with a woman.“

„And you tried to cut the knot with a whisky bottle. Well, you're not the first. Fire away, and tell us about it.“

„It's this way,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „A year ago I met a Miss Hitchen. She was one of those red-haired girls who wear green gowns, don't you know, and go in for things Herbert Spencer and all that sort of stuff, don't you know? I met her at a show a Johnny took me to for fun, a kind of literary club business. Then, next day, I met her again by accident in the Park, and we walked round the Serpentine. You see, I'd never met a woman like that before. She lived in rooms by herself, like a man, and she had a latch-key. I wasn't in love with her,“ said the ingenuous Mr. Dashwood, „but somehow or another, before I'd known her ten days I was engaged to her. Awfully funny business. You see, she had a lot of mind of her own, and I admire intellect in a woman, and she was a right good sort. I told her all about my life, and she wanted me to lead a higher one. Said she never could marry me unless I did. The strange thing about her was, she always made me feel as if I was in a Sunday School, though she wasn't pious in

the least. As a matter of fact, she didn't believe in religion, that is to say church and all that, but she was a Socialist. Awfully strong on dividing up every one's money so that every one would have five pounds a week. I used to fight her over that, for she had three hundred a year of her own and stuck to it; besides, I didn't see the force of making all the rotters in the world happy, and drunk, with five quid a week out of my pocket; but she never would give in always had some card up her sleeve to trump me with. You see, I'm not a political Johnny, and hadn't studied up the question. But we never fought really over that. Men and women don't ever really fight over those sort of things; and I'd always give in for a quiet life, and we'd go off and have tea at the British Museum, and look at the mummies and the marbles and things, and after six months or so I got quite fond of her in a way, and I began to look forward to marrying her. I used to mug up Herbert Spencer and a chap called Marx, and I never looked at another woman, and scarcely ever made a bet; and it might have gone on to us getting two latch-keys, only—" Mr. Dashwood stopped.

"Only, I met another girl," he went on. "That put me in a beastly position, and the long and the short of it is I went on the razzle-dazzle from the botheration of it all. Miss H. found out, and she cut the knot herself. I'm glad to be free," finished Mr. Dashwood, "but I wish it had happened some other way. In fact, I wish I'd never met Miss H. at all."

"And who is the other girl?" asked Mr. French. "Oh, you know her."

"I?"

"Yes; she's down at your place now." "Not Miss Grimshaw?"

"Yes, Miss Grimshaw. And that's the reason I'm going down West. I want to see her and tell her all."

French whistled; then he laughed.

"You seem in mighty good spirits over her," said he. "How do you know she'll have anything to do with you? Have you asked her?"

"Asked her! No. How could I, when I was tied up like that? That's what drove me off my balance. But I'm going to ask her, and that's why I've come over to Ireland."

"Look here," said Mr. French.

"Yes?"

"You said when I met you in the hall you were going to put up at Mrs. Sheelan's. You're not. Come and stay at Drumgool, on one condition."

"What's that?"

"That you don't ask her. First of all, you haven't known her long enough and she hasn't known you long enough, to find out whether you are properly matched. Secondly, I'm not so sure that I'm not going to ask her myself."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Dashwood.

"Oh, you needn't beg my pardon. I'm just telling you what's in my mind. I'm so moithered with one thing and another I've no heart for anything at present but just this horse I told you about, you remember Garryowen. And I'm not a man to stand between two young people if their minds are set on each other. But the question is. Are they? You care for her, but does she care for you? So take an open field and no favour. Don't go sticking at Mrs. Sheelan's seeing her maybe only once in a week, but come right to Drumgool. No proposing, mind you, or any of that rubbish. I'm giving you your chance fair and square, and I'm telling you fair and square it's in my mind that I may ask her myself. So there you are. Take the offer or leave it."

Mr. Dashwood paused for a moment before this astonishing proposition which upset all his preconceived ideas of love-affairs; then the straightness and strangeness and sense of it went to his heart. Surely never had a man a more generous rival than this; and the sporting nature and the humour of it completed the business and he held out his hand.

„Right,“ said he. „Another man would have acted differently. Yes, I’ll come. And I’ll play the game; get to know her better, and then, why, if she cares for me, it’s the fortune of war.“

„That’s it,“ said French; „and now I want to tell you about the horse.“

He gave the full history of his predicament, of the Patriots, and the money worries, and the enemies who seemed bent on destroying his chance of success. „If I could only get the horse out of the country,“ said French. „But I can’t.“

„Can’t you?“ said Bobby, who had followed the tale with sparkling eyes and rising colour. „Who says you can’t? I say you can, and I’ll show you how.“

He rose up and paced the floor.

„Don’t speak to me. This is simply frabjous! Why, my dear chap, I’ve got just what you want.“

„What’s that?“

„A place where you can train half a dozen horses if you want to.“

„Where?“

„Where? Why, down at Crowsnest, in Sussex. It’s not my place; it belongs, ‘s’matter of fact, to Emmanuel Ibbetson. He’s chucked horses, and he’s going to pull the place down and rebuild when he comes back from Africa. I can get a loan of it for three or four months.“

„What would the rent be?“ asked Mr. French.

„Nothing. He’ll lend me it. He’s just now constructing a big game expedition, and they start in a few days. I saw him only the day before yesterday at White’s. Lucky, ain’t it, that I thought of it? I’ll wire to him now, asking for the permit. The place is furnished all right; there’s a caretaker in it. It’s a bungalow with no end of fine stables. The Martens is the name of it.“

„Begad!“ said Mr. French, „this is like Providence.“

„Isn’t it? You hold on here and I’ll send the wire. I’ll send to his chambers in the Albany, and well have the reply back to-night or to-morrow morning.“

When the wire was dispatched Mr. French proposed an adjournment to the Kildare Street Club, whither, accordingly, the two gentlemen took their way.

„If,“ said he, „we can pull this business off I’ll never forget it to you. You don’t know what this means to me. It’s not the money so much, though that’s a good deal, but it’s the outwitting and getting the better of those scoundrels, Dick Given and the rest of them. Even if your friend agrees to lend us this place all our troubles aren’t ended. I want to get the horse away without any one knowing where I’m taking him to. I’ll have to take Moriarty and Andy, and I can’t leave Effie behind, for if I did I’d have to write to her, and they’d see the postmarks at the post-office in Cloyne, and my address would be all over the place. I mustn’t leave a clue behind me to tell where I’m gone to, and with that beast of a Given nosing about like a rat it’ll be difficult rather; but we’ll do it.“

„Yes,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „we’ll do it.“ The excitement of the business filled him with pleasurable anticipations, and he had not reckoned on Emmanuel Ibbetson in vain, for when they got back to the Shelbourne in the evening they found a wire from that gentleman. It only contained three words: „Yes, with

pleasure.“ With this telegram there was another. It was from Miss Grimshaw, and it ran: „Come back at once.“

Chapter XII

The Warning.

THE day Mr. French left Drumgool on his visit to Dublin it rained.

Croagh Mahon had been winding himself with scarves of mist all the day before, and he had come up so close to Drumgool that you might have hit him with a biscuit, to use Moriarty's expression.

The weather kept the great mountain for ever in fantastic movement, now retreating, now advancing. He grew and shrank in a wizard way with the changes of the atmosphere. To-day he would be immense, slate-coloured, strewn with dim ravines, standing beneath the subdued beauty of the quiet winter daylight, a sure sign that on the morrow he would be blotted out. Fine weather would cast him far away, and he would stand, heather purple in the blue distance, but still calling you to come to him.

When Mr. French departed for the station the weather was clear, and Miss Grimshaw, having watched him drive away, strolled down the garden, then through a little wicket she passed into the kitchen-garden, and from there along the uphill path to the cliffs.

There was little wind on the cliffs, and the sea was coming in unruffled, yet hugely stirring in league-long lapses of swell.

Boom!

The whole coast answered with a deep organ note to the leisurely breaking of the billows.

Boom!

You could hear the voice of the Devil's Kitchen, the voices of the Seven Sisters, the voice of the long Black Strand, the voices of the headlands, as billow after billow struck the coast; great waves from the very heart of the ocean, and the snarl of the pebbles to the undertow on the strand beneath could be heard shrill, like the voice of each dying wave, „I have come from afar afar.“

No other sound.

Not a whisper from the land stretching away to the distant hills under the dull grey sky; not a whisper from the heaving sea stretching away to the fleckless grey horizon.

Boom!

„I have come from afar afar afar.“ Nothing more except the cry of a gull. The girl stood on the cliff edge, looking and listening. The air was sweet with the recent rain, invigorating as wine, clear as crystal, filled with ozone from the seaweed-strewn shore and the perfume of earth from the rain-soaked land.

She could see the Seven Sisters seated in their rings of foam; miles of coast lay on either hand, cliff, and headland, and bay singing together, and being sung to by the waves, tremendous, majestic, desolate, just as they sang and were sung to ten thousand years ago, just as they will sing and be sung to ten thousand years hence.

The recollection of Mr. Giveen, called up in her mind by the sea, brought French and his troubles before her; the League and its pettiness, and old Ryan and his cows' tails. Before the tremendous seascape all these things shrank to their true proportions, and the booming of the billows seemed like a voice commenting on it all, yet indifferent to the doings, the hopes and aims of man as Death.

A spot of rain touched her cheek and she turned from the cliff and began the descent towards the house. At the gate leading into the kitchen-garden a dirty and draggle-tailed girl without boots or shoes, a girl of about fourteen, with a dirty face, was endeavouring to unravel the mystery of the latch it was a patent latch with a trick bar in the staple and failing.

Miss Grimshaw came to her assistance, opened the gate and held it open for the other to pass through, but the damsel did not enter.

She stood with eyes downcast; then she looked up, then she looked down, then:

„If you plaze, miss,“ said she, „are you the young lady ould Mrs. Moriarty tould me to ax for?“

„I'm sure I don't know,“ laughed Violet; then, remembering the name, „Do you mean old Mrs. Moriarty at Cloyne?“

„Yes, miss.“

„Well, why did she send you?“ „If you plaze, miss, I'm Shusey Gallagher.“ „Yes?“

„I'm the servant at the blacksmith's, miss, and ould Mrs. Moriarty sez to me to keep me ears open to hear if the boys was aafter playin' any tricks on Mr. Frinch, an' she'd give me a sixpence, miss; so I lays wid me ears open, pritindin' to be aslape, and I heard him say to his wife, 'It's fixed for Thursday night,' says he. 'What's fixed?' says she. 'Frinch's job,' says he.“

„Yes, yes,“ cut in Miss Grimshaw. „But who were these people speaking?“

„Mr. Blood, the blacksmith, miss, and his wife, and I lyin' wid me ears open and they thinkin' me aslape. 'What are they goin' to do?' says she. 'Hamstring the coult,' says he. 'Garryowen?' says she. 'The same,' says he. 'And how many of them on the job?' says she. 'Only one,' says he. 'That'll larn ould Frinch,' says she. 'And who's goin' to do it?' 'Black Larry,' he says, 'and now shut your head, for it's tired I am and wants to go to slape.'“

„Good heavens!“ said Miss Grimshaw.

„Yes, miss,“ replied the tale-teller, evidently pleased with the effect of her information. „And ould Mrs. Moriarty whin, I tould her, 'Run, Shusey,' says she, 'hot-fut to Dhrumgool and ax for the young lady, and give her me rispicts, and tell her what you've tould me, and maybe she won't forget you for your thrubble.'“

„That she won't,“ said Miss Grimshaw, taking her purse from her pocket and half-a-crown from her purse. She also took a sixpence; and giving the child the sixpence, she showed her the half-crown.

„I will give you that,“ said she, „next Friday if what you have told me is true, and if you say nothing about this to any one else. Tell old Mrs. Moriarty I will call and see her, and thank her very much for sending you. Now, mind, if you say a word of this to any one else you won't get the half-crown.“

Susie Gallagher, whose mouth had flown open wide at the sight of the half-crown, closed it again.

„Plaze, miss, is the whole half-crown for me?“

„Yes, if you don't say a word.“

„Not a word, miss; sure, I'd bite me tongue off before I'd let it be tellin' a word.“

„And go on keeping your ears open,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „and let me know if you hear anything more.“

„Yes, miss.“

„That'll do,“ said Miss Grimshaw, and Susie Gallagher departed, running, taking a hop, skip and a jump now and then, presumably as an outlet for her emotions.

When this desirable and faithful servitor had vanished round the corner, Miss Grimshaw passed through the kitchen-garden towards the stables. She wanted to find Moriarty. The news had shocked her, but as yet she could scarcely believe in its truth. Susie Gallagher was not a person to bear conviction however easily she might bear tales; but Moriarty would be able to decide.

Moriarty was in the stable-yard with Doolan. They were overhauling the fishing-tackle of the past season, deep-sea lines and conger hooks and what not, whilst Mrs. Driscoll stood at the back entrance to the kitchen premises, her apron over her arms, assisting them. She popped in when Miss Grimshaw made her appearance, and Moriarty touched his cap.

Ever since the bailiff incident he had a great respect for the governess, the respect a sportsman has for a sportsman.

„Moriarty,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „I want to speak to you.“

„Yes, miss,“ said Moriarty, stepping up to her.

„I have just had some very serious news about the horses. I had better speak to you about it in the library. Come in there.“

She led the way into the house.

When they were in the library she shut the door and told him all.

„Divil mend them,“ said Moriarty, who seemed much perturbed.

„Do you think there is any truth in it?“

„I do, miss, and what's botherin' me is the master bein' away.“

„He's coming back on Thursday.“

„Yes, miss. If they'll only hould their hands till Thursday. Not that I mind tacklin' them alone; but if there's any shootin' to be done I'd sooner the master was on the primises.“

„Oh, but you won't shoot them!“

„Shoot them, miss! Faith, if I catch them at their games I'll shoot them first and bile them afther. To-day's Monday, are you sure it was Thursday she said, miss?“

„Yes.“

Moriarty ruminated.

„Black Larry you said it was, miss, that was comin'?“

„Yes.“

„Then he's sure to come single-handed. He always does his jobs alone, and he's never been cotched yet.“

„Is he a dangerous man?“

„He's not a man, miss, he's a divil. Six fut two and as black as a flue-brush. He was gamekeeper to the masher, and the masher turned him off for bad conduc', and he's swore to be even with him.“

„Of course,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „I might telegraph to Mr. French and bring him back; but he has gone on important business and it would be a pity.“

„It would, miss.“

„I’m not afraid,“ said the girl, "and if you think you can manage till Thursday, by yourself, it would be better to do nothing. I will send him a telegram on Wednesday to make sure of him returning on Thursday.“

„Yes, miss,“ said Moriarty. „That’ll be the best way and if Black Larry comes before the masther is back, God help him!“

Moriarty took his departure and the girl turned to the window. The rain was falling now, „the long rain of these old, old lands; eternal, fateful, slow.“ Verhaeren’s verse crossed her mind as she looked out at the lowering sky and at the distant mountains now half-veiled in clouds ; as she looked the naked tree branches all bent one way, as if pressed down by an invisible hand, a sheet of rain obliterated everything beyond the middle distance of the landscape, and every window on the west side of the house shook and rattled to the wind that had suddenly risen.

She went upstairs to the schoolroom, where Effie, kneeling on the window-seat, was engaged in the monotonous occupation of tracing the raindrops on the pane with her finger.

Chapter XIII

Miss Grimshaw’s Five Points.

IT rained steadily from Monday afternoon till Thursday morning, and then, as if at the stroke of a great boom, the clouds broke up and were driven in piles over the hills, leaving the sky winter-blue and free; cloud-shadow and sunshine chased one another over the land, and from the cliffs the sea lay foam-capped and in great meadows of different colour. It had blown half a gale on Tuesday night, and the sea was fretting from it still. Acres of tourmaline-coloured water showed where the „deeps“ lay close inshore, and each glass-green roller came running in, capped with foam and shot through with sunlight till

Boom!

A league-long burst of spray told of its death, and from far and near came the sound, like the breathing of the coast, like the breathing of a leviathan in its sleep.

It was dark when the train from Dublin drew in at the station of Cloyne, and Mr. French and his companion found the outside car waiting for them, in charge of Buck Slane.

Buck was a helper in the stable, a weedy-looking individual in leggings, with a high, piping voice, red-rimmed eyes and an apologetic manner. When Buck spoke to you on any subject he seemed to be apologising for it as though it were something indecent that had to be mentioned or spoken about against his will.

„Where’s Moriarty, and why didn’t he come with the car?“ asked Mr. French.

„Plaze, sorr,“ said Buck, „Moriarty’s stuck in the stable.“

„Stuck in the where?“

„In the stable, sorr, wid the horses. He hasn't left them a minit since Monday afternoon, and he tould me to harness the mare and stick her in the car and come to the station.“

„All right,“ said French. „Hop up, Dashwood. Here, get the luggage on board, Buck, and I'll hold the mare.“

A couple of minutes later they were on the road to Drumgool under the light of a winter moon. It was the road along which Mr. Dashwood had driven that morning with Miss Grimshaw when, after breakfast at the Station Inn, he had accompanied her to Drumgool House. Everything on the road recalled her in that poignant language used by inanimate things when they remind us of the people we love.

He had spoken no word about her to French since that conversation in the smoking-room of the Shelbourne Hotel, and French had spoken no word to him. French, having declared his half-formed intention to „ask“ her himself, had apparently dismissed her from his mind. I doubt if ever a lover found himself in a more peculiar and difficult position than that which was beginning to surround Mr. Dashwood. French brought into this affair a mixture of card-room and commercial honesty that was very embarrassing to an ordinary rival. He had said in substance, „Here's a girl; you're in love with her. I'm not going to do a mean thing; I'm going to take you to my house and put you together, so that you may know more of each other. If she likes you better than me, you can have her; if she likes me better than you, you can't. I give you just the same chance as I have myself, and I expect you to play the game.“ There was a splendid self-confidence in the proposition which made it not altogether a complimentary one; but there was also a fine open-heartedness, an absence of that essential malice of love, which made it less a proposition than a law of conduct with all sorts of clauses.

Generous in a love-affair! Men may be generous in sharing money, in sharing fame, in sharing the chance of death, but in sharing the chance of love—ah! that's a very different thing. The most extreme Socialist has never dared to propound such a community of interests, and yet here was a simple Irish gentleman not propounding the idea, but putting it in practice, and as fine deeds are the fathers of fine thoughts, here was an ingenuous lover, in the form of Mr. Dashwood, determining to play the game and take no advantage of French. To complete the matter, here was Miss Grimshaw, who had been apprised of the coming of Mr. Dashwood as a guest by wire, completing the preparations for the reception of the two gentlemen and with, in her heart, an equally kindly feeling for each.

Doolan had caught a large lobster the day before, „blown up on the strand,“ and this, coral-red and curled on a dish, flanked a round of cold spiced beef on the supper-table; a bright fire was burning in the grate, the light of the lamps shone, reflected by the ruby of port and claret in the decanters on the sideboard; the potatoes, boiled in their jackets, were being kept hot in the oven, and everything was in readiness for the expected travellers, who were late.

As Miss Grimshaw sat by the fire she could hear the faint boom of the sea. To know desolation and the blessing of a visit you must live in the extreme west of Ireland, which, I take it, is the extreme outside edge of European civilisation; and after three days of rain, three days of reading the day before yesterday's *Freeman's Journal* and Mrs. Brown's *Oliday Outings*, Miss Grimshaw was in

the frame of mind to receive a visitor, more especially when that visitor took the form of Bobby Dashwood.

Bobby and his irresponsibilities had found a place in her heart. Not the place that woman keep for lovers, but the place they keep for cats, stray dogs and other people's children; a place, all the same, that opens into the real place, an ante-room where, if a man can obtain a footing, he has a chance of being shown into the boudoir. Unfortunately for Bobby, French had a place there too; so had Noreen, the cat, and Effie, quite an extraordinary collection of people and animals, but only two men, French and Mr. Dashwood.

„Here they are, miss,“ cried Norah, popping her head in at the door. „The car's comin' up the drive.“

Miss Grimshaw rose from the fire and came out into the hall.

She saw the car through the open door, and the lamps blazing, and next moment she was shaking hands with Bobby Dashwood.

„Where's Mr. French?“ asked the girl.

„He jumped down at the stable entrance,“ said Mr. Dashwood, wriggling out of his great-coat, „and went to see the horses. He asked me to come in and tell you.“

She led the way into the dining-room.

„You've got the same bedroom that you had before,“ said she. „The one with the glimpse of the sea. Mrs. Driscoll has put a fire there, and they've been airing sheets and things all day, so you need not be afraid of catching cold. Hasn't the weather been awful?“

„Awful!“ said Mr. Dashwood.

„You met Mr. French in Dublin, I suppose?“ said the girl.

„Yes, I met him in Dublin. Funny, wasn't it? We were staying at the same hotel, and I was coming down here, and he invited me to stay with him.“

He stood with his back to the fire, warming himself and glancing about the comfortable room, and there was something in his manner that Miss Grimshaw could not quite make out, an almost imperceptible stiffness, a want of spring. It was as though he were on his guard.

„Was it raining in Dublin?“

„Yes, most of the time. And I suppose you've been having it pretty bad here?“

„Awful!“

She was dying to ask him why he had come over from England at this season of the year, why he had come down here. Who can tell but, in her heart, she knew the reason perfectly, and, knowing it, felt perplexed with his strange manner and stiffness?

They talked on indifferent matters Effie and so forth till French came in. He had interviewed Moriarty, and he was full of the business of the horses, and, strange to say, with the entrance of French Mr. Dashwood's manner completely changed. His stiffness vanished, and he became his old, irresponsible, joyous self again.

„Think of it! The blackguards!“ said Mr. French, as he carved the round of beef, „coming to try their tricks on the horses! Moriarty hasn't let his eye off Garryowen since I left. I'll pension him for life if I win the City and Sub. But think of the blackheartedness of it!“

He went into the details we know, Susie Gallagher's „information,“ and the fact that it was almost certain Black Larry would try the business that night.

Mr. Dashwood's eyes sparkled as he listened.

„What are you going to do?“ he asked.

„Catch him if I can,“ said French. „There mustn't be any shooting. I don't want any police business, for then I'd be held as a witness at the Assizes. But if I catch him I'll give him something to remember to-night by and let him go.“

„You'll let me help?“ said Bobby.

„Of course I'll let you help. And so it was Susie Gallagher brought the news?“

„Yes,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „I told old Mrs. Moriarty you remember that day you took me to see her? well, I told her to let me know if she heard of any mischief. I guess she kept her ears open, for I gave her a shilling and promised her five if she got any information. You'll have to pay that.“

French chuckled.

„Ever since you've entered the house,“ said he, „you've been putting things straight and saving us all from ourselves. Look here, now,“ said Mr. French, resting his elbow on the table and checking off the items with the index finger of his right hand on the fingers of his left. „You've helped to fix the bailiff. That's number 1.“

Mr. Dashwood applauded, and Mr. French continued: „You put old Kate Moriarty on the scent of these scoundrels; that's number 2. You put Effie on her leg's, and you've freed the house of Dick Given; that's number 3. And you put into my head what to do about Garryowen; that's number 4.“

„And now,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „I'm going to bed, and to leave you two to your pipes; and that's number 5. I suppose you will sit up to catch this person?“

„We will,“ said French.

Chapter XIV

Black Larry.

HER room was situated at the back of the house, overlooking the kitchen-garden. Any sound from the stable-yard would reach it, and she determined to lie awake and listen. Moriarty's description of the expected desperado, „over six fut and as black as a flue-brush,“ seemed to promise developments. Like most women, she had a horror of fighting, and, like most women, fighting had a fascination for her. She had no fear of the result. Mr. French, Mr. Dashwood, Moriarty and the stable helper, not to mention Andy, formed a combination bad to beat, even against a dozen Black Larrys. All the same, there was a certain heart-catching excitement about the business not altogether unpleasurable, and never did the silence of the great old house seem more freighted with the voices of the past; never did the ticking of the huge old clock on the landing outside seem more pronounced than just now as, lying in bed with a candle burning on the table by her side and *Tartarin of Tarascon* open in her hand, she listened.

The bed she was lying in was the bed that once had supported Dan O'Connell's portly person. The tent-like curtains had been removed, so that one could breathe in it, but the pillars remained, and the head-piece and the carvings; it was less a bed than a coign of history, and more conducive to thought than sleep.

From this bed and its suggestions, from Drumgool, from Ireland, the delightful Tartarin led Miss Grimshaw to the land of plane trees and blue sky. Mock heroics are the finest antidote for tragic thoughts, and they fitted the situation now, had she known it, to a charm.

Now she was at Tarascon. Tartarin, leaving his house in the moonlight, armed to the teeth against imaginary foes, led her down the white road, past the little gardens, odorous as bouquets, to the house of Madame Bezuquet, from whence issued the voice of Costecalde, the gunmaker, and the tinkling of the Nimes piano.

Now she was seated beside him and his guns and implements of the chase in the old dusty African stage coach, bound for Blidah, listening to the old coach's complaining voice.

„Ah! my good Monsieur Tartarin, I did not come out here of my own free will, I assure you. Once the railway to Beaucaire was finished I was of no more use there, and they packed me off to Africa.“

Miss Grimshaw paused in her reading. Was that a shout from the night outside? The clock on the landing gathering itself up for the business of striking with a deep humming sound, began to strike. It struck twelve, and at the last leisurely and sledgehammer stroke resumed its monotonous ticking. The faint boom of the sea filled the night, but all else was silence, and the old stage-coach continued her complaint. „And now I have to sleep in the open air, in the courtyard of a caravanserai, exposed to all the winds of heaven. At night jackals and hyenas come sniffing round my boxes, and tramps, who fear the evening dew, seek refuge in my compartments. Such is the life I lead, my worthy friend, and I suppose it will continue till the day when, blistered by the sun and rotted by the damp, I shall fall to pieces, a useless heap, on some bit of road, when the Arabs will make use of the remains of my old carcass to boil their kousskouss.

„*Blidah! Blidah!* shouted the conductor, as he opened the door.“

Miss Grimshaw awoke. The candle had burnt itself out, and a ray of early morning sunlight was peeping in through the blinds.

She could still hear the clank of the old stage-coach or was it imagination? She rubbed her eyes. Yes, there it came again. The window was half open, and the sound came from the kitchen-garden below; a metallic sound that had broken through her sleep, filling her dreams with pictures of the Blidah coach, and the illustrious Tartarin with his guns, hunting-knives and powder-horns.

She sprang out of bed, went to the window, pulled aside the curtains and looked out.

In the kitchen-garden down below she saw an object that had once been a man, more desperate even than the immortal Tartarin. The once-man was on all-fours; he could not get on his feet, because his ankles were hobbled together with a piece of rope. He could not untie the rope, because on each of his hands was firmly tied a boxing-glove. Try to untie a knot with your hands encased in boxing-gloves if you wish to realise nightmare helplessness in its acutest form. A tin stable bucket was tied down over the head of the figure, and, as a last artistic touch, one of old Ryan's cows' tails was tied to a band round the animal's waist and hung down behind.

The creature was trying to get out of the kitchen-garden—Miss Grimshaw could not help thinking of the blind and hopeless antics of an insect imprisoned under a wine-glass as she watched. The garden, strongly railed in, formed a sort of pound, hopelessly ungetoutable.

The whole thing seemed so like a joke that the girl at the window for a moment did not connect it with the obvious. Opening the window more she leaned farther out.

„Hi!“ cried Miss Grimshaw. „What are you doing there?“

The thing rose up on its knees, the boxing-gloves, like great paws, seized the bucket on either side, in a frantic endeavour to wrench it off, failed, and then from the bucket broke a volume of language that caused the listener to draw hastily in and shut the window.

She guessed.

At this moment eight o'clock struck from the landing, and Norah knocked at the door with hot water.

For a moment she thought of asking the servant the meaning of it all; then she decided not.

Half an hour later she entered the dining-room, where breakfast was laid. Mr. French and Mr. Dashwood were already there, both spick-and-span and looking like people who had enjoyed an undisturbed night's rest. But there was a jubilant look in Mr. Dashwood's face and a twinkle in Mr. French's eye such as seldom appear on the face or in the eye of man before breakfast.

During the meal the conversation turned upon indifferent matters. Mr. Dashwood had several attacks of choking, but Mr. French seemed quite unmoved.

When the meal was over and cigarettes were lit, Mr. French, who had been scanning through his letters, stretched out his hand to the bell-pull, which was close to him.

„Norah,“ said Mr. French, when that damsel appeared, „go down to the stable and send up Moriarty.“ He lit a cigarette, and Miss Grimshaw, who had been preparing to leave the room, waited.

A few minutes passed; then came a knock at the door, and Moriarty, cap in hand, stood before his master.

„Moriarty,“ said Mr. French, „there's a pig got into the kitchen-garden.“

„A pig, sorr!“

„Yes; it's escaped down here from Cloyne. At least, I'm going to send it back to Cloyne. Get the cart.“

„Yes, sorr.“

„And a pig-net. Get it into the cart, with the net over it, and take it to Cloyne. I don't know who it belongs to, so dump it in the market-place. This is market day, so there'll be some one to claim it, or it will find its way home.“

„Yes, sorr.“

„And, see here, bring the cart round to the door before you start.“

„Yes, sorr.“

Moriarty departed.

„Now,“ said Mr. French, „let's talk business. Miss Grimshaw, we're leaving Ireland to-morrow. You and I and Effie and the servants and all. I've got a place.“

„To train Garryowen?“

„Yes, and here's the man that's got me it. It's in Sussex, down at a place called Crowsnest. There are too many pigs in Ireland, poking their noses into my affairs, to do any good with the business here.“

„Good,“ said Miss Grimshaw, with a rising colour. To escape from the rain and the awful loneliness of Drumgool had been the chief desire of her heart for

days past. She knew Sussex and loved the country, and a great feeling of gratitude towards Mr. Dashwood, the provider of this means of escape, welled up in her heart.

„So,“ said Mr. French, „we‘ll find our work cut out to pack, and all before eleven o‘clock to-morrow morning. I‘m sending Andy and Buck Slane and the horses on by this night‘ s train to Dublin; he‘ll put up with them at Bourke‘ s livery stables. I‘m leaving only Doolan behind to look after the house. James, my agent, will pay him his wages. I‘m not even telling James where I‘m going. I want to make a clean sweep. I‘m safe till the debt to Lewis becomes due. If that beast of a Givven knew my address he‘d put Lewis‘ s man on to me the minute he came here claiming the money. I must cut myself off as completely from the place as if I was dead.“ „Well, there‘ s one thing,“ said the girl. „If you can get away from here without any one knowing where you are going to they‘ll never dream of looking for you in Sussex. I shouldn‘ t think they know the name of the place here. But can you?“

„How do you mean?“

„Well, you must take tickets at the station here. You must take tickets to Dublin first of all. Well, that‘ s a clue to where you are going.“

„I‘ve thought of that,“ said Mr. French, with a chuckle. „I‘m going to take our tickets to Tullagh; that‘ s half-way. The express stops at Tullagh, and I‘ll hop out of the train there and book on to Dublin. Mr. Dashwood here is going on with the horses to-night, and then on to Crowsnest, to have the house ready. Faith, I never can thank him for what he‘ s done or what he‘ s going to do.“

„God bless my soul,“ said Dashwood, „I don‘ t want thanks. It‘ s the greatest lark I ever came across. I wouldn‘ t have lost last night for a thousand pounds. I mean, you know, it‘ s tremendous fun; beats a comic opera to fits.“

„Please, sir,“ came Norah‘ s voice at the door, „the cart‘ s round and waiting.“

Mr. French rose to his feet, and led the way from the room, followed by the others.

At the hall door steps a manure cart was drawn up. In the cart was something covered with a pig-net. Doolan, whip in hand, was standing at the horse‘ s head.

„Let up,“ came a voice from the cart. „What are viz doin‘ wid me? Where am I at all, at all? Oh, but I‘ll pay yiz out for this I I‘ll have the laa on yiz.“

„Shut your ears,“ said Mr. French to the girl; then he took Doolan‘ s whip, and with the butt of it prodded the thing in the cart. What seemed a great tin snout resented this treatment, then the cart moved off, Doolan at the horse‘ s head, and disappeared down the drive.

„Did you see what was in the cart?“ asked French when the girl uncovered her ears.

„Yes,“ she replied, „and I saw it in the garden this morning, and I spoke to it, and asked it what it was doing, and well, I don‘ t wonder at your wanting to leave Ireland.“

„Not whilst there‘ s things like that in it.“ said the master of Drumgool, following Doolan and his charge with his eyes till they disappeared from sight. „And now, let‘ s get to work.“

The sunlight of the early morning had vanished, and almost as the cart and its contents turned from the avenue drive into the road the rain began to come down again in great sheets; thunderous pourings, as if to make up for lost time. But it was a merry rain, at least in the ears of the girl. „You‘re going, you‘re

going“; the rain beat a tattoo to the words on the zinc roof of outhouse and window-pane. „To- morrow,“ slobbered the overflowing water-butts, and „Sussex,“ hissed the schoolroom fire as the raindrops down the chimney hit the burning coals.

No one but a woman knows the things to be done in a sudden disruption of a household like this. „Everything must be covered up, and everything must be turned over,“ is a broad axiom that only just covers the situation when a house is to be left uninhabited for a number of months. That is to say, carpets must be taken up, beaten, and folded; pictures and looking-glasses taken down, covered in brown paper and placed on the floor. A sort of spring cleaning, petrified half-way through and left in a state of suspension, is the ideal aimed at by the careful housewife. Miss Grimshaw never had possessed a house of her own, but she was descended from long generations of careful housewives, and she had an instinct for what ought to be done. But she had also a clear brain that recognised the impossible when it came before her. To put Drumgool in order in twelve working hours, and with a handful of disorganised domestics, was impossible, and she recognised the fact.

So the carpets were to be left unbeaten; the pictures still hanging. Doolan had orders to light fires in the rooms every week, and to be sure and take care not to burn the house down.

At four o'clock, in a burst of sunset which lit up the heaving Atlantic, the rain-stricken land, and the great hills unveiled for a moment of clouds, Mr. Dashwood departed for the station. Andy, Buck Slane, and the horses had left at three.

„I'll have the bungalow jolly and comfortable for you,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „You'll be there day after to-morrow evening, if you stay in London for a few hours' rest. Send me a wire when you reach Huston. Well, good luck!“

„Good luck,“ said Mr. French.

„Good-bye,“ said the girl.

They watched the car driving down the avenue, the wheel-spokes flashing in the sunlight. Then they turned back into the house.

„To-morrow,“ thought Miss Grimshaw, as she lay in bed that night listening to the rain that had resumed business and the ticking of the clock in the corridor making answer to the rain. „Oh, to-morrow!“ Then she fell to thinking. What was the matter with the two men ? When she and they were gathered together they were as jolly as possible, but the instant she found herself alone with one of them that one wilted at least, became subdued, lost his sprightliness and gaiety. More than that, each, when alone with her, became, if the subject turned that way, the trumpeter of the other's praises. Yet when they were all together they would try as much as they could to outshine each other, Mr. French setting up his wit against Mr. Dashwood; Mr. Dashwood retaliating. Just as two male birds before a hen strut and spread their tails, so these two gentlemen would show off their mental feathers when together. Parted, they drooped.

A bell-man could not have told her the fact that they had lost their hearts more plainly than intuition stated the fact when all three together at afternoon ten, just before Mr. Dashwood's departure for the station, that young gentleman, with a plate of toast in his hand, had dallied attendance upon her, whilst Mr. French had urged the dubious charm of crumpets. Yet, behold! on the departure of the younger man, the elder had presumably found his heart

again, and at supper had become almost tiresome in his fulsome praise of Dashwood. It was horribly perplexing.

A woman's intuitive knowledge teaches her how to act in every situation love can place her in, from the first glance to the last embrace; her male and female ancestors whisper to her what to do down the long whispering gallery of the past. They whispered nothing now. Miss Grimshaw had relatives long dead who, fur-covered, tailed, and living in trees, had dropped cocoa-nuts on the heads of rivals; these gentlemen and ladies could give her no advice. Cave-dwelling ancestors, whose propositions were urged with stone clubs, were equally dumb; even her more near and cultivated forebears had nothing to say.

It was an entirely new situation in love. Two men „playing the game,“ and determined to take no mean advantage one of the other even love himself found the situation strange and had no suggestions to offer.

The next morning was dull, but fine; the sky had lifted, thinned, and become mackerelled; between the ribs of cloud a faint bluish tinge here and there told of the blue above; the mountains sat calm and grey upon the horizon; they had drawn a great way off, as if to make way for the coming sunshine. Fine weather was at hand.

In the hall of Drumgool the luggage was piled, waiting for the wagonette. The servants and the luggage were to go in the wagonette, and so carefully had Mr. French thought out the problem before him that he had hired the horses and the wagonette the day before, not from Cloyne, but from Inchkillin, a small town twelve miles south of Drumgool. The Dancing Mistress and the outside car were to be sold off by his agent, and the money held till his return.

The train started at eleven. At eight o'clock the wagonette and its contents drove away from the house, and at ten minutes to nine the car, with Mr. French, Miss Grimshaw and Erne, followed. Doolan was driving, and just as they were turning out of the avenue the whole east side of Drumgool House lit up to a burst of sunshine from over the hills.

It seemed a lucky omen. That, and the lovely winter's morning through which they were driving, put the party in good spirits, and Doolan's deafness allowed them to talk as freely as they liked about their affairs.

„I hope Dick Givven hasn't seen the wagonette,“ said French. „If he has he'll be following to the station to find out what's up. If he sees us it won't so much matter, for he'll think, maybe, we are only going for a drive, but the servants and the luggage would give the whole show away.“

„Has he any sort of trap to follow us in?“ asked Miss Grimshaw.

„He has an old shandrahdan of a basket pony-carriage. Maybe he's not up yet, for he's not an early riser. Anyhow, we'll see when we pass the bungalow.“

They were drawing near Drumboyne now; the bungalow inhabited by Mr. Givven lay at the other end of the tiny village. It was a green-painted affair, with an outhouse for the pony and trap; a green-painted palisading, about five feet high, surrounded house and garden, and as the car passed through the village and approached the danger zone Miss Grimshaw felt a not unpleasant constriction about the heart. Effie seemed to feel it too, for she clasped Mrs. Brown's *Oliday Outin's*, which she had brought to read in the train, closer under her arm, and clasped Miss Grimshaw's hand. There was no sign of the ogre, however, in the front garden, and the girl heaved a sigh of relief, till French, who had stood half up to get a better view of the premises, suddenly

sat down again, with a look of alarm on his face, and cried to Doolan to whip up.

„What is it?“ asked Miss Grimshaw.

„The blackguard’s putting the old pony to,“ said Mr. French. „I caught a glimpse of him in the back yard. He’s got wind of our going, and he’s after us. Whip up, Doolan.“

„There’s not much use whipping up,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „for the train won’t go till eleven. The question now is, can his old pony get him to the station by eleven?“

„If it does,“ cried French, now in a towering passion, „I’ll—I’ll—b’God, I’ll shoot him.“

„You haven’t anything to shoot him with. Let’s think of what’s best to be done.“

„Doolan!“ shouted French into the hairy ear of the driver, „do you know Mr. Giveen’s old pony?“

„Do I know Misther Giveen’s ould pony?“ creaked Doolan. „Sure, who’d know her better? Do I know Misther Giveen’s ould pony? Sure, I knew her mother before she was born. An ould skewbal’ she was, till Micky Meehan battered her to death dhrivin’ roun’ the counthry-side wid that ould cart he got from Buck Sheelan of the inn, before he died of the dhrunk, and dhrunk he was when he sould it.“

„Bother Buck Sheelan! Can the old pony get Mr. Giveen to the station by eleven?“

„D’you mane, can it get him from his house to the station, sorr?“

„Yes.“

„Well, sorr, it all dipinds. She’s a rookit to go if she’s in the mind for it, but if she’s set against goin’ you may lather the lights out of her and she’ll only land you in the ditch. But if she’s aisy in her mind and agrayable, faith, I wouldn’t wonder if she could, for that ould clothes-basket of Misther Giveen’s doesn’t weigh more’n a feather.“

„Curse him and his clothes-basket!“ cried French. „Whip up!“

To be opposed by a villain is not nearly so vexing as to be thwarted by a fool, and the vision of Dick Giveen in his basket carriage, soft, malevolent and pursuing, filled French with such a depth of rage that, had he possessed a gun, his better nature would certainly have made him fling his ammunition away over the nearest hedge so as to be out of the way of temptation.

„Look!“ said Miss Grimshaw, „isn’t that smoke away over there Cloyne? We’ll soon be there now, and there is no use in worrying. If he does follow us we’ll manage to give him the slip at Tullagh.“

„That’ll mean the whole lot of us, servants and all, will have to get out at Tullagh and lose the train and stay the night; and then we’re not sure of escaping him. He’ll stick to us like a burr. You don’t know Dick Giveen. Who the devil ever invented relations?“

Miss Grimshaw could not answer this question, which many a man has no doubt asked, and no more was said till the long, dreary street of Cloyne, destitute of life and colour, lay before them.

It was fifteen minutes to eleven when they reached the station. The train was drawn up at the platform. Mrs. Driscoll and Norah had taken their seats in a third-class carriage, and Moriarty was seeing the luggage stowed in the van.

French took the tickets, chose a first-class compartment, and the handbags and wraps having been stowed in it, they walked up and down the platform, waiting and watching.

There was one point in their favour. Mr. Giveen's meanness amounted with this gentleman almost to a monomania. He would do incredible things to save a halfpenny. Would he incur the expense of pursuit? Cannibalism amongst the passions is a law in the mental world. One vice often devours another vice, if the other vice stands between the devourer and its objective. Were the jaws of Mr. Giveen's spite wide enough to engulf his meanness? This was a question that Mr. French was debating vaguely in his mind as he paced the platform with Miss Grimshaw and Effie.

A regiment of Christmas turkeys (live) were being entrained, not in silence; the engine was blowing off steam; the rattle of barrows, the clank of milk-cans, all these noises made it impossible to hear the approach of wheels on the station road.

„I believe we'll do it,“ said Mr. French, looking at his watch, which pointed five minutes to the hour. „Anyhow, we'll be off in five minutes, and I'll break the beast's head at Tullagh if he does follow us.“ He walked down the train to the third-class carriage where the servants were, and at the door of which Moriarty was colloquing with Norah.

He told Moriarty in a few words of the pursuit and then returned to his own compartment.

„Take your sates, take your sates for Tullagh, Kildare and Dublin!“

The van door was shut on the turkeys, the last of the luggage was in the train, the last door was banged to, and the train was just beginning to move, when out of the ticket-office entrance rushed Mr. Giveen with a ticket in his hand. He had asked the ticket-collector where Mr. French had booked to, and, being told Tullagh, had done likewise.

He had just time to reach the nearest carriage and throw open the door, when Moriarty, who had been observing everything, interposed.

„Mr. Giveen, sorr,“ cried Moriarty, protruding his head and shoulders from the window of the third-class carriage which was now in motion, „Mr. Giveen, sorr, here's the shillin' I owe you.“

A shilling fell on the platform at Mr. Giveen's feet. He stooped to grab it as it rolled in a leisurely manner towards the booking-office door, missed it, pursued it, and was lost.

At least, he lost the train.

Moriarty's profound knowledge of the psychology of the horse often stood him in good stead when dealing with animals or lower.

= PART III =

Chapter XV

A Bit of England.

CROWSNEST lies upon a hill. It consists of a post-office, a tiny butcher's shop, a greengrocer's, an Italian warehouse and a church. The London road climbs the hill, passes through the village, descends the hill and vanishes from sight. Trees swallow it up. Century-old elms cavern it over. When the greatgrandfathers of these elms were young the Roman road leading over the hill to the sea was old; as it was then, so is it now, and so will it be when these elms are coffin-boards, enclosing the bones of vanished and long-forgotten people.

At the foot of the hill passes a nameless river which the Roman road crosses by a bridge whose stones are old as the road itself. On a summer's afternoon, leaning one's elbows comfortably on the moss-grown balustrade of this bridge, the river and the road hold one's mind between them; the river leaping amidst the weed-green stones, here in the cave-like twilight of the foliage, here diamond-bright where the sun dazzle strikes through the leaves; the road steadfast and silent, with a silence which the motor horn cannot break, a silence that has been growing and feeding upon life since the time of Tiberius.

The place is tremulous and vibrating with life; the wagtail by the water, the water itself, the leaves dancing to the breeze and the birds amidst the leaves, the lost butterfly, the gauze-blue dragonfly, the midges in their interminable dance, all keep up an accompaniment to the flute-like tune of the river. Then, as one muses, the thousand snippets of beauty and life, gay and free and ephemeral, that make up the beauty of a summer's afternoon, suddenly, as if touched by a magic wand, lose their ephemeral nature and become their immortal selves.

„They were old when I was young. The wind blew their songs in the faces of the legionaries; before the phalanx flew the butterfly, and the water wagtails before the glittering eagles.“

Thus speaks the road in answer to the river, making the charm of this place, a charm felt even by the teamsters of a summer's afternoon as they halt their horses for a rest.

On either side of the road, down here, stretch woods—mellow-hearted English woods, nut copses, beech glades, willow brakes—the home of the squirrel and the pheasant and the wood-dove. The corkscrew note of the cock-pheasant answers the poetical lamentation of the dove; that caressing sound, soothing, sleep-drugged and fatuous. In spring, the children of Crowsnest come here for the wood violets burning blue amidst the brown last autumn leaves; the glades are purple with the wild hyacinths, and the voice of the cuckoo here is a thing never to be forgotten. In autumn the children come for nuts. No poem of tone or word conceived by man can approach the poetry of these glades, nor picture their simple beauty; they are the home of Oberon and Titania, and they are rented by Colonel Bingham.—

The colonel lives, or lived at the time of this story, at the Hall, which is the chief house of the neighbourhood, a neighbourhood parcelled up into small country seats. Three acres and a house would about constitute one of these seats, and they stretch right round the hill of Crowsnest, invading even the rise of the downs.

The Bungalow is situated on the downs; a good road of fairly easy ascent leads up to it, and looking from the verandah of the Bungalow you can see,

below, the roofs of all the country seats, the walls forming their frontiers, and, with a good glass, the seat-holders promenading in their gardens.

From here the Roman road looks like a white cotton ribbon; the woods and gardens, the tennis-lawns no bigger than billiard-tables, the red-tiled houses no larger than rabbit-hutches, form a pretty enough picture to smoke a cigarette and ponder over on a warm afternoon. The people down there seem playing at life, and finding the game pleasant enough, to judge from their surroundings. They look very small, even when viewed with the aid of a lens.

Raising your eyes suddenly from those toy houses, those trim and tiny lawns, those gardens threaded with the scarlet of geraniums, you see Sussex in one great sweep of country, just as by the river you saw the past in the monolithic Roman road. Woods upon woods, domes and vales of foliage, and, to the south, the continuation of the downs on which you are standing.

Emmanuel Ibbetson had built the Bungalow and stables in a moment of enthusiasm about racing. It was certainly an ideal spot for training. Just here the downs are level as heart of man could wish. A great sweep of turf, a tableland where nothing moves but the grazing sheep and the shadow of the bird and cloud, extends from the stables due south, ending in an out-crop of chalk and a rise leading to the higher downs and the sea. The higher downs are a shelter from the wind.

There was stabling for half a dozen horses; everything about the place was of the best, from the tiles to the roof, from the patent manger to the patent latch of the door. There was a patent arrangement with a prong for conducting the hay from the loft above to the manger below. This nearly stabbed Garryowen in his suddenly up-flung nose, and Moriarty, who had a contempt for everything patent, including medicine, broke it—but this in parenthesis.

The Bungalow, where the human beings were stabled, was a much less elaborate affair in its way. Built for a bachelor and his friends, it just held the Frenchs, leaving a spare room over for Mr. Dashvwood.

This is a vague sketch of the buildings and premises called *The Martens*—heaven knows why!—and situated like a marten-box on the eminence above Crowsnest, that highly respectable residential neighbourhood, whose residents knew nothing yet of the fact that the place had been let—or rather borrowed—and nothing yet of the nature of the borrower.

Chapter XVI

Money Matters.

„My DEAR,“ wrote Miss Grimshaw, in another letter to that lady friend—

„Here we are at last. We arrived the day before yesterday evening, horses and all, including the servants. I once heard an old lady in the States giving good advice to a young woman just married; one sentence clung to me, and will, I think, by its truth cling to me for ever: (Never move servants.)

„We took with us from Ireland Mrs. Driscoll the cook, and Norah, the parlour-maid, besides the men-servants. I am not referring to the men when I repeat that axiom, ‘Never move servants,’ but to the women folk.

„We had not started from Holyhead when Mrs. Driscoll broke down. She weighs fourteen stones, and does everything in a large way. She broke down from home-sickness. She had travelled well up to that; the crossing had been smooth and she had not made a single complaint, fighting bravely, I suppose, all the time, against the growing nostalgia. Then on the platform at Holyhead, before the waiting Irish mail, it all came out at once. It sounds absurd, but really the thing was tragic. Real grief is always tragic, even the grief of a child over a broken toy, and this was real grief, and it taught me more in five minutes about Ireland, and why the Irish in America hate England, than I learned from all my months spent in the country itself. It did not seem grief for a lost country so much as for a lost father or mother, and, mind you, she was with people she knew, and she was only being *expatriated* for a few months. What must they have suffered in the old days, those people driven from their homes and holdings to a country three thousand miles away, never to come back? Mr. French got her brandy from the refreshment-room, and we took her in the first-class carriage with us; but all her cry was to go back; and what lent a grim humour to the situation was the fact that none of us can go back to Ireland from this expedition into England till a certain something has been accomplished. There seems something mysterious and sinister in that statement, but there is really nothing sinister in the situation. Only a horse. However, to return to the servants. Mrs. D. has recovered somewhat, but Norah, the parlour-maid, has now broken down. She is a pretty girl with black hair, grey eyes and beautiful teeth, and she is sitting at the moment in the kitchen, with her apron over her head, *eating her heart out*, to use Mrs. Driscoll’s expression. The curious thing is that both these women have no relations of any account to tie them to Ireland. It’s just Ireland itself they want—and it seems to me they won’t be happy till they get it. The woman from Crowsnest, whom Mr. Dashwood got to tidy the place up and light the fires and have supper for us the evening we came, has left. She did not get on with the others; and now this place is all Irish, with the exception of me. A bit of the West coast planted above a most staid and respectable English village. I wonder what the result will be as far as inter-communication goes.

„No one has called yet, but, of course, it is too soon. But I hope they will stay away. I have several reasons.—Yours ever, VIOLET.“

Miss Grimshaw had several very good reasons to make her desire seclusion for herself and the family which she had taken under her wing. I say „taken under her wing“ advisedly, for, since the day of her arrival at Drumgool, she had been steadily extending the protection of her practical nature and common sense to her proteges. In a hundred ways too small for mention in a romance of this description she had interfered in domestic matters. Mrs. Driscoll, for instance, no longer boiled clothes in the soup-kettle, prodding them at intervals with the pastry roller, and Norah no longer swept the carpets under the sofas, lit the fires with letters left on the mantelpiece, or emptied slops out of the windows; and these sanitary reforms had been compassed with no loss of

goodwill on the part of the reformed towards the reformer. She had emancipated Erne from her bondage to an imaginary disease, and she had pointed out to French the way he should go and the methods he should use in carrying out his assault on what, to a lower order of mind than Miss Grimshaw's, would have seemed the impossible.

Common sense of the highest order sometimes allies itself to what common sense of a lower order would deem lunacy. When this alliance takes place, sometimes great and world-shaking events occur.

French had conceived the splendid idea of winning a great English race with an unknown horse, in the face of debts, enemies and training disabilities. Miss Grimshaw had, with misgivings enough, brought him the aid of her practical nature. The first move in the game had been won, the knight's gambit had been played, Garryowen had been hopped over three squares and landed in Sussex; nothing threatened him for the moment, and Miss Grimshaw's mind, turned from the big pieces, was now occupied with pawns.

Norah was a pawn. She had a great-aunt living in Cloyne, and should she forsake *The Martens* and return, driven by home-sickness, to the roof of her great-aunt, the game might very easily be lost. Mr. Givven, who had inklings of French's debt, would discover, by hook or by crook, the Sussex address, and when Lewis's man arrived to find Drumgool empty the information he would receive from Givven would be fatal as a loaded gun in the hands of an unerring marksman. Mrs. Driscoll was another pawn in a dangerous position; but the small pieces most engaging the attention of our chess-player at the moment were literally small pieces—half-crowns and shillings.

She had carefully worked out the money problem with Mr. French, and, allowing for everything and fifty pounds over, to take them back to Ireland in case of disaster, there was barely three pounds a week left to bring them up to the second week of April.

„Oh, bother the money!“ French would say. „It's not the money I'm thinking of—“

„Yes, but it's what I'm thinking of. We must be economical. We should have travelled here third-class, not first. You sent that order to Mr. Dashwood's wine merchant for all that champagne and stuff.“

„I did, I know; but that won't have to be paid for a year.“

„Well, it will have to be paid some time. However, I don't mind that so much. What is frightening me is the small amount of actual money in hand. We have four months before us and only a little over sixty pounds for that four months. Now, I want to propose something.“

„Yes.“

„It's this. Why not give me that sixty pounds to keep and pay the expenses out of? If you keep it, it will be gone in a month.“

Mr. French scratched his head. Then he laughed.

„Faith, perhaps you're right,“ said he.

„I know I am right. It is only by saving and scraping that we will tide over these four months. Now you have the money in the bank. We calculated that it will just cover your racing expenses; the money you will require for bringing the horse to Colonel What's-his-name's stable at Epsom before the race, the money you will require for backing the horse—in fact, for the whole business, leaving fifty pounds over, in case of disaster.“

„Yes.“

„Well, I want you to lock your cheque-book up in a drawer and give me the key, and promise not to touch that money on any account.“

„I won't touch it,“ said French, with the air of a schoolboy making a resolution about apples.

„I know that's what you say and feel now, but there are temptations, and it is vital that you should be out of the way of temptation. You remember Jason, and how he stopped his ears with wax not to hear the songs of the sirens?“

„Faith,“ said French in a tender tone, and quite forgetting that it was Jason's crew who were stoppered as to the ears, „if the sirens' voices were as sweet as—“ He checked himself.

„That may be,“ said Miss Grimshaw, hurriedly, „but, sweet or not sweet, there are always voices calling for money; even coming through London a five-pound note went on nothing. So you must please put that cheque-book in a drawer and lock it, and give me the key. Will you do this?“

„I will, I will. The thing's all right, but if you want it done I'll do it.“

„Well, let's do it now, then.“

„I will in a minute, when I've seen Moriarty—“

„No; now. There's nothing like doing things at the moment.“

„Well, all right,“ said French. „Let's do it now.“ He produced his cheque-book from his desk, and Miss Grimshaw locked it up in the drawer of an escritoire.

„And now,“ said she, „how about that sixty pounds?“

The badgered one produced a pocket-book and took three twenty-pound notes from it.

„That leaves me only three pounds ten,“ said he, taking the coins from his waistcoat pocket and exhibiting them as he handed over the notes.

Miss Grimshaw cast a hungry eye on the gold.

„When that's gone,“ said she, „I will have to allow you pocket-money out of my household expenses. We are in exactly the position of shipwrecked people on a raft, with only a certain amount of food and water, and when people are in that condition the first thing they have to do is to put themselves on a strict allowance. I want you,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „to feel that you are on a raft—and it might be much worse. You have a house for which we have to pay no rent; you have wine and all that which need not be paid for yet. How about cigars and tobacco?“

„Oh, there's lots of smokes,“ said French, rather drearily. „And Bewlays know me, and I can get anything I want on credit—only I'm thinking—“

„Yes?“

„There may be other expenses. In a place like this people are sure to call, and how about if they want to play bridge—or—“

„Don't let's think of it,“ said the girl. „Bother! why couldn't it have been summer?“

„They play bridge in summer as well as winter.“

„Yes, I suppose they do. But the fools spend their energy on tennis as well, and that makes the disease less acute. Well, if you have to play bridge I'll try and find the money for it somehow, even if I have to keep the household on oatmeal. What other expenses are likely to turn up?“

„There's sure to be subscriptions and things. And see here. If we're invited out we'll have to return any hospitality we receive.“

Visions of Mrs. Driscoll's fantastic cookery, crossed by visions of big bills from Benoist, rose before Miss Grimshaw's mind, but she was not a person to be easily cast down.

„If they do, we'll manage somehow. We have wine, and that's the biggest item. Besides“—a brilliant inspiration seized her—„I'm only the governess. People won't call on me. You are really in the position of a bachelor, so you'll only have to invite men.“

Mr. French looked troubled for a moment, then he said, „I was going to have told you something—“

He stopped and lit a cigarette.

„Well?“

„Dashwood—“

„Well?“

„Well, he said, in fact, he said that these old English folk round here are such a lot of stuck-up old fools that, as a matter of fact, you'd have a bad time here as a governess. So he said he said to a man that lives here I was bringing me niece with me. D'you see?“

Miss Grimshaw laughed. She knew at once what French meant. Over in clean Ireland no one thought anything of a pretty young governess living in the house of a widower and looking after his daughter; but here it was different. The morals of the rabbit-hutch, which are the moral's of English society, had to be conformed to. She had never thought of the matter before, and lo and behold! Bobby Dashwood had thought of the matter for her.

„But I'm not your niece.“

„No,“ said French, „but sure, you might be. And how are they to know? Lot of old fools, they think the position of a governess beneath them—not that you are a governess. Sure,“ finished he, apologetic and laughing, „we're all at sixes and sevens, and the easiest way out is to cut the knot and claim kinship. I don't know but some of the Frenchs mayn't have married some of your people in the past—“

„That would scarcely make me your niece. Anyhow, I don't care, only the servants—“

„Faith, and it's little the servants will say. They're dead-set against the English folk, and won't have a word with them. Only this morning I heard Mrs. Driscoll with a chap that had come round selling vegetables. ‚Away with you,‘ says she, ‚or I'll set the dog on you, coming round to my back door with your turnips and your rubbish!‘ The sight of an English face sets her off, going like an alarum clock. But little I care about that, so long as she doesn't go off herself.“

„Well, then, I'll go now and see what Effie's doing and how the servants are getting on. Mr. Dashwood is coming down for the week-end, is he not?“

„Yes; he'll be down on Friday.“

„The great comfort about him,“ said she, „is that he takes us just as we are, and there's no trouble or expense with him.“

She left the room. It was the second morning of their stay at *The Martens*. Before going to look after Effie and the servants she passed out on the verandah and stood there for a moment looking at the winter landscape and then down at the houses of the Crowsnesters.

She felt dimly antagonistic to the people who lived in those comfortable-looking red-tiled houses set about with gardens. She fancied women sitting by

those fires whose smoke curled up in thin wreaths through the winter air—women who would cast their noses up at the idea of a governess, and their heads and eyes after their noses at the idea of a supposititious „niece.“ She imagined gentlemen addicted to bridge who would drain, perhaps, her narrow resources. One thing pleased her: the neighbourhood looked prosperous and the charitable appeals, she thought, could not be very exacting. On this she reckoned without the knowledge that a large amount of English charity begins and ends abroad.

Then she turned and, still delaying before going to see after the servants and Effie, she passed round to the stable-yard.

Andy, who was passing across the yard with a bucket in his hand, touched his cap, put down the bucket, and with a grin on his face, but without a word, opened the upper door of the loose-box that held the treasure and pride of the Frenchs.

Scarcely had he done so than the sharp sound of horse hoofs on flags was heard, and a lovely picture framed itself in the doorway—the head of Garryowen.

Leaving aside the beauty of women, surely above all things beautiful and sentient the head of a beautiful horse is supreme. Where else in the animal kingdom will you find such grace, such sensitiveness, such delicacy, combined with strength? Where else, even in the faces of men, such soul?

Even in the faces of men! The girl thought of the faces of the men she had come across in life, and she contrasted those heads, stamped with dulness, with greed, with business or with pleasure—she contrasted these images of God with the finely chiselled, benign and beautiful head of Garryowen.

Could it be possible that Mr. Given would have the impudence to call Garryowen a lower animal?

Even Andy's „mug“ looked like the mask of a gargoyle by contrast, as she turned from the loose-box and made her way back to the house.

Chapter XVII

The Kiss.

„WHAT'S the matter?“ asked Mr. Dashwood.

„Botherations,“ replied Miss Grimshaw. „Look at this.“

She handed him a neatly printed card, folded in the middle. It looked like a ball programme. Nearly four months had passed. The Frenchs had settled down at *The Martens*. The whole neighbourhood had called; there had been several small dinner-parties at the bungalow, and Garryowen was turning out a dream. Training a horse is just like painting a picture; the „thing“ grows in spirit and in form; it has some of you in it; the pride of the artist is not unallied to the pride of the trainer. When you see swiftness coming out, and strength, endurance and pluck, you feel just as the artist feels when, of a morning, he uncovers his canvas and says to himself, „Ah, yes, I put some good stuff into that yesterday.“

On the dull, clear winter mornings, in the bracing air of the downs, French knew something of the joy of life as he watched Garryowen and The Cat taking exercise. Sometimes young ladies from Crowsnest would appear on the edge of

the downs to watch Mr. French's „dear horses.“ They little knew how apt that expression was.

Mr. Dashwood examined the card.

It contained the programme and the rules of a small poetical club presided over by a Miss Slimon. Each member was supposed to invent or create a poem on a given subject each month, and to send the result to Miss Slimon, who would read it. But the matter did not end there. Miss Slimon, by virtue of her self-constituted office, would send in due course each member's poem to each of the other members for criticism, and the results would be made known and published in a small pamphlet at the end of the year. The subscription was a guinea, and to this society for the circulation of rubbish Miss Grimshaw had been invited to subscribe. Hence the trouble.

„She asked me did I like poetry, and I said I did, like a fool, and then she asked me to join, and I agreed. I can't back out now. She never told me the subscription was a guinea.“

„It's beastly bad luck,“ said Mr. Dashwood, who by this time knew the financial affairs of the Frenchs thoroughly to their innermost convolutions, and who was at the moment himself in the most horrible condition of penury, a condition that made the purchase of his week-end ticket to Crowsnest (he came down every week-end) a matter of consequence.

„And that's not all,“ went on the girl. „Here's a bazaar coming on, and of course we'll have to subscribe to that in some way. They want me to take a stall. You haven't any aunts or any one who would do embroidery for it, have you? It's to be on the fifth of April.“

„No,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „I don't think I have any female relatives any good in the fancy needlework line. I've got a charitably-disposed elderly female cousin I might land for a subscription, though—“

„I wouldn't trust myself with the money. No matter. I daresay we will manage somehow. I want to go down to Crowsnest and post these letters. Will you walk with me?“

„Rather,“ replied Mr. Dashwood, and, taking his hat, he followed her out on the verandah.

It was a clear March morning without a trace of cloud in the sky, and with just a trace of frost in the air. The country, still half wrapped in the sleep of winter, had that charm which a perfect English early spring day can alone disclose, and there was something—something in the air, something in the sky, some indefinable thrill at the heart of things that said, spirit-fashion, to whoever could hear, „All this is drawing to a close. Even now, in the woods, here and there, you will find primroses. In a week or two you will find a million. My doors are just about to open, the cuckoo is just preening for flight, the swallows at Luxor and Carnac are dreaming of the pine trees and the north. I am Spring.“

Mr. Dashwood was not given to poetical interpretations of Nature's moods, but there was that in the air to-day which raised to an acute stage the chronic disease he had been suffering from for months. He had seen a lot of his companion during the last ten weeks or so, but he had played the game like a man. Not a word had he said of his mortal malady to the author of it. But there are limits to endurance. This would not go on any longer, yet how was he to end it? French had said nothing since that interview in the Shelbourne Hotel, and a subject like that, once dropped between two men, is horribly difficult to take up

again. What did French propose to do? Was he waiting till Garryowen won or lost the City and Suburban before he „asked“ Miss Grimshaw? No time limit had been imposed. „I’m giving you a fair field and no favour,“ Mr. French had said. „If she likes you better than me, well and good. If she likes me better than you, all the better for me.“ That was all very well, but which did she like best? This question was now calling imperatively for an answer. Miss Grimshaw alone could answer it, but who was to ask her? No third person could put the proposition before her. Only one of the two rivals could do so, and to do so would be to propose, and to propose would be dishonest.

Of course, a seemingly easy solution of the difficulty would be to go to French and say, „See here, I can’t stand this any longer. I’m so much in love with this girl I must speak. What do you propose to do?“

Seemingly easy, yet most immensely difficult. In the Shelbourne, when the young man had spoken, he had spoken in one of those outbursts of confidence which men rarely give way to. To re-open the question in cold blood was appallingly hard. Not only had he got to know the girl better in the last few months, but he had also got an entirely different view of French. The good, easy-going French had turned for Mr. Dashwood from another man who was a friend into a friend who was a sort of fatherly relation. The difference in years between them showed up stronger and stronger as acquaintanceship strengthened, and French had taken on an avuncular manner; the benevolent and paternal in his nature had unconsciously developed; he was constantly giving Bobby good advice, warning him of the evils of getting into debt, holding himself up as an awful example, etc. French, in the last ten weeks, had shown no symptoms of special feeling with regard to the lady. Was he, too, playing the game, or had he forgotten all about his intentions towards her? or was his mind taken up so completely with the horse and his money troubles that he had no time at the moment to think of anything else?

„Isn’t it delightful?“ said Miss Grimshaw.

„Which?“ asked Bobby, coming back from perplexed meditations to reality.

„This—the air, the country. Look! there’s a primrose!“

They were taking the downhill path from *The Martens*. A pale primrose growing in a coign of the down side had attracted her attention and she stooped to pick it.

„Now I wish I hadn’t. What beasts we are! We never see a flower but we must pick it, or a bird but we want to shoot it. This might have lived days if I had left it alone, and now it will wither in a few hours. Here.“

She stopped and fixed the primrose in Mr. Dashwood’s buttonhole. She was so close, touching him, and her felt hat almost brushed his face. There was no one on the path; it was the psychological moment, yet he had to let it go.

„Thanks,“ he said.

Miss Grimshaw looked at the flower critically for a second, with her pretty head slightly on one side.

„It will stick in without a pin,“ she said. „Come on, or I’ll miss the post. No, thanks; I can carry the letters all right. I like to have something in my hand. Why is it that a person always feels lost without something in their hands? Look, that’s Miss Slimon’s house, *The Ranch*. She’s immensely rich and awfully mean, and lives there alone with three servants. She’s always dismissing them. I don’t know why, unless they steal the poetry. There’s nothing else much to steal, for she’s a vegetarian and lives on a shilling a day, and keeps the servants

on board wages. And I have to give her a guinea out of my hard-earned savings for that poetical club. I'm going to make Effie write the poetry. It will give the child something to do. That's Colonel Creep's house, *The Roost*. They were the first people to call on us—sort of spies sent out by the others to see how the land lay. Do you know, I've never thanked you for something.“ „No? What's that?“

„Do you remember your forethought in making me a niece to Mr. French? Well, I never felt the benefit of your benevolent intention so much as the day when the Creeps called on us and when they crept into the drawing-room—three girls like white snails, followed by an old gentleman like a white cockatoo. It was so pleasant to think they thought I was on a social and mental equality with them, and so pleasant to think they were wrong!“

„Wrong!“ cried Dashwood, flying out. „I should think they were wrong! Not fit to black your boots!“

„Perhaps that's what I meant, from my point of view,“ said Miss Grimshaw, modestly, „and perhaps it wasn't. Anyhow, the situation was not without humour. Our relationship with the Crowsnest people has been a long comedy, of a sort. You know all our affairs, but you don't know the ins and outs and how the wild Irish on the hillside—“

„Yes?“

Miss Grimshaw laughed. „Do you remember that little dinner-party Mr. French—my uncle, I mean—gave in January to Colonel Bingham and the Smith-Jacksons?“

„Yes.“

„You remember how Colonel Bingham praised the pheasants? Well, they were his own pheasants.“

„His own pheasants!“

„Moriarty poached them.“

Mr. Dashwood exploded.

„I did not know at the time,“ went on Miss Grimshaw, virtuously. „I entrusted the marketing to Mrs. Driscoll. I explained to her privately that we would have to be very economical. She quite understood. I will say for the Irish that they are quicker in the uptake than any other people I know. She said she could make ends meet on two pounds ten a week, and she has done so; more, she has made them lap over. I am not very good at the price of things, still, pheasants at a shilling each seemed to me very cheap; of course, I thought most probably she was dealing with some man who got the things in some contraband way, and I suppose it was very wicked of me, but—the pheasants were very nice. Then there were vegetables—“

„You can't poach vegetables.“

„I think I said before,“ went on Miss Grimshaw, „that the Irish were quicker than any other people I know in the uptake, and I'm very much afraid that Moriarty has uptaken not only all the potatoes that have come to our table this winter, but the turnips as well.“

Again Mr. Dashwood exploded.

„Of course you can't poach vegetables,“ she went on, „but you can poach eggs, and, as a matter of fact, I believe our fried eggs are poached eggs—could such a statement ever occur out of Ireland and carry sense with it? It's awful, isn't it?“

„I think it's a jolly lark,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Gloats! to think of old Bingham gobbling his own turkeys—“

„Pheasants, you mean. Don't talk of turkeys, for we've had three since Christmas, and I don't know what's been going on in the kitchen in the way of food, but I know they had jugged hare for supper last night.“

„When did you find out about it?“

„Yesterday morning I began to guess. You see, I had been wondering for a long time how Mrs. Driscoll had been managing to produce such good food for two pounds ten a week. She pays for the groceries and everything out of it. Well, yesterday morning she brought me six pounds that she had *saved* out of the housekeeping money; she said it might be useful to *the master*. I must say it was a perfect godsend, but I thought it more than peculiar, and I tried to cross-question her. But it was useless. She swore she had been saving the money for months—before we left Drumgool, even, so I could say no more. However, things came to a climax last night. I was lying in bed; it was long after eleven, and the moon was very bright, and I heard a noise in the stable-yard. My window looks on to the stable-yard. I got up and peeped through the blind, and I saw Moriarty and Andy with a sheep between them. They were trying to put it into one of the loose-boxes, and it didn't seem to want to go. Now, when you are trying to drive a sheep like that against its will it bleats, doesn't it?“

„I should think so.“

„Well, this sheep didn't bleat—it was muzzled.“

They had reached the post-office by this and Miss Grimshaw stopped to put in her letters; then she remembered that she required stamps and a packet of hooks and eyes, so she left Mr. Dashwood to his meditations in the street and entered the little shop.

It was a very small shop, that competed in a spirited way with the Italian warehouse. It sold boots, too; hobnailed boots hung in hanks from the ceiling, and a small but sprightly linen-drapery business went on behind a counter at right angles to the counter that sold tinned salmon and tea.

Chopping, who owned this emporium, was a pale-faced man, consumptive and sycophantic, with a horrible habit of washing his hands with invisible soap when any of the carriage people of Crowsnest entered his little shop. This is a desperately bad sign in an Englishman; as a symptom of mental and moral depravity it has almost died out. In the early and mid-Victorian age, in the era of little shops and small hotels, it was marked, but it lingers still here and there in England, and when one meets with it it makes one almost a convert to Socialism.

Mr. Chopping washed his hands before Miss Grimshaw, for though the Frenchs were not carriage people they owned horses, and were part of the social state of Crowsnest; and Miss Grimshaw wondered if Mr. Chopping would have washed his hands so vigorously if he had known all.

There was a big notice of the forthcoming bazaar hanging behind the drapery counter.

This bazaar had become a bugbear to the girl. Amidst her other distractions she was working a table-cover for it, and Effie, who was clever with her needle, was embroidering a tea-cosy. If the thing-were a failure and the sum necessary for reconstructing the choir stalls in the church were not forthcoming, there was sure to be a subscription, and money was horribly tight, and growing tighter every day. Things had managed themselves marvellously well up to

this—thanks to French's luck. The unfortunate gentleman, whose pocket-money, under the strict hand of Miss Grimshaw, did not exceed ten shillings a week, had managed to make that sum do. More than that, he wore the cloak of his poverty in such a way that it seemed the garment of affluence. The ready laugh, the bright eye, and the jovial face of Mr. French made the few halfpence he jingled in his pocket sound like sovereigns. He played bridge with so much success that he just managed to keep things even, and the rare charm of his genial personality made him a general favourite.

„Shall we go back, or go for a little walk down the road?“ asked Miss Grimshaw, as she left the post-office and rejoined her cavalier.

„A walk, by all means,“ replied Mr. Dashwood. „Let's go this way. Well, go on, and tell me about the sheep.“

„Oh, the sheep! Yes, there it was, struggling in the moonlight; they were trying to get it into the loose-box next the one The Cat's in; and they did, Andy jostling it behind and Moriarty pulling it by the head. Then they shut the door—“

„Yes?“

„That's all. I saw the light of a lantern gleaming through the cracks of the door, and I felt as if I had been accessory before the fact—isn't that what they call it?—to a murder. Of course I saw Mrs. Driscoll this morning, and I taxed her right out, and she swore she knew nothing about it. At all events, I told her it mustn't occur again, and I think I frightened her.“

„That chap Moriarty must be an expert poacher,“ said Mr. Dashwood.

„Expert is no name for it if he's done all I suspect him of doing. It's a most strange position, for I believe they don't see any harm in it. You see, they seem to look upon the people about here as enemies, and Sussex as an enemy's country, and really, you know, they have still a good deal of the original savage clinging to them. I found a notched stick in the kitchen the other day, and I found it belonged to Norah. Every notch on it stood for a week that she had been here.“

„They used to do that at cricket matches long ago to score the runs. I've seen an old rustic Johnny—they said he was a hundred and four—doing it—“

„Let's stop here for a moment,“ said the girl. They had reached the little bridge on the Roman road at the foot of the hill. The river, wimpling and sparkling in the sunlight, was alive as in summer, but all else was dead—or asleep. Dead leaves had blown in the river-bed and floated on the water, or were massed in the crevices of the stones here and there. They formed a brown carpet amidst the trees of the wood; you could see far in amidst the trees, whose leafless branches formed a brown network against the blue March sky; from amidst the trees, from here, from there, came occasionally the twitter of a bird; not a breath of wind stirred the branches, and the place had the stillness of a stereoscopic picture. This spot, so haunted by poetry and beauty in summer, was never entirely deserted; on a day like this it had a strange beauty of its own.

Temptation comes in waves. The all but overmastering temptation to seize the girl in his arms and kiss her, which had assailed Mr. Dashwood on the hillside, was now returning gradually. She was leaning with her elbows on the balustrade of the bridge; her clear-cut profile, delicately outlined against the trees, held him, as one is held by the graceful curves of a cameo.

Down here, to-day, everything was preternaturally still. The essential and age-old silence of the Roman road seemed to have flooded over the country as a river floods over its banks; the warbling and muttering of the water running beneath the bridge served only to accentuate this silence and point out its intensity.

„What are you thinking of?“ said Mr. Dashwood.

The girl started from her reverie and glanced sideways at her companion, one of those swallow-swift glances whose very momentariness is filled with meaning. Mr. Dashwood had spoken. In those five words he had let his secret escape. In the words themselves there was nothing, but in the tone of them there was much. They were five messengers, each bearing a message; five volumes of prose could not have told her more; I doubt if they could have told her as much.

She glanced away again at the river.

„I don't know. Nothing. That's the charm of this place. I often come here and lean on the bridge and look at the water. It seems to mesmerise one and take away the necessity for thought. Don't you feel that when you look at it?“

„No,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I wish to goodness it did.“

She cast another swift side glance at him. The alteration in his tone made her wonder; his voice had become hard and almost irritable; he spoke as a man speaks who is vexed by some petty worry, and the words themselves were not over-complimentary. She could not in the least understand what was the matter with him. Ever since his return to Drumgool, whilst her mind had been engaged in the intricate problem of Mr. French's affairs, her subliminal mind had been engaged in the equally intricate problem presented by the conduct of Mr. French and Mr. Dashwood. There were times when, alone with her supposititious uncle, the original man in him seemed just about to speak the old language of original man to original woman. There were times, when, alone with Mr. Dashwood, the same natural phenomenon seemed about to happen. Yet something always intervened; French would seem to remember something, check himself, turn the conversation, and with the bad grace of a bad actor playing a repugnant part change from warmth to indifference. Dashwood, even a worse actor than French, would, as in the present instance, suddenly, and for no apparent reason, become almost rude.

Not in the least understanding the position of the two gentlemen one towards the other, and the fact that they looked upon each other as rivals in a game whose rules of honour had to be observed, she had passed from amusement to vague amazement when these sudden changes of temperature took place, and from amazement to irritation.

„Perhaps,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „you never feel the necessity.“

„For what?“

„Want of thought.“

Being a person who never thinks, how could you?—was what her tone implied.

„Oh, I daresay I feel it as much as other people,“ he said. „In a world like this it seems to me that the happiest people are the people who don't think.“

„How happy some people must be,“ murmured she, gazing at the rippling water, and speaking as though she were taking it into cynical confidence.

„Thanks,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I beg your pardon?“ „I only said, *Thanks*.“ „What for?“ „Your remark.“ „My remark!“ „Yes.“

„What on earth was there in my remark to thank me for?“

„If there’s one thing I hate more than another.“ burst out Mr. Dashwood, „it’s sarcasm misapplied.“ „Why do you misapply it then?“ „I never do; I never use it, so I couldn’t misapply it. It’s you.“ „What’s—you?“ „You who are sarcastic.“

„I sarcastic!“ said the girl, with the air of a sacristan accused of theft. „When was I ever sarcastic?“

The linnets in the trees must have heard the raised voices; the humans were quarrelling in good earnest; then, no doubt, seeing the young man seize the young woman, they flew away thinking tragedy had arrived on the old Roman road with all her pomp and circumstance.

For a moment the astonished girl had a vision of being hauled over the bridge to drown in the six-inch river, and then she lost consciousness to everything but the embrace of the man who had seized her in his arms. Lips, eyes and mouth covered with burning kisses, she leaned against the parapet gasping for breath and—alone.

Mr. Dashwood had gone; vaulting over the low fence of the wood, he had vanished amidst the trees. No criminal ever escaped quicker after the commission of his crime.

„Mad! Oh, he’s mad!“ she gasped, half laughing, gasping, and not far from tears. It was not the outburst of fervent passion that astonished or shocked her. It was the running away.

The deep throb of a motor-car topping the hill brought her to her senses, and she had composed herself and was leaning on the parapet again, looking at the river as it passed by.

Then she took her way back to *The Martens*, walking slowly and thinking the situation over as she walked.

Chapter XVIII

Mr. Dashwood Leaves.

MR. DASHWOOD in his delirium had penetrated deep into the wood, beyond sight of road or house, before he recovered his normal senses.

Then that unpleasant, candid friend who lives in the brain of every man had his say.

„Oh, what a fool you have made of yourself! Oh, what a fool you have made of yourself!“ said the friend, who only speaks after an error has been committed, and then in a gloating voice.

„What will she think of you?“ went on the tormentor. „You have acted like a hooligan. But that wouldn’t matter, for passionate men are apt to be hooligans, and women don’t mind that—but to run away! To run like a rabbit! She does not know about your absurd compact with French. She only knows that you have behaved like a hooligan or an Ass. Yes, my friend, an Ass, with a capital A.“

There were nut groves here, and one required the instincts of a bush pig to make one’s way in any given direction. Mr. Dashwood, moving blindly and swiftly, spurred on by a mad desire to get back to *The Martens*, pack his bag, escape to London and explain everything in a letter, took by chance the right

road and struck a right-of-way that led through the woods skirting the hill of Crowsnest and bringing him on the road to the downs.

He ascended the steep path leading to *The Martens* at full speed, and, out of breath, flushed and perspiring, he was making his way to the bungalow, when he met French, amiable-looking, cool, and smoking a cigar.

„Hullo!“ said French. „What’s up?“

„Everything—“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Don’t keep me, like a good fellow. I’m off to London.“

„Off to London I Why, I thought you were staying till Monday.“

„I’m not.“

„Where’s Miss Grimshaw?“ asked French, following the other to the house. „Did you leave her in the village?“

„No, I left her by the bridge—I mean on the bridge, down there by the river—“

French followed the young man into his bedroom. Bobby Dashwood, who seemed like a sleeper half awakened from a horrible nightmare, pulled a kit-bag from the corner of the room and began stuffing it with clothes.

French took his seat on a chair and puffed his cigar.

„Botheration!“ said French, who saw Love’s Despair in the erratic movements of his companion. „Botheration! See here, Dashwood.“

„Yes—oh, what!“

„Don’t go getting in a flurry over nothing.“

„Nothing!“ said Mr. Dashwood, with a hollow laugh, stuffing socks and hair-brushes into the yawning bag.

„When you’ve been through the mill as often as I have,“ said French, „you’ll know what I mean. There never was a girl made but there wasn’t as good a one made to match her.“

„I’m not thinking of girls. I’m thinking of myself. I’ve made—I’ve made an Ass of myself.“

„Faith, you’re not the first man that’s done that.“

„Possibly.“

„And won’t be the last. I’ve done it so often myself. Ass!—faith, it’s a herd of asses I’ve made of myself, and Jackasses at that, and there you go getting into a flurry over doing what every man does. Did you ask her?“

„No,“ said Dashwood, viciously, clasping the bag. „I didn’t.“

„Then how on earth did you make an ass of yourself?“ asked French, without in the least meaning to be uncomplimentary.

„How?“ cried Dashwood, infuriated. „Why, by trying to act straight over this business. Now I must go. I’ll write from town. I’ll explain everything in a letter. Only promise me one thing—don’t say anything to—her. Don’t ask her questions.“

Bag in hand, he made for the door. To reach the station by the road would mean the risk of meeting Miss Grimshaw. By the down-side, skirting the allotments and the Episcopalian chapel, ran a path that led indirectly to the station. This Mr. Dashwood took, walking hurriedly, bag in hand, and arriving half an hour before the one-ten to Victoria was due.

Crowsnest station is not a happy waiting place. Few railway stations really are. To a man in Mr. Dashwood’s state of mind, however, it was not intolerable. Rose gardens, blue hills or the music of Chopin would have been torture to him. Pictures illustrating the beauty of Rickman’s boot polish and the virtues of Monkey Brand soap fitted his mood.

He arrived at Victoria shortly before three, and drove to his rooms at the Albany. It was a feature of Mr. Dashwood's peculiar position that, though heir to large sums of money, endowed with a reasonable income, and with plenty of credit at command, he was, at times, as destitute of ready cash as any member of the unemployed. Hatters, hosiers, tailors and bootmakers were all at his command, but an unlimited credit for hats is of no use to you when your bank balance is overdrawn, and boots fail to fill the void created by absence of money.

When he paid his cab off in Piccadilly he had only a few shillings left in his pocket. It was late on a Saturday afternoon, and the desolate prospect of a penniless Sunday lay before him but left him unmoved. There is one good point about all big troubles—they eat up little ones.

Chapter XIX

Effie's Business.

THIS was Mr. Dashwood's letter to Miss Grimshaw, received and read by her on Monday morning:

„You must have thought me mad, but when you know all you will think differently. I hope to explain things when the business about the horse is over. Till then I will not see you or Mr. French. I cannot write more now, for my hands are tied.“

Mr. French also received a letter by the same post, which ran:

MY DEAR FRENCH—When at the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin I agreed to come down to Drumgool House as your guest you said to me frankly and plainly that, with regard to a certain young lady, you would give me *a fair field and no favour*. You intimated that you yourself had ideas in that quarter, but that you would do nothing and say nothing till the lady herself had a full opportunity for deciding in her own mind—or, at least, for seeing more of us. I undertook not to rush things and to do nothing underhand. Well, I have carried out my word. I have played the game. By no word or sign have I tried to take advantage of my position till Saturday, when my feelings overcame me and I made a fool of myself. The agony of the thing is, I can't explain to her my position. It's very hard, when a man has tried to act fair and square, to be landed in a beastly boghole like this.

„I only can explain when I ask her to be my wife, which, I tell you frankly, I am going to do, but not yet. I know how your plans and affairs are in a muddle till this race is over, and I propose to do nothing till then. Then, and only then, I will write to her, and I will tell you the day and hour I post the letter. I expect you to do to me as I have done to you, and not take advantage of your position.

„I will not see you till the event comes off, when I hope to see you at Epsom, and not only see you, but your colours first past the winning post.“

A youthful and straightforward letter, and sensible enough considering the extraordinary circumstances of the case.

French, when he read it, scratched his head.

When he had made the compact with Bobby Dashwood in the smoking-room of the Shelbourne Hotel he had done so half in joke, half in earnest. Violet Grimshaw had appealed to him from the first just as a pleasant picture or a pretty song appeals to a man, but till the day at the Shelbourne Hotel he had no views regarding her. She was in his house, under his protection; he looked on her more as a daughter than a stranger brought under his roof by chance, and had Bobby Dashwood not intervened he might have continued so to regard her. But the instant Mr. Dashwood spoke, Mr. French became aware that Miss Grimshaw had become a necessity to him, or, rather, a necessary luxury. He was not in love with her, but she was a charming person to have in the house; she carried brightness with her; he did not want to lose her, and here was Dashwood proposing to carry her away.

Recognising that Bobby was very much in earnest, and knowing that, when he had passed his irresponsible stage, he would make an excellent suitor for any girl, French, large-hearted and generous, was not the man to put barriers in the way of a good match for the homeless orphan from the States. But he would have no engagement on a half-formed acquaintanceship. If, when they had got to know each other well, Violet preferred Bobby to any one else, well and good; if she preferred him (French), all the better.

But since that compact at the Shelbourne, though French had been so occupied by the horse that he'd scarcely time to think of anything else, the bonds had been strengthening between him and the girl, and his kindly feeling for Bobby had been increasing.

He did not recognize the facts fully till he put down Mr. Dashwood's letter and summed up the situation exactly and precisely in the word „Botheration.“ Everything had been going so well up to this. Garryowen was in the pink of condition; though the debt to Lewis was due, Lewis might have been dead for all the trouble he gave, or could give, unless by any chance Dick Given found out the Sussex address—which was next to an impossibility—and now this bother must turn up, driving Dashwood away and so splitting up their pleasant little party. Dashwood was an invaluable aide-de-camp, but French was mourning him more as a lost friend, when, breaking in upon his meditation, Effie entered the room.

Disaster, when she appears before us, often comes at first in a pleasant disguise, and Effie looked pleasant enough this morning, for she never looked pleasanter than when full of mischief. „Papa,“ said Effie, „what's to-day?“ „Monday,“ said Mr. French.

„I know it's Monday. I mean the day of the month.“

„The thirtieth of March.“

Effie absorbed this information in silence, and occupied herself making cocked hats out of an old bill for straw that was lying on the floor, while her father occupied himself at the writing-table with some accounts. Miss Grimshaw, the good genius of the family, Fate had decoyed out on the downs to watch Garryowen, with Andy up, taking his exercise.

„Papa,“ said Effie, after a while.

„What?“ asked Mr. French in a bothered voice.

„How long does it take for a letter to go from here home?“

„Two days nearly,“ said French. „Why do you want to know?“

„I was only thinking—“

„Well, think to yourself,“ replied her father. „I’m busy, and don’t want to be interrupted.“

Effie obeyed these instructions, making incredibly small cocked hats out of the bill paper and pursing up her lips during the process.

At last French, tearing up some calculations and throwing the pieces in the waste-paper basket, rose to his feet, lit a cigar and strolled out.

„Won’t you come out on the downs?“ said he as he left the room.

„No, thank you,“ said Effie, „I’m busy.“

She waited till she heard his footsteps on the verandah; then she rose from her cocked-hat making and went to the writings-table.

She got on the chair just vacated by her father, took a sheet of note-paper and an envelope, dipped a pen in ink, and began to address the envelope in a sprawling hand.

MR. GIVEEN,

The Bungalow, Drumboyne,

Nr. Cloyne, Ireland, wrote Effie.

Then she dried the envelope and hid it in the blotting-pad.

She took the sheet of paper, dipped the pen in ink and wrote on the paper, with care and labour, „April Fool.“

Then, having dried these words of wisdom, she placed the sheet of notepaper in the envelope and gummed it. Then, getting down from the chair, she ran to the window to see that nobody was coming, and, assured of the fact, ran to the writing-table and stole a stamp from the drawer in which they were kept. Having stamped the letter, she placed this torpedo in her pocket, and, running out, called for Norah to get her hat and coat as she wanted to go out on the downs.

Every day at this hour Miss Grimshaw was in the habit of going for a walk, and taking Effie with her.

Today, returning from looking at the horses, she found, to her surprise, Effie dressed and waiting.

„Which way shall we go?“ asked Miss Grimshaw.

„Let’s go through the village,“ said Effie. „I like the village.“

It was a moist day, damp and warm, with just the faintest threat of rain. It was the last day of the season for the West Sussex hounds; they had met at Rookhurst some seven miles away, and there was a chance of getting a glimpse of them.

As they passed the spot where, on Saturday, Miss Grimshaw had plucked the primrose and placed it in Mr. Dashwood’s coat, she noticed that several more were out.

„I say,“ said Effie, as though she were a thought-reader, „why did Mr. Dashwood go ‘way Saturday?“

„I’m sure I don’t know,“ replied the girl, with a tart. „What makes you ask?“

„I don’t know,“ replied Effie.

Miss Grimshaw glanced sideways at her companion. Effie had lost considerably the elfish look that had been a striking feature in the child during her long imaginary illness, but she had not lost it entirely; there was still something old-fashioned and vaguely uncanny about her at times, and she had,

without doubt, now and then, the trick of saying things so apposite as to hint at a more than natural intelligence. Parrots have this peculiarity too.

„If I tell you something,“ said Erne, suddenly, „you won't tell it to any one else, will you?“

„No.“

„Say 'Ton my honour.‘“

„Ton my honour.“

„Well, I heard something.“

„What did you hear?“

„I heard Mr. Dashwood saying he was an ass.“

„Effie,“ said Miss Grimshaw, hurriedly, „you must never repeat things you hear.“

„There you go!“ said Effie. „And you told me to.“

„I didn't.“

„You did. You said, 'What did you hear?‘“

„Yes, but I did not know it was anything that Mr. Dashwood said.“

„Why shouldn't I tell you what he said?“

„Oh, you can tell if you like. It doesn't matter to me. Where did you hear him say it?“

„In his bedroom, when he was packing his bag. Papa was with him; the door was open, and I heard him say it, and I heard papa say there was never a girl made but there wasn't a better girl made to match her, and that Mr. Dashwood wasn't to bother himself—“

„You needn't tell me any more.“

„I can't, for Norah came and I ran away.“

„Where were you?“

„Listening at the door.“

„Well, you certainly are frank!“

„What's that mean?“ asked Erne.

„It means that you deserve a whipping. Come on. And see here, Effie, you mustn't say anything about that to any one. Have you told any one else?“

„Only Norah.“

„What did she say?“

„She only laughed.“

Miss Grimshaw felt as though she were walking through a veil of blushes. Happily there was no one to see. Bobby Dashwood's extraordinary behaviour by the bridge was nothing, absolutely nothing, to the fact that he had told about it to Mr. French. To kiss, to run away, to tell! She knew nothing of the position of the two men towards one another; she only knew just what had occurred on the bridge and what Effie had told her.

The uphill path to the village went between a double row of poplar trees and debouched on the Roman road just by the village pump.

„Are you going to the post-office?“ asked Effie, as they drew near the road.

„No. I haven't anything to do there.“

„I heard papa say he wanted some post-cards.“

„Well, I've forgotten my purse, so I must get them to-morrow.“

„Couldn't you put them down in the bill?“

„No; post-offices don't give credit.“

Effie hung lovingly on her companion's arm. They passed into the village street and, just as they made the turning, the thin, insignificant sound of a hunting horn came on the wind.

„There's the hounds," said Effie, and scarcely had she spoken the words than, topping the crest of the hill, came the scarlet-clad figures of the master and whips, the hounds, and after the hounds the hunt.

The fox had run to earth in Blankney Woods, and they were going now to draw Fairholts spinney.

„Come on," said Effie.

The child made a bolt across the road, and so swiftly that Miss Grimshaw had no time to follow. Hounds and horses blocked the road, but not so densely as to prevent her from seeing Effie run to the post-office letter-box and pop something in. When the press had gone by and the road was clear Miss Grimshaw crossed.

„What was that you put in the letter-box, Effie?"

„Nothing," said Effie, with a laugh.

„Don't say that. I saw you putting something in. Was it a stone?"

„No," said Effie, „it wasn't a stone."

„You know what they do to children who put rubbish in letter-boxes?"

„No."

„They put them in prison."

„Well, they won't put me in prison."

„Yes they will; and if you don't tell me what it was I will go in and ask Mr. Chopping to open the box and then send for a policeman."

Effie, who had heard her elders ridiculing and vilifying Mr. Giveen for the past three months, had thought it a fine thing to play a joke of her very own upon him. She knew nothing of the disastrous nature of her act, but suddenly interrupted like this and put off her balance she did not want to confess it. Besides, she had stolen a postage stamp. „Don't," said Effie, turning very pale. „I will, if you don't tell." „Well, it was only a letter." „A letter?" „Yes." „Who gave it you to post?"

The suggestion created a lie. „Papa."

„Well, if he gave you it, why did you hide it and post it secretly like that?"

„Pa told me not to let you see it," said Effie.

She was not a liar by nature, but children have streaky days in their moral life, just as men have, and to-day was a very streaky day with Effie. She had awakened that morning predisposed to frowardness; a slight bilious attack had made her fretful, and fretfulness always made her impish. The devil, taking advantage of this pathological condition, had incited her to make an April fool of Mr. Giveen, to steal, and to lie.

„Oh!" said Miss Grimshaw.

They walked away from the post-office, taking the downhill road to the bridge. They walked hurriedly; at least the girl did—Effie had almost to trot in order to keep up with her.

A nice thing, truly. Here, for months, she had been working for the interests of a man who to-day had taken a child into his confidence, given it a letter to post, and instructions to keep the matter hidden from her. Worse than that, she had a dim suspicion that the letter was to Mr. Dashwood and had to deal with that „affair." She had taken the road to the bridge unconsciously, and when she reached it and found herself at the very place where the affair had

occurred she could have wept from sheer mortification, only for the presence of the culprit at her side.

„Don't tell your father that you told me that, Effie,“ said Miss Grimshaw, after she had leaned for a moment on the parapet of the bridge, deep in troubled thought.

„No,“ said Effie, „I won't.“

Miss Grimshaw resumed her meditations, and Effie, very quiet and strangely subdued, hung beside her, looking also at the river.

Even in the time of the Roman legionaries lovers had haunted this place. What a story it could have told of lovers and love-affairs gone to dust! But from all its wealth of stories I doubt if it could have matched in involution and cross-purpose the love-affair in which figured Mr. French, Mr. Dashwood and the girl in the Homburg hat who was now gazing at the wimpling water and listening to the moist wind in the branches of the trees. She was of the order of people who forgive a blow struck in anger readily, but not a slight or a fancied slight. French had slighted her, and she would never forgive him. She had helped him, plotted and planned for him, and it had all ended in this! There was nothing for it but to leave *The Martens* as quickly as might be and return to London; and it was only now that she recognised, fully shown up against the background of her resentment, the pleasant ties and interests that bound her to these people; ties and interests that would have to be broken and dissolved. So, in a fever of irritation, she told herself as she leaned on the low parapet and looked at the river, whilst Effie broke pieces of mortar from the cracks between the stones.

What, perhaps, rankled deepest in her heart was the expression used by French and repeated by Effie: „There is never a girl but you'll find a better one to match her“—or words to that effect.

Dinner at *The Martens* was a mid-day function. At half-past one, when Mr. French came home from a walk over the high downs, he found dinner waiting for him. Miss Grimshaw, during the meal, seemed to be suffering from a dumbness affecting not only her speech but her manner; her movements were stiff and formal and inexpressive, and she never once looked in his direction, but engaged herself entirely with Effie, who also had a wilted air and appearance.

At tea it was the same.

After tea Mr. French lit a cigar and went out on the verandah to smoke.

He could not make it out at all. Something had happened in the space of a few hours to make all this difference in the girl. What could that something be? At eleven o'clock she had been all right, yet at half-past one she was a different person.

He was not a man to keep up a misunderstanding without knowing the reason of it, and, having smoked his cigar half through, he went back into the house and to the sitting-room, where the girl was curled up on the sofa reading Punch.

„Look here,“ said French, „what's the matter?“

„I beg your pardon?“ said Miss Grimshaw, uncurling herself and sitting half erect.

„What's the matter? Something is wrong. Have I done anything, or what is it?“

„I'm sure I don't know. Nothing is the matter that I am aware of specially.“

„Well, now, see here,“ said Mr. French, taking a seat close by; „I thought, maybe, you seemed so silent, that something had gone wrong, or I'd done something that displeased you. If I have, just let me know it.“

Miss Grimshaw had risen erect and now she was making for the door.

„I don't know what you call wrong. I call subterfuge wrong. Perhaps I am mistaken; it's all a matter of opinion, I suppose—but, anyhow, it is not worth discussing.“

Then she was gone, leaving the astonished Mr. French to amuse himself with the problem of how he had employed subterfuge, and against whom.

She did not appear at supper, alleging a headache.

She went to bed at nine.

Chapter XX

Effie's Business. (continued)

TOWARDS midnight Miss Grimshaw was awakened from her slumbers by a sound as of some person weeping and wailing. She sat up in bed and listened. It was Erne's voice, and she heard her own name called repeatedly.

„Miss Grimshaw—Miss Grimshaw—Miss Grimshaw!“

In a moment she was out of bed and wrapped in a dressing-gown. The next, she was in Erne's room.

The child was sitting up in bed in the moonlight. Her subliminal mind had constructed a nightmare out of a gallows, a guilty conscience and a stolen postage stamp.

„I took it out of the drawer of the writing-desk. I didn't mean it—I did it for fun,“ cried Erne, her face buried in the girl's shoulder. „And I dreamt—ow! ow!“

„What on earth's the matter?“

It was Mr. French, in a dressing-gown, with a lighted candle in his hand.

You cannot weep and wail in a pitch-pine bungalow, resonant as a fiddle, without disturbing the other occupants, and behind Mr. French moved figures dimly suggestive of the chorus of the Greek drama waiting to come on.

„I don't know,“ replied Miss Grimshaw, her mind divided between Erne and a feeling of thankfulness that she had her slippers on. „She seems to have taken a postage stamp, or some nonsense. It's night terror. Now, Effie, don't stop crying if you feel you want to, but just tell me it all. Once you have told me it all the bad things will go away.“

„I stuck it on the letter,“ sobbed Effie, who had passed from the howling to the blubbering stage, „and I stuck the letter in the box—and I dre'mt Mr. Chopping and the pleeceman were going to hang me.“

„Well, they aren't. Mr. Chopping and the policeman are in bed. So it was a letter. And how about the letter your father gave you to post?“

„I never gave her a letter,“ put in Mr. French.

„I only made it up,“ said Effie. „Father never gave me anything. It was only my letter to Cousin Dick.“

„Your what?“ said French, who had taken his seat on the end of the bed and was now holding the flat candlestick so that the candle light showed up Erne with Rembrandtesque effect.

„I wrote to make an April fool of him.“

„What did you say?“ asked French, and there, a tension in his voice unperceived by his daughter but very evident to Miss Grimshaw, and even to Norah and Mrs. Driscoll, who were listening outside.

„I only said *April Fool*,“ replied Effie, who had passed now into the sniffing stage, a wan smile lighting up her countenance.

„Did you put any address on the paper?“

„No. You remember, when I wrote to him last year on the first of April, and you said I ought to put *April Ass*?—well, I put *April Fool* just the same as then.“

„He'll know her writing,“ groaned French, speaking aloud, yet to himself. Then, as if fearing to trust himself to speak to the child, he turned and told the servants in the passage to begone to their beds.

„Come with me,“ he said to Miss Grimshaw, when Effie had at last lain down, eased of her sin and its terrors. „Come into the sitting-room.“

They went into the sitting-room, and Mr. French put his candle on the table.

„Here's a kettle of fish,“ said he.

„She put no address on the paper,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „but—“

„The post-mark.“

„Yes, the post-mark. I was thinking of that. There is one comfort, however; the post-mark may be illegible. You know how difficult it is to read a post-mark very often.“

„Listen to me,“ said French, with dramatic emphasis. „This post-mark won't be illegible; it will be as plain as Nelson's Pillar. I know it, for it's just these sort of things that happen in life, and happen to me. The letter won't get lost; if the mail packet was to sink, a shark would rout it out from the mail bags and swallow it, and get caught, and be cut open, and the letter would go on by next mail. We're done.“

„Don't lose heart.“

„We're done. I know it. And to think, after all our plotting and planning, that a child's tomfooling would come, after all, to ruin me! I could skin her alive when I think of it.“ He stopped suddenly and turned. A little white figure stood at the door. It was Effie. Seized with an overwhelming spirit of righteousness, hearing her father's voice colloquing, and touched with desire for adventure and a kiss, she had bundled out of bed and run into the sitting-room.

„I want a kiss,“ said Effie.

The next moment she was in her father's arms, and he was kissing her as though she had brought him a fortune instead of ruin.

The next moment she was gone, seeking her warm bed rapidly, and as the sound of her pattering feet died away the girl turned to French, her eyes filled with tears.

„We aren't done,“ said she, speaking rapidly and with vehemence. „We'll get the better of them yet. We'll do something, and we have time to prepare our defence against them, for the letter won't reach Cloyne till the day after to-morrow.“

„If they manage to do me in this,“ said French, „I'll shoot Garryowen with my own hand, and I'll hang for Dick Giveen, by G—d!“

„Hush! There is no use in giving way to anger. We must have a council of war and collect all our forces. I say—“

„Yes?“

„Mr. Dashwood—“ The girl paused for a moment, then, as if the desperate nature of the situation made everything else of small account, she went on: „Mr. Dashwood behaved very foolishly the other day and ran away off to town. We must send him a wire to-morrow morning to come at once. I'll send it. And look here; you know how grumpy I was after tea. Well, Erne, in that fit of lying, told me you had given her a letter to post which she was to hide from me. Of course I ought to have known you wouldn't do anything of the sort. I 'pologise. Good-night.“

They had been talking to each other attired only in their dressing-gowns and slippers. If Crowsnest Society could have seen them their doors would have been shut against them from that night forth for ever more.

Chapter XXI

The Bundle of Letters.

MR. DASHWOOD'S chambers in the Albany were furnished according to the taste of that gentleman, high art giving place in the decorations to the art of physical culture. Some old Rowlandson prints decorated the walls, together with boxing-gloves, singlesticks and foils; the few books visible were not of the meditative or devotional order of literature—Ruff, Surtees and Pitcher being the authors most affected by Mr. Dashwood.

He had spent a very miserable Sunday. Having written and posted his letters to Miss Grimshaw and French, he had fallen back on gloomy meditation and tobacco. He had spent Monday in trying to imagine in what manner Miss Grimshaw had taken his letter; he had taken refuge from his thoughts at the Bridge Club, and had risen from play with twelve pounds to the good and a feeling that things had taken a turn for the better; and on Tuesday morning, as he was sitting at breakfast, a telegram was brought to him.

„Come at once, most important.—
GRIMSHAW, Crowsnest.“

„French has dropped dead, or the place has caught fire,“ said Mr. Dashwood, as he sprang from the breakfast-table to the writing-table in the window and opened the pages of the ABC railway guide. „Robert, rush out and get a taxi-cab. I've just time to catch the 11.10 from Victoria. Don't mind packing. I'll pack some things in the kit-bag. Get the cab.“

He stuffed somethings into the bag, and ten minutes later the cab, which had been brought up to the Street entrance of the Albany, was taking him to the station.

That some disaster had happened he was certain. Never for a moment did he dream of the truth of things; the vision of French lying dead, Garry stricken lame, or *The Martens* in flames, alternating in his mind with attempts to imagine how the girl would meet him, what she would say, and whether she would speak of the occurrence at the bridge.

He had sent a wire from Victoria telling the train by which he was coming, and as they drew in at Crowsnest station she was the first person he saw upon

the platform. As they shook hands he saw at once that the past was not to be referred to.

„I'm so glad you've come," said the girl. „You have a bag? Well, they'll send it on. We can walk to the house, and I can tell you everything on the way."

„What has happened?"

„Disaster. But it's not so much what has happened as what may happen. Effie—"

„Has she had an accident?"

„No, she hasn't had an accident, but the little stupid posted a letter yesterday morning to Mr. Giveen."

„A letter to him! Who wrote it?"

„She did. She wanted to make an April fool of him, so she wrote *April Fool* on a piece of paper, put it in an envelope, dinoted it, and posted it."

„Good heavens! He'll know your address now, and give Lewis warning, and you'll have the bailiffs in and the horse will be seized!"

„Exactly."

„But stay a moment," said Dashwood. „Did she put any address on the paper?"

„No. An April Fool like that isn't generally addressed from anywhere, is it? But the postmark—"

„I was thinking of that," said Mr. Dashwood.

„The only thing is this," said she. „The postmark mayn't be legible. Some of these country post-offices use die stamps that are nearly worn out. Now, can you remember—I have written you several letters since we came here, asking you to bring down things from London—can you remember whether the postmarks were legible or not?"

„No," said Mr. Dashwood, „I can't." Then, blushing furiously, „But we'll soon see."

He dived his hand into the breast pocket of his coat and brought out a small bundle of letters. There were only four letters in the bundle, and they were tied together with a narrow piece of silk ribbon. When the girl saw the silk ribbon she bit her lip.

„Look!" said he, slipping the ribbon off and thrusting it into his pocket. He showed her the first of the letters. It bore the Crowsnest post-mark large as a penny, clear and legible.

The three others were the same.

He put the letters back in his pocket and they resumed their way in silence. You would never have imagined that the last time these two people parted the young man had held the girl in his arms, kissing her wildly.

It was the girl who broke silence first.

„Mr. French said last night we were *done*, and I'm afraid he never spoke a truer word."

„The only thing I can think of," said Mr. Dashwood, „is for me to go over to Ireland and try to talk Giveen over."

„You don't know him. He's a fool, and a vicious fool at that. You can't talk a man like that over."

„Well, we might bribe him."

„Mr. French has no money to bribe him with. All his money is on this race."

„The City and Suburban is run on the fifteenth," said Mr. Dashwood, meditatively. „So we have more than twelve days. Bother! so has this man

Lewis. I say, this Giveen must be a beast. What makes him so anxious to have his knife into French?”

„I believe I have something to do with that. Didn't Mr. French tell you about the boating affair?”

„No.“

„Well, Mr. Giveen took me out in the boat at Drumgool to see the coast.“

„Yes.“

„He rowed into a sea cave, the most awful place you have ever seen, and then—“

„Yes?”

„He rocked the boat, pretending he was going to drown me.“

„Brute!”

„That's what I said to him. He was laughing all the time, you know. He wanted me to—to—“

„Yes?”

„Give him a kiss—ugh! And I was so frightened—I promised him one if he put me on shore. Well, Mr. French was waiting for us when I got back, and I told him what had happened.“

„What did he do?”

„He kicked Mr. Giveen.“

„Good,” said Mr. Dashwood. „If I'd been there I'd have drowned him.“

„Mr. French wanted to. At least, he wanted to duck him.“

„I'll tell you what,” said Dashwood, „if this beast comes near Crowsnest, I won't be answerable for what I'll do to him.“

„That would be the worst policy in the world,” said Miss Grimshaw. „If he comes here we must meet him with his own weapons if we can—but he won't come here.“ In this she was wrong.

„I wouldn't mind so much,” she finished, „only for this wretched bazaar on the fifth. I have to help at a stall. You can imagine what it must be to keep a straight face and smile at people one doesn't particularly care for, standing all the time, as it were, on a powder magazine. Besides, just imagine, if a man in possession came down, and if the fact leaks out, how all these Crowsnest Society people will snub us and sneer at us. You don't know them. I do.“

„There are an awful lot of old cats here,” conceded Mr. Dashwood, not knowing what else to say.

„Makes one feel one would like to put out poisoned milk for them,” said the girl. „Well, here we are, and there's Mr. French.“

They had reached the top of the path, and French, who was standing in the verandah of the bungalow, like a watchman on the lookout for enemies, hailed them.

Chapter XXII

The Bazaar.

THAT night, at a consultation held between these three conspirators against misfortune, it was decided that nothing could be done but wait.

There was no use in attempting to remove Garryowen to another training ground; it would be impossible to do so without being traced; besides, there was no other place available. There was nothing for it but to sit still and wait for the thunderbolt to fall, if it was going to fall.

The bazaar was to take place on the fifth, and as day followed day without disaster appearing in the form of a bailiff, Miss Grimshaw began to recognise that the forthcoming function was a blessing in disguise. It was at least a visible and tangible bother, and helped to distract the mind from gloomy speculations.

It was to take place in the school buildings, and on the fourth, much to the delight of the school children, a holiday was proclaimed. Benches and blackboards were turned out of the big schoolroom, the walls stripped of maps and hung with ivy and flag's, and stalls erected.

As money-making was the primary object of the function, things were done as cheaply as possible. Colonel Bingham lent his gardener; the Smith-Jacksons lent the weedy-looking boy who rolled their tennis lawn and cleaned their shoes; Miss Slimon lent her housemaid, and the village carpenter, fuming at heart, but constrained to please his customers, lent his services—for nothing.

Miss Grimshaw was to assist Miss Slimon at the needlework stall. Mr. Dashwood had already lent his services; toiling all day valiantly in his shirt-sleeves, nailing up green stuff on the walls, tacking baize covers on the tables, even carrying baskets of crockery ware and provisions; and to such good effect that when, at ten o'clock at night, they closed the doors and locked them everything was in place and ready for the next day's orgy.

„Look here,“ said Mr. Dashwood as they sat at breakfast next morning. „Given got that letter on the first, didn't he? Well, if he had been up to any mischief he would have communicated with Lewis at once. I bet my life he would have telephoned to him. Well, this is the fifth. Three days have gone and nothing has happened.“

„What's three days?“ said French. „There are ten days before the race, and I can't move the horse to Epsom till the thirteenth, so that gives them eight days to work in.“

„Does Given know Lewis's address in London?“

„Faith, I don't know, but he can easily get it from Lewis's bailiff, who must have been down at Drumgool kicking his heels a week now.“

„What sort of money-lender is this Lewis?“

„What sort? Why, there's only one sort of money-lender, and that's a beast. There's nothing to be done with Lewis. If he gets my address here, he'll put in a man to seize Garryowen, and I'll be kiboshed. Sure, it's enough to make one want to tear one's hair. The colt's in the pink of condition. Another week and he'll be perfect. There's nothing that puts hoof to turf will beat him, and to think of him being barred out of the race by a beast of a money-lender and a bum-bailiff is enough to drive one crazy.“

„Look here,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „why not go to Lewis, explain all, and offer him half profits if the horse wins and he doesn't interfere with its running?“

„Give him half profits!“ shouted French, nearly upsetting his tea-cup. „I'd cut his throat first!“

„They wouldn't be much use to him after,“ said Miss Grimshaw, rising from the table. „What time is it now? Ten? Well, shall we go down to the schoolroom,

Mr. Dashwood, and see if there is anything more to be done? Effie can come too; it will keep her out of mischief."

It was a glorious spring morning, the herald of a perfect spring day. The hedges were sprinkled with tiny points of green, and the Crowsnest children, free of school, were gathering wild violets and snowdrops and primroses in the woods for bazaar purposes.

The bazaar had its hand upon the countryside for miles round. The church, calling for new choir stalls, had sent the little children into the woods to pick flowers for sale; the farmers' wives to their dairies to make butter; the farmers' daughters answered the call with crewel-work and pin-cushions; even the cottagers were not behind with gifts. There was something so pleasant in this response from the fields and the hedgerows, as it were, that it made one almost forget the snobbishness, small-mindedness and pride of the prime movers in the affair. For the Fantodds, who lived at Mill House, were snobbish, and would rout out trade in your family tree, even if the disease were hidden deep and forgotten at its roots; and not only rout it out, but sniff and snort over it. Colonel Bingham—I think I called him General before, but we will reduce him for punishment to the rank of colonel—Colonel Bingham was an army snob; a well-born, kindly and handsome old gentleman, but still a snob. The Creeps were puffed up with pride; a drunken baronet who had married a cousin of Colonel Creeps acted in this family just as a grain of soda acts in a mass of dough, leavening the lump. The Smith-Jacksons, the Dorian-Grays (most unfortunate name, assumed in the seventies), the Prosser-Jones, all suffered from this perfectly superfluous disease.

The schoolroom, when they reached it, was having a last finishing touch put to the decorations by Miss Slimon, so, finding nothing to do, they returned to *The Martens*.

They were in that condition of mind that, going even for a short walk, dread would be ever present in their minds that on returning to the house they would find Garryowen „seized“ and a bailiff sitting in the kitchen. This dread, which had something of pleasant excitement about it, this ever-present fear of danger, had drawn French, Mr. Dashwood and the girl together again in a family party, a corporate body. Love, though he hovered over them, could not divide or disunite them till the adventure they were bound together in was completed. They were united against a common enemy, so united that by a process of telepathy gloom affecting one would affect the rest; hilarity likewise. To-day at luncheon they were hilarious as an offset to their gloominess at breakfast. A bottle of Pommery assisted their spirits; they drank confusion to Lewis and benightment to Mr. Giveen. They were fey.

The bazaar was to be declared open at half-past two by Mrs. Bingham, and at half-past two a long line of carriages stood in the roadway outside the red brick school-house; the place inside was hot and stuffy, crammed with the lute of Crowsnest and smelling of glue, raw pine boards and coffee. A huge coffee-urn with steam up at the refreshment stall spoke of the rustics who would invade the place at three o'clock, when the price of admission was to be lowered to sixpence, and answered with a cynical hissing the announcement of Mrs. Bingham that the bazaar was now open, and the little speech which that excellent lady had been preparing for three days and rehearsing all the morning.

Miss Grimshaw, whose place was at the fancy-work stall, and whose duty it was to assist Miss Slimon in the most nefarious, if undisguised, robbery of customers, found time in the midst of her duties to take in the doings of her neighbours. Bobby Dashwood was much in evidence, buying nothing, but officiating as an unsolicited and highly successful salesman, flirting with mature spinster stall-holders and seeming to enjoy his position immensely. Miss Grimshaw noted with a touch of regret this flaw in his character, but she had not time to dwell upon it. The sixpenny barrier was now down, and the place that had been full before was now all but packed. Farmers and their wives and daughters, cottagers and humble folk permeated the crowd; every now and then the throb of a motor car coming to rest announced some fresh arrival from a distance. Mr. French was not there. He had said that he might look in later in the afternoon, but he had not yet arrived. It was now four o'clock, and the girl, half-dazed by the stuffy air of the place, the buzz of tongues and the endeavour to make correct change, was resting for a moment on a ledge of the stall, when a voice brought her to her senses and made her start to her feet.

„No, thank you, I don't want dolls. Sure, what would I be doing with dolls at my age? No, thank you, I don't smoke, and if I did I wouldn't do it in a smoking-cap. No, thanks; I just looked in to see what was going on. I'm strange to the place. I've only left Ireland the day before yesterday, and it's half moidhered I am still with me journey.“

As a gazelle by the banks of the Zambesi starts from her couch of leaves at the voice of the leopard, so Miss Grimshaw, at the sound of this voice, started from the ledge of the fancy-work stall and looked wildly round her.

In the crowd, beset by two ardent spinsters, one armed with a smoking-cap and the other with a Teddy bear, she saw a bubble-faced gentleman in grey tweeds. Almost with the same sweep of the eye she caught a glimpse of Bobby Dashwood at the bran-pie corner. The wretched Bobby, in his glory, was standing on a tub inviting speculators to take a dip. Next moment she had reached him, plucked him by the sleeve and was leading him to the door. She did not speak till they were in the porch, which was deserted.

„Bobby—Mr. Dashwood—he's here!“

„Who?“

„Mr. Giveen.“

„Good God!“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Giveen!“

„Yes. They're trying to sell him dolls. Quick! we haven't a moment to waste! He doesn't know you, does he?“

„No; he never came to Drumgool when I was there.“

„Get close to him, get to speak to him; don't lose sight of him. Pump him. Oh, use your—your intellect now! I don't know what you can do, but try to get hold of his plans.“

„Trust me,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I'll do my best.“

„Well, go at once. I'll follow you back. If you get to talk with him much, pretend you're an enemy of Mr. French's. He's in grey tweeds, with an Irish voice. You can't mistake him.“

„Trust me,“ said Mr. Dashwood.

Next moment he was in the midst of the sweltering mob, boring his way diligently through it, his eyes and ears on the alert for the sight of the grey tweeds and the sound of the Irish voice.

It was at the refreshment stall that he found his prey.

Mr. Giveen, with a cup of tea in one hand and a bun in the other, was talking to Miss Smith-Jackson, who was replying in icy monosyllables.

„Faith, and the country about here is very different from the country I come from. You don't know where that is, do you? Do you now? Well, I'll tell ye, it's the country of pretty girls and good whisky. Not that I ever drink it—what are you smilin' at? I give you me oath a sun of whisky hasn't passed me lips these twenty years.“

„One-and-six, please,“ replied Miss Smith-Jackson, in still icier monosyllables.

„I beg your pardon?“ said Mr. Giveen, who had swallowed his bun and was now „saucering“(22-1) his tea.

„One-and-six, please.“

„And for what, if you please? Do you mane to tell me you're going to charge me one-and-six for a cup of tea and a bun?“

„Our charge is one-and-sixpence.“

„May I never swallow bite or sup again if this isn't the biggest do I ever came across! And I paying sixpence at the door to get in, and they told me, when I asked them, the refreshments were free. I won't pay it.“

„Then please take it as a gift.“

„A gift!“ cried Mr. Giveen. „When did ever a Giveen take food and drink as a gift! Is it a tramp you're takin' me for? Here's sixpence, and that's tuppence too much, but you can keep the change.“

„Colonel Bingham!“ said Miss Smith-Jackson, perfectly unmoved.

The colonel, who had overheard the end of Mr. Giveen's remarks, came to the table.

„Now, sir,“ said Colonel Bingham, „what's the trouble?“

„Trouble! Here's sixpence—a fair price for what I've had. One-and-sixpence she asked me—one-and-sixpence for a cup of tea and a bun!“

Mr. Giveen, who had never been to a bazaar in his life, and who, justly enough, felt outraged, held out his sixpence, this time to Colonel Bingham.

Colonel Bingham looked from the sixpence to Mr. Giveen, and from Mr. Giveen to the sixpence.

„I think, sir,“ said Colonel Bingham, „you have mistaken the place where you are. If you will kindly step outside with me I will point you out the way to the village inn, and your admission fee will be returned to you at the door—“

It was at this moment that Mr. Dashwood struck in. The crowd immediately in their vicinity had stepped back slightly, making a small arena as people do around a street accident or a dog-fight. In the middle of this arena stood the outraged Mr. Giveen, facing the colonel. A moment more, and who knows what might have happened only for the intervention of Bobby.

„Excuse me,“ said Bobby, addressing the colonel, „but this gentleman is Irish and unacquainted with our customs. The whole of this, I believe, is a mistake, and if he will step outside with me I will explain everything to him. I am sure that, as an Irish gentleman, he will agree with me that little affairs about money are better settled in private.“

„Now, that's common sense,“ said the gentleman from Ireland. „I haven't the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir, but I place me honour in your hands.“

„Come on, then,“ said Mr. Dashwood, and, taking the other by the arm, he led the way through the crowd towards the door.

„Now we're all right," said he when they found themselves in the open air. „I say, you're well out of it, and I wouldn't go back if I were you. Do you mean to tell me they wanted to rook you of one-and-six for a cup of tea and a bun?"

„They did that," replied the other, with a chuckle. „They thought they caught an omadhaun asleep; but, faith, they thought wrong!"

„You were too sharp for them," said Mr. Dashwood. „I saw you come in. I'm down here for the day, and I just dropped into the place. Then I heard you talking to the girl behind the stall, and chaffing her and telling her you were Irish; then I heard the row and came to your assistance. I like Irish people. Are you staying here?"

„No," said Mr. Giveen. „I just came down for the day—do you live here?"

„No," said Mr. Dashwood. „I just came down for the day. I live in London. But I'm jolly glad to have met you; it's a relief to come across a genuine Irishman with some wit in him. I say, I'm jolly glad you put that girl in her place. She's a cheeky beast. Come along into the inn and have a drink."

They had been walking towards the inn, and Mr. Dashwood, taking his companion's arm, guided him, nothing loth, through the entrance and into the bar parlour.

„Now we're all right," said Bobby, taking his seat and rapping on the counter with a half-sovereign. „Cock yourself up on that stool. What'll you have?"

„Thanks, I'll have a stone ginger-beer and a biscuit, if it's all the same to you."

„A whisky-and-soda, a stone ginger-beer and some biscuits, please, Mrs. Stonnor." Then, whilst the landlady was serving them, „You are staying in London I think you told me?"

„Yes," said Mr. Giveen. „I'm over on a little holiday, and I just ran down here to-day to see the country. Do you know the country round about here?"

„Rather!"

„And the people?"

„Most of them."

„Now, look here," said Mr. Giveen. „Do you happen to know any one of the name of French that's staying in the neighbourhood?"

„Michael French, do you mean?"

„That's him."

„Oh, good Lord! I should think I did. An awful chap. I had a row with him."

„Did you now? So you had a row with him? Faith, he's always rowing with people, and it's my belief he'll do it once too often."

„So you know him?" said Bobby, who in his few minutes' knowledge of Mr. Giveen had taken a hearty and whole-souled dislike to him that amounted almost to a hatred.

„Know him!" said Mr. Giveen. „None better. I just came down to ask after him; but since I've met you, you can tell me all I want to know."

„Delighted, I'm sure."

„He's got some horses down here?"

„Yes, so I believe."

„And he's got his little daughter and the governess with him?"

„Yes, I believe he has a child, and a young lady is staying with him, a Miss—Grim—something."

„Grimshaw."

„That's it—Grimshaw."

„That’s all I want to know,“ said Mr. Giveen, and there was a satisfied malignity in his tone which, combined with the soft stupidity of his manner and face, made Mr. Dashwood think of reptiles and those jelly-fish that blister and sting.

A mad desire to kick Mr. Giveen off the high stool he was perched on was overcome by a tremendous effort. The young man recognised that the whole of French’s fortune and future was in his hands, and that it all depended on how he played his game whether this noxious soft and venomous enemy was to be frustrated in his plans or not.

Bobby, at the moment, had no plans, but he had this advantage—he knew Giveen’s game, and Giveen did not know his.

„The row I had with French,“ said the artful Bobby, „showed me what the man was. I was up on the downs one day when he was exercising his beastly horses, and he asked me what I was doing there. What I was doing there! As if the downs belonged to him! And I told him to go hang himself, and, as a matter of fact, he threatened to kick me.“

„Yes,“ said Mr. Giveen, „he’s great at kicking is Michael. But he’ll kick once too often one of these days.“ He rubbed his hands together softly and chuckled to himself.

„He will,“ said Bobby. „I’d give anything to get even with him and pay him back. I say, what brought you into that bazaar place?“

„What brought me in?“ said Giveen. „Why, what else but a girl.“

„A girl?“

„Faith, the prettiest girl I ever saw. I was coming along the street here, looking for some one to ask them where French lived, when a motor car stopped at that red brick place, and out of the motor car steps a girl with a face like a tea-rose. The instant her eye lit on me she smiles. Now, when a girl smiles at a fellow like that, what does it mean?“

„That she’s fallen in love with you, of course,“ replied Mr. Dashwood, looking at the face and figure of his companion as one looks at a Toby jug on a Hogarth print, allured yet repelled by its grotesqueness.

„Well,“ went on Mr. Giveen, „what does a fellow do when a girl looks at him like that but follow her? So in I went, and a chap at the door stops me. ‘Sixpence,’ says he. ‘What for?’ says I. ‘To go into the bazaar,’ says he. ‘What are they doin’ there?’ says I. ‘Selling things,’ says he. ‘I want a cup of tea,’ says I, ‘but I’m not goin’ to pay sixpence to go in and get it.’ ‘Oh,’ he says, ‘they give refreshment away for nothing to such as you.’ So in I went.“

„Just so,“ cut in Mr. Dashwood. „See here—when are you going back to town?“

„By the half-past five train.“

„Are you in a hurry to get back?“

„Faith, and I am. I’ve done my business here, and I’ve more business to do in town.“

„Look here,“ said Bobby, „I’ve been thinking you’re just the man who might help me. I want to play this fellow French a trick.“

„Sure,“ said the other, „our minds are jumpin’. A trick? Why, that’s the same I’m after myself.“

„I was thinking,“ said Bobby, „of rotting him by sending him a telegram from town to tell him to come up at once as some relation was ill. The only thing is, I don’t know if he has any relations in town.“

„That’s no use,“ said Giveen. „You leave me to play him a trick. See here—“

„Yes?“

„The chap’s rotten with debt.“

„Debt! Why, I thought he was a rich man.“

„Rich! He’s as poor as Brian O’Lynn. And, look here—he’s down here in hiding.“

„Hiding?“

„Ay—hiding from the bailiffs.“

„Good heavens!“ cried Bobbv. „Why, ev’ry one here thinks he’s a great swell.“

„He’s run away from Ireland, him and his horses, and done it so cleverly that no one knows where he’s gone to; but I’ve found out. It’s the truth I’m telling you. Well now, see here. He owed a chap in London no end of money; the chap’s name is Lewis, and Lewis sent a man to French’s house over in Ireland to take possession. Hammering away at the house door the man was, and it empty. Well, I got an inkling from a letter that Michael French himself, and his daughter and his governess and his horses, were down here, and here I’ve come to find out; and here he is, and it’s to-morrow morning I’m going to see Lewis, and it’s to-morrow night the bailiffs will be in at French’s.“

„Gloats!“ cried Bobby. „Oh, this is too much of a good thing all at once! Why, it will crack French up and ruin him! All the people here will cut him. He’ll be done for, utterly done for!“

„He’ll get such a twisting he’ll never get over it,“ said Giveen. „It’ll mean pretty nigh the workhouse for him and his brat. Cocking her up with a governess! And, see here—“

„Yes.“

„That governess is all me eye.“

Mr. Giveen accompanied this cryptic remark with a wink that spoke volumes of libel and slander, and Mr. Dashwood rose from his seat and executed a double-shuffle on the bar-room floor.

„What are you doing?“ asked Giveen.

„Doing? I feel as if I was going to burst! To think of getting even with that man! See here, you must come up to town and dine with me.“

„Sure, with the greatest pleasure. But I haven’t the honour of knowing your name yet. Me name’s Giveen.“

„And mine’s Smith. Where are you staying in town?“

„I’m staying at Swan’s Temperance Hotel, in the Strand.“

Mr. Dashwood looked at his watch.

„It wants ten minutes to five. We may as well get to the station. Have another drink?“

„Well, I don’t mind if I do,“ said Mr. Giveen, who worked on a fixed principle of never refusing anything he could get for nothing.

Bobby Dashwood called for more ginger-beer, which his companion consumed; then they started for the station.

The only plan Mr. Dashwood had in his mind for the moment was to cling to his companion. If the worst came to the worst he would, at least, have the satisfaction of kicking the traitor into the street out of Lewis’s office, where he determined to accompany him. But he felt dimly there was a chance between this and to-morrow morning of doing something to save French.

If Giveen had only been a drinker the path would have been clearer. The man who gets jolly has always soft spots one can work on. But Mr. Giveen had no

soft spots. He was soft all over, with hard spots in him here and there; and the hardest of all these spots was his hatred of French.

Chapter XXIII

Miss Hitchen.

MR. DASHWOOD, piloting his undesirable companion, led the way to the station, where they arrived ten minutes before the train was due.

He had seven pounds, the remains of the twelve pounds he had won at the Bridge Club, and he thanked fervently the powers above that he had the money about his person. To have left Mr. Giveen whilst he rushed back to *The Martens* for the sinews of war would have been a highly dangerous proceeding. He felt intuitively that Giveen was one of those people who, incapable of trust, have no trust in others, and that once this gentleman's suspicions were aroused the affair would be hopeless.

Above Bobby's intense desire to save French and thwart his enemy was the desire to shine in the eyes of Violet Grimshaw; to execute some stroke of finesse, to trump the ace that Fate had suddenly laid down on the card-table on which French was playing the greatest game of his life.

And he had not a trump card to his knowledge.

The train came steaming in, disgorged a few passengers, received some baskets of country produce and steamed out again, with Mr. Dashwood and his antagonist seated opposite to one another in a third-class smoking carriage.

Dashwood was by no means an „intellectual“, yet before they reached Victoria the unintellectuality of Mr. Giveen had reduced him from a condition of mild wonder to pure amazement. An animal of the meanest description would have been a far preferable companion to this gentleman from over the water, childish without the charm of childhood, ignorant and little-minded.

As Mr. Dashwood stepped out of the carriage at Victoria he saw, amidst the crowd on the platform, a figure and a face that he knew.

A tall girl, with red hair and a good-looking but rather masculine face, dressed in a tailor-made gown of blue serge, and wearing pince-nez. That was the apparition that brought Mr. Dashwood to a pause and caused him for a moment to forget Mr. Giveen.

It was Miss Hitchen, the high-minded girl with the latch-key, the student of Eugenics and Sociology, the lady who, in a moment of mental aberration, had engaged herself to Mr. Dashwood, and who, after recovering her senses, had disengaged herself, much to Mr. Dashwood's relief. She was evidently looking for some friend expected but not arrived. For a moment Mr. Dashwood paused. He had never loved Miss Hitchen, but he had always felt a profound respect for her intellect and grasp of things. In his present quandary, with French's fate literally in his hands, and with no idea how to preserve it, the clever and capable face of Miss Hitchen came as a light to a man in darkness.

They had parted in amity. In fact, the last words Miss Hitchen had said to him were of a nature almost prophetic. „Bobby,“ she said, „if your irresponsibility ever gets you into any scrape, and I can help you, let me know,

for you are just the sort of boy that gets into scrapes that only women can help a man out of.“

„Wait for me a moment,“ said Mr. Dashwood to Mr. Giveen. Then, pushing through the crowd, he touched Miss Hitchen lightly on the arm.

She turned.

„Bobby!“

„I’m so awfully glad to see you—you can’t tell! I say, I’m in a scrape—not me, but another man. I can’t explain everything at once. Don’t think there’s anything wrong, but a man’s whole fortune is hanging in the balance, and I want you to help to save it. Just look round there. Do you see that fellow in grey tweed, with a face like an—I don’t know what?“

„Yes,“ said Miss Hitchen, gazing at Mr. Giveen. „Is he the man in the scrape?“

„No; he’s the scrape. See here—will you drive with us to the Albany, and I’ll leave him there, and we can speak about the thing. He’s a gentleman and all that, but he’s slightly mad, and the whole thing is most curious.“

„Yes,“ said Miss Hitchen. „I came here to meet a girl, but she hasn’t turned up. If I can help you in any way I’m willing.“

„Well, then, I’ll introduce you to him, and wish you’d study him on the way to the Albany. I can’t tell you the importance of all this till we have a moment together alone.“

Mr. Dashwood left his companion and made through the crowd towards Mr. Giveen.

„I say,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „I’ve just met a lady-friend, a most charming girl, and she wants to be introduced to you.“

„Sure, with pleasure,“ replied the lady-killer.

„Well, come along then.“

He led him by the arm towards where the girl was standing, and effected the introduction.

„Now,“ said he, „as you say you are going in my direction, if the presence of myself and my friend Giveen here will not bore you, may I ask you to take a seat in my cab?“

„Oh, you won’t bore me,“ replied Miss Hitchen, who, with a searching glance, had taken in the face, form and bearing of Giveen, and who felt for this new type of individual something of the interest a naturalist feels on coming across a new species of insect. „You’ll amuse me.“

„Faith, we’ll try our best,“ said Mr. Giveen, whilst Bobby Dashwood went in search of a taxi-cab. „There’s nothing like fun, is there? And, faith, it’s fun we’ve been having to-day, Mr. Smith and I—“

„Mr. Smith!“ said Miss Hitchen, and then, recognising in a flash that the pseudonym was part of some artless plan of Bobby’s, „oh, yes, Mr. Smith. You mean my friend who has just introduced us. And what have you been doing? I mean, what did your fun consist of?“

„Faith, it mostly consisted of a girl.“

„Yes.“

Mr. Giveen tilted his hat and scratched his head. He did not shine as a conversationalist, and as Miss Hitchen watched him something of disfavour for this humorist with the shifty manner of a self-conscious child stole into her mind.

„Yes?“ said Miss Hitchen.

„I beg your pardon?“ said Mr. Giveen.

„You were saying something about a girl.“

„Oh, ay, it was a girl down at a place in the country, and, faith, by the same token, she was old enough to be my aunt. It was a bazaar.“

„Yes?“

„And she was selling tea behind a counter, and up I went, and ‚What can I serve you with?‘ says she, ‚A cup of tea,‘ says I, ‚and a bun.‘“

„How funny! What did she reply.“

„Faith, I forget—but the next she says to me, ‚One and sixpence,‘ she says.“

„Yes?“

„One and sixpence!“ suddenly burst out Mr. Giveen. „Why you might have knocked me down with a feather. And I put me hand into me pocket, and ‚Here’s sixpence for You,‘ says I, ‚and that’s tuppence too much, but you can keep the change.‘ With that she called an old gentleman up with a red face, and then Mr. Smith came and took me by the arm, and out we went—“

„And the sixpence?“

„Faith, I’ve got it still in me pocket.“

„How awfully amusing! But look, Mr. Smith has got us a cab. Thanks, no, I never take gentlemen’s arms; it is quite unnecessary.“

They took their seats in the taxi, Miss Hitchen and Mr. Dashwood in the back seat, Mr. Giveen sitting opposite to Miss Hitchen.

„The Albany, Piccadilly end,“ said Mr. Dashwood to the driver, and they started.

Before they had well cleared the precincts of the station, Miss Hitchen was alive to the fact that Mr. Giveen was „making eyes at her,“ ogling her. Mr. Dashwood noted the same fact, and with his elbow touched his companion’s arm as if to implore her patience. To have stopped the taxi-cab and kicked Mr. Giveen out of it would have been apples of gold in pictures of silver to Mr. Dashwood, but he controlled himself, contemplating French’s possible salvation as a Buddhist controls himself by contemplating Nirvana.

At the Piccadilly end of the Albany the taxi-cab drew up, and Miss Hitchen, who was on the kerb side, alighted hurriedly. She stood on the pavement waiting, whilst Mr. Dashwood paid the driver off, and then the three entered the Albany. Mr. Dashwood’s rooms were situated half-way up, on the right-hand side, and at the entrance to them he stopped and turned to Mr. Giveen.

„Will you come in and wait for me a few minutes? Miss Hitchen will excuse me if I run in for a moment with you, to show you the way. You can sit and wait for me a few minutes whilst I see Miss Hitchen into a cab. Come, this is the way.“ Mr. Giveen held out his hand to the girl.

„It’s sorry I am to have seen so little of you,“ said Mr. Giveen, „but, sure, if we have any luck, we may meet again.“

„Yes, I suppose so,“ replied Miss Hitchen, releasing her hand. „Good-evening.“

She waited.

In less than a minute and a half Mr. Dashwood reappeared.

„Bobby,“ said Miss Hitchen, as she turned with him to the Vigo Street entrance, „I have forgiven you many things, but that Thing is too much to be forgiven without a very complete explanation. Do you know that it put its toe on my foot in the cab?“

„Beast!“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Can you imagine my fix, tied to it? I feel as if I were going to burst. Now, look here. Here’s my situation in a nutshell.

„I know a man called French, the nicest fellow in the world. He's almost broken, but he has one thing left—a race-horse. The horse is almost sure to win the City and Suburban, and if he does French will make a fortune. Well, French is training the horse down at Crowsnest in Sussex. French owes a moneylender named Lewis a lot of money, and Lewis doesn't know where French is. If he knew it he would send down a man to-morrow and collar the horse. Do you see?“

„Yes.“

„Giveen is French's cousin.“

„Poor Mr. French.“

„And he has a mortal hatred to French. He has been hunting for his address for the last long time, and he has found it. He went down to Crowsnest to-day to make sure. He strayed into a bazaar that was going on there, and I met him. He was acting like a cad, refusing to pay for a cup of tea, and I froze on to him. Miss Grimshaw, French's governess, pointed him out to me, and told me who he was, and I froze on to him. I said my name was Smith, and I told him I hated French, and he unbosomed himself to me. Well, here's the position now. Tomorrow morning he's going down to Lewis the money-lender, and is going to put Lewis on to French. Now you see the position I'm in. For heaven's sake, try and think of what's to be done.“

„When is the race?“ asked Miss Hitchen.

„On the fifteenth.“

„Well, unless you murder him I don't see that anything is to be done. If the race were to-morrow or next day you might chloroform him, or lock him up in your rooms; but you can't lock a man up for fourteen days.“

„He ought to be locked up for life,“ said Bobby. „Idiot! If I could only make the beast tipsy I might do something with him, but he drinks nothing—only stone ginger-beer.“

„Ah!“ suddenly said Miss Hitchen, pausing.

„What is it?“ asked Mr. Dashwood.

„An idea.“

„Yes?“

„Why not sequestrate him?“

„What's that?“

„Hide him away.“

„Where on earth could I hide him?“

„Good gracious, Bobby, haven't you any imagination?“

„Not much,“ replied the unfortunate Bobby. „I was never any good at working out things, and now I'm so addled I can't think.“

„Well, now, listen to me. I don't want to be accessory before the act in this business, and I only make suggestions. Tell me, do you not sometimes go duck-shooting?“

„Yes.“

„Where do you go?“

„Essex.“

„Where in Essex (I know, because you have several times told me, but I want you to answer all my questions)—where in Essex do you go duck-shooting?“

„Why, you know very well it's Flatmarsh, down near Canvey Island.“

„Where do you stay there?“

„Uncle James's hole of a cottage.“

„Is Uncle James's hole of a cottage occupied now?“

„No.“

„No one lives near it?“

„Not within six miles.“

„Good. Can you drive a motor car?“

„Should think so!“

„And hire one?“

„Yes, I've got tick at Simpson's. Oh, by Jove! I see what you mean!“

„I'm glad you do; otherwise I would have fancied that your mental sight was defective.“

„I see what you mean! But, look here—if I got him down there, how would I feed the beast and keep him hid?“

„Biscuits and tinned meat can be bought, and enough for a fortnight wouldn't cost more than, say, three or four pounds.“

„And there's a well there, so we'd have plenty of water,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I say you are a ripper! I'd never have thought of all that.“

„Would Simpson, or whoever he is, let you hire a car for a fortnight?“

„Course he would. I always pay up my bills, though he has to wait sometimes; but I paid him my last bill a month ago.“

„Where is his place?“

„Just close here, in Regent Street.“

„Now, another thing—can you imagine what it would be to live for a fortnight alone in a cottage with a person like that, acting as his gaoler?“

„Oh, Lord!“ said Bobby, „you think of everything! No, I can't, but I'll do it to save French.“

„Bobby,“ said Miss Hitchen.

„Yes?“

„Do you know what I've discovered?“

„No.“

„That I'm a fool.“

„You a fool?“

„Yes. I thought you were only an irresponsible boy, but I find you're a man.“

„Thanks—thanks,“ said Bobby. „Anyhow, I'll try to be.“

„You needn't thank me. Now, have you any money?“

„About five pounds.“

„Well, I'll lend you another five pounds. No, I won't, but I'll buy the provisions myself. If I left that to you you'd forget the essentials. Are there plates and things at the cottage?“

„Lots.“

„Well, now, like a good boy, go at once to Simpson's and order the car, and get back before that animal takes it into his head to escape.“

„Do you mean I ought to take him to-night?“

„Of course I mean it.“

„Will I see you again this evening?“

„No; but you can write and tell me the result. Same address. The provisions for your excursion will be sent to the Albany by special messenger within the hour. And, oh! Bobby!“

„Yes?“

„Do be artful. Say you are taking him out to dinner at a country-house. Once he's in the car—“

„Once he’s in the car,“ said Bobby, „he’ll stick in it, or I’ll smash him up. Oh, leave him to me. But I can never thank you enough. What makes you so awfully clever?“

„He squeezed my foot,“ said Miss Hitchen.

Chapter XXIV

Deportation.

MR. GIVEEN, left alone in Mr. Dashwood’s chambers, took a comfortable seat in an arm-chair and gazed around him.

He felt that he had fallen on his feet. He had extracted two bottles of ginger-beer, some biscuits, and a drive in a taxi-cab from his new-found friend; he was going to extract a dinner; he was about to have his revenge on French. All these things combined to cast him into a pleasant and amused state of mind, and he looked with satisfaction at all the evidences of well-being around him.

Then he got up and began a circuit of the room, looking at the prints on the wall, examining his own face in the looking-glass, touching the boxing-gloves and foils. Then he examined the writing-table. Fortunately there were no letters with Mr. Dashwood’s name on them, and when he had turned over the books and taken another peep at himself in the glass he resumed his seat and presently fell into a doze which deepened into slumber.

He had slept like this for some three-quarters of an hour, when he was awakened by the entry of his new friend.

„Well,“ said Bobby, in a cheerful voice. „How are you getting along? Been asleep, hey? Now, look here, I want you to come out to dinner with me.“

„Right you are,“ said Mr. Giveen, rubbing his eyes. „I’m with you—hay yow! I’m half mothered with all me travelling. And what’s become of Miss What’s-her-name?“

„She—oh, we’re going to meet her at dinner. She’s gone on in her motor car.“

„So she keeps a motor car, does she?“ said Mr. Giveen, rising, and pulling down his waistcoat.

„Rather! She keeps two. Why, she has half-a-million of money of her own. And look here,“ said the artful Bobby, „I’m only taking you to dinner with her on one condition.“

„And what’s that?“

„Well, I’m rather sweet on her myself, do you see—“

„Oh! faith, you may trust me,“ said Mr. Giveen, in high good spirits. „I’m not a marrying-man, or I’d have been snapped up years ago, musha! But oughtn’t I to go back to me hotel for a black coat?“

„Oh, you won’t want any black coat where we’re going to,“ said Bobby, with grim jocularly. „They are most unconventional people. But, maybe, you’d like to wash your hands. This is my bedroom.“

He ushered his guest into the bedroom and left him there. When he returned to the sitting-room he found Robert waiting for him with the announcement that some parcels had come.

„Let’s see them,“ said Mr. Dashwood.

Four large brown paper parcels were on the floor of the landing; they had just arrived from Thompson's, the big Italian warehouse in Regent Street.

„That's right," said Bobby. „I'm taking them down to a place. And see here, Robert, I may be away a few days. I've got a car coming; it will be at the Vigo Street entrance in a few minutes. Just keep a lookout for it and let me know when it arrives.“

„Yes, sir. Shall I pack you some things?“

„Yes; shove a few things into a bag—enough for a week—and stow the bag and these parcels in the back of the car when it comes.“

Twenty minutes later, to Mr. Dashwood and his companion appeared Robert with the announcement that the car was in readiness.

Bobby led the way to the Vigo Street entrance, where, drawn up at the kerb, stood a forty horsepower Daimler car with lamps lit.

Bobby looked at this formidable locomotive with an appreciative eye, and the chauffeur sent with it by Simpson getting down, he mounted and took the steering pillar. Giveen, innocent of danger as a lamb entering the yard of the butcher, got in and took his seat beside Mr. Dashwood.

„Right!“ said Bobby.

He backed into Cork Street, and then, turning again into Vigo Street, passed into Regent Street.

„How far is it, did you say, to Miss Hitchen's?“ asked Mr. Giveen.

„I didn't say—but it's not far—at least, with this car. Are you used to motors?“

„No, faith, I've never driven in one before. And are you used to driving them?“

„Oh, pretty well.“

„Do you ever have accidents?“

„Accidents! Rather. That's half the fun. The last accident I had the car turned turtle and pinned the fellow that was with me under the engine; the petrol spilt on him and a spark set it on fire—“

„Good God!“ said the horrified Giveen. „Was he burnt?“

„Was who burnt?“

„The chap with the petrol on him.“

„Burnt!, they gathered up his ashes in a bucket. Didn't you read about it in the papers?“

„No,“ said Mr. Giveen; „I didn't.“

They passed down the Strand; the night was clear and warm for the time of the year—a fortunate circumstance for Mr. Giveen, as he had no overcoat. They passed up Fleet Street, by St. Paul's, and down Bishopsgate Street.

„Is it anywhere near here?“ asked Giveen, as they passed Whitechapel Church and turned into the old coaching road to Ilford.

„Is what near here?“ asked Bobby.

„The place we're going to.“

„Oh, it's about sixty or eighty miles.“

„Sixty or eighty miles!“

„Yes—that's nothing to a car like this. You just see how I'm going to make her hum. I haven't had a car like this to drive since I came out of that beastly asylum place.“

„I beg your pardon?“ said Giveen, cold shivers going up his back. „Did you say—did I understand you to say—which asylum place was it did you say?“

„Don't bother me with questions,“ replied Mr. Dashwood, „for when people talk to me when I'm driving I'm sure to do something wrong.“

Chapter XXV

The Letter.

WHEN Miss Grimshaw saw Bobby leading Mr. Giveen to the bazaar entrance she returned to her duties with so distracted a mind that she sold a seven-and-sixpenny tea-cloth to Mrs. Passover, the sanitary inspector's wife, for two-and-sixpence, and was only conscious of the fact when she was reminded of it by Miss Slimon, the presiding genius of the stall.

On the pretext of a headache she released herself at five o'clock and made directly for *The Martens*, where she found Mr. French smoking a cigar and reading a novel, and utterly oblivious of the fact that he had promised to attend the bazaar.

„What's up?“ said French, putting his book and reading glasses down and staring at the girl, whose face and manner were eloquent of news.

„He's come.“

„Who?“

„Mr. Giveen.“

The owner of Garryowen sprang to his feet.

„He's come, has he! Where is he? He's come, has he!“

„Stop!“ she said, half-frightened with the ferocity of the outraged French. „It mayn't be so bad as you think. Mr. Dashwood is with him and is going to do what he can. There's no use in violence. Sit down and listen to me and I'll tell you all about it.“

French sat down in the chair from which he had just arisen. The animal fury which the idea of Giveen excited in his mind might have given cause to grave results had the image come within striking distance; and little blame to him, for here was Garryowen trained to a turn. Weeks and months of care and the genius of Moriarty had brought the colt to that point of perfection which leaves nothing to be desired but the racing day. Only a few days separated them from the supreme moment when, if Fate were propitious, the black-and-yellow colours of Drumgool would be carried first past the winning-post; the possibility of winning a small fortune was almost becoming a certainty, and now, to thwart him of his desire and cripple him for life, here came Dick Giveen.

„But what took him into the bazaar?“ asked he, when the girl had finished her story.

„Providence, I believe,“ replied Miss Grimshaw. „Just fancy, if he hadn't come in! He has come down here, evidently, to make sure that you are here. If he hadn't wandered into the bazaar he might have found out what he wanted and gone back to London without our knowing, and then the next thing would have been a man in possession.“

French rose up and paced the floor several times without speaking, then he broke out:

„I don't see what Dashwood is to do with him; unless he murders him he'll never stop him from going to Lewis and blowing the gaff. What's the good of

following him? Might as well leave him alone; better to have it over at once and done with. Well, let them do their worst, but they'll never get the horse, for as sure as Lewis takes possession I'll shoot him."

"Shoot Mr. Lewis?"

"No; the horse."

He strode out of the room, and by the back entrance to the bungalow found the stable-yard.

Moriarty was in the yard, completing a trap of his own invention; a thing simple as sin, fatal as death, and artful as the mind of its maker. Miss Grimshaw had spoken strongly to Mrs. Driscoll about the poaching. Catching rabbits and such things might be excusable, said Miss Grimshaw, but poaching sheep and eggs was indefensible. It was robbery, in fact, and should it come to her ears again she would inform Mr. French. Stoutly denying all knowledge of the fact, Mrs. Driscoll, all the same, listened to the words of the governess and conveyed them to Moriarty.

"Sheep?" said Moriarty, with a wink at his informer. "What sheep does she mane?"

"Faith, I dunno, but she says she saw you and Andy draggin' a sheep into the loose-box be the wan The Cat's in."

"Oh, that ould bell-wether! Sure, it was to keep him from the cowl we put him there. And was it our fault if he committed suicide and killed himself and skinned himself and hung himself up in quarters?"

All the same, from that day he paid no more attention to the comfort of the sheep of the neighbourhood, confining himself to smaller game.

"Moriarty," said Mr. French, "Mr. Given has found out where we are. He's been down here to-day, and it's all up with us."

"Faith, sorr," said Moriarty, "and I'm not surprised. The only wonder to me is he didn't find us out before."

"Well, he's found us out now, anyhow, and be hanged to him. There's only one thing. Mr. Dashwood has got hold of him and is sticking to him. Not that I expect he'll do much good."

Moriarty, who had put his trap down on the window-ledge of the kitchen, pursed his lips and stood with one hand caressing his foxy chin.

"And where has Mr. Dashwood got him, sorr?" asked he, after a moment's silence.

"I don't know."

"Be any chance, sorr, d'you think he's left the place yet? For if he hasn't, and we could speak him fair and get him up here—"

"Yes?"

"Well, sorr, there's a loose-box beside the wan The Cat's in."

"You mean we might lock him up there?"

"Yes, sorr."

"He'd never come, and if he did he'd shout the place down."

"Faith he'd be silent enough, sorr, wid a rope gag in him."

"We couldn't keep him ten days, and he'd have a tearing action against us—not that I'd care about that. See here, Moriarty."

"Yes, sorr?"

"Down with you to the village and station, and if by any chance you see him with Mr. Dashwood—well, b'god, I'll do it. Get him up here; tell him I want to see him. We may as well try!—"

„Yes, sorr.“

Moriarty went into the stables and slipped on his jacket. An hour later he returned from the village with the news that Mr. Dashwood and the strange gentleman had departed for London by the five-o'clock train.

Early next morning with the letters arrived a telegram that Mr. Dashwood had dispatched the night before:

„Gieven safe.“

Mr. French, having read it, put on his dressing-gown, and, crossing over to the door of Miss Grimshaw's room, knocked and pushed the envelope under the door.

„Read that,“ shouted Mr. French.

„Good!“ came the girl's voice, when she had read it. „I knew he'd do something. Oh, what a relief!“

At breakfast, with the open telegram on the table, they discussed it.

„It was handed in at Regent Street last night at eight o'clock,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „What, I wonder, can he have done to him, or how can he have got round him?“

„I don't know what he's done to him,“ said her companion, „but I know one thing, he'll never get round him, and if he thinks he's talked him over he'll find he's made a mistake.“

„Well,“ said the girl, „whatever has happened has happened. We have done our best, and if we are beaten it won't be our faults. And there is some satisfaction in that.“

The day passed, bringing no news from Mr. Dashwood. The next day also passed without news; but by the early post of the third day arrived a letter.

The envelope was shabby and dirty, and the address was written in pencil. Mr. French tore the thing open, and read:

„DEAR FRENCH—I've bottled him; I'm scribbling this with pencil as I have got no ink, and I don't know how I will post it. Anyhow, I'm writing it on the chance of finding some means of doing so. I got Gieven up to my rooms in town, and when I had him there I didn't in the least know what to do with him. The beast hates you. I got it all out of him by pretending you were an enemy of mine. He told me straight out that he was going to set Lewis on you, and, upon my soul, there were moments on the journey up to town when I could have flung him out of the railway carriage. Anyhow, when I got him to my rooms, a brilliant idea occurred to a friend of mine, whom I consulted. I hired a motor car, bought some provisions, got Gieven into it, and motored him down here to a cottage which belongs to an uncle of mine, and which he uses for duck-shooting.

„It's the most God-forsaken place in the world on the Essex coast, not a soul within miles; only seagulls. Of course Gieven bucked coming down, but only mildly. A happy thought occurred to me, and I pretended to be slightly balmy. I told him I was the King of Siam—that quieted him. He's dead certain he's in the grip of a lunatic, and asks no questions. I make him do the cooking, such as it is, and the washing-up; I never let him out of my sight for a moment, and I sleep at night with my bed drawn across the door. The whole thing is like what you'd read of in a book; but it's too awful for words. He can talk about nothing, and we are living on tinned meat and biscuits, and now my tobacco is giving out. I'd ask you to send

me some, only I daren't, for if the postman came here Giveen would be sure to make a bid for freedom.

„Be sure I will stick to him like grim death, and give my kind regards to all at The Martens.“

French read this important dispatch to Miss Grimshaw as they sat at breakfast, and the girl listened with sparkling eyes.

„I always hated motor cars,“ said she, when he had finished, „but I'll never hear a word against them again. Wasn't it clever of him! And the cleverest thing in the whole business is the King of Siam part, for if there's any bother afterwards he can put the whole affair down to a practical joke. There's only five days now to the thirteenth. You are moving the horse to Major Lawson's stables at Newmarket on the thirteenth, aren't you?“

„I am,“ said French. „I had a letter from him only yesterday asking after the colt. By George, but I believe we'll pull the thing through after all!“

He rose from the table in high excitement; went to the window and stood, jingling the keys in his pocket and gazing at the view. It seemed to him that at last fortune was beginning to make a way for him. A few days only separated him from his goal. If Bobby Dashwood could only keep Giveen „bottled“ till the thirteenth, or even the twelfth, all would be well. Could he do this? Time alone could answer that question.

Chapter XXVI

Marshland and Sea.

IT will be remembered that the night of the fifth of April was the date of the kidnapping of Mr. Giveen. Early in the morning of the sixth Mr. Dashwood awoke from his slumbers with a start, looked around him, and remembered.

The cottage contained only two bedrooms and a living-room. He had taken a bed the night before from one of the bedrooms and dragged it in front of the living-room door, which was also the hall door. Here he had slept, literally making a barrier of his body to the escape of Giveen.

His first thought was of his prisoner, but he was reassured as to his safety by loud snores coming from the bedroom where he had deposited him the night before. The morning reflections of Mr. Dashwood, as he lay watching the mournful dawn breaking through the diamond-paned window, were not of the most cheerful description.

In seizing the body of Mr. Giveen and forcibly deporting it from London to Essex he had broken the law. The fact that Giveen was an enemy of French's, and about to do him a cruel injury, would, Mr. Dashwood felt, weigh very little with a jury should the said Giveen take an action against him for wrongful imprisonment; and he felt distinctly that Giveen, despite all his softness, was just the man to take such a course. The craft of Giveen was fully demonstrated by the way in which he had acted the night before. Believing himself in the power of a lunatic, he had adapted himself to the situation, feigning unconcern as a beetle feigns death. Besides gloomy forebodings as to the ultimate issue of his illegal proceedings, Mr. Dashwood had to face the immediate prospect of

Giveen's close companionship for ten days or so. But, as a set-off to these undesirabilities, he had the pleasant vision of French liberated from his difficulties, Garryowen passing the winning-post with a beaten favourite behind him, and last, but not least, Violet Grimshaw's face when he told her all.

Enlivened by the thought of this, he sprang out of bed, pulled the bed away from the door, and opened it. The bleak morning had broken fully now upon the marshlands and the sea; a cold wind was blowing from the south-east, bending the wire grass and bringing with it the chilly sound of small waves breaking on the shore; electric white gulls were circling and crying by the distant sea-edge, and the marble-grey clouds were running rapidly overhead.

He shut the door on this dismal prospect and turned his attention to the fireplace.

He remembered that the last time he was here there was some coal and firewood in the little outhouse at the corner adjoining the shed under whose shelter he had placed the car. He went out now, and, opening the out-house door, found several hundredweight of coal stacked in a corner of the shed, and a dozen or so bundles of firewood by the coal; an old basket stood by the coal, and filling this with fuel and sticks he returned to the cottage.

Giveen was still snoring, and Mr. Dashwood, who had no desire for his company, left him to his slumbers whilst he proceeded to the business of lighting the fire. Then he undid the package of provisions and spread the contents on the dresser. Tinned meat and biscuits formed the store—nothing else, unless we include two small jars of olives; and as Mr. Dashwood looked at the row of biscuit bags and tins he came to the conclusion that, however learned in Eugenics and Sociology, Miss Hitchen was somehow deficient in her knowledge of household management. When he had untinned a tongue, put some biscuits on a plate, and boiled some water, which, if you drink it hot enough and with your eyes shut, you cannot distinguish from tea, he called his companion, and they sat down to their cheerless meal, Giveen amiable and even cheerful, seeming to find nothing extraordinary in his position but fencing with the subject whenever Bobby brought the conversation in the direction of Siam, and, Mr. Dashwood noted, with his eyes ever wandering to the door.

After breakfast he wrote the letter we have seen to Mr. French and put it in his pocket, with a view to finding some means of sending it later; then he took his charge out for a walk on the salt marshes. After dinner, with an old pack of cards, which he discovered in the dresser drawer, they played beggar-my-neighbour, and dusk closed on that terrible day and found them sitting without candles or lights of any sort, by the embers of the fire, Mr. Giveen still amiable and even mildly cheerful.

Had he been obstreperous or quarrelsome, had he even asked questions as to Bobby's intentions, had he been irritable, the situation would have been more bearable; but he sat uncannily composed and amiable, and giving no hint of dissatisfaction with his position and no sign of revolt or evasion, with the exception of the tell-tale wandering of his eye every now and then towards the door.

Bobby's watch had run down, and Mr. Giveen had no timepiece, time being to him of no account, and, at an indeterminable hour, Mr. Dashwood, yawning, dragged his bed to the door by the light of the flickering fire, and his prisoner retired to the bedroom and, judging by the sound of snoring that soon filled the cottage, to sleep.

It was long past midnight when Mr. Dashwood was aroused from sleep by cries from the night outside. The clouds had broken and a full moon was casting her light through the diamond panes of the windows as, sitting up in bed, he strained his ears to listen.

It was Giveen's voice, and Giveen was shouting for help. He dragged the bed from the door, opened the door, and without waiting to dress rushed out into the night.

The cries were coming from the back of the cottage. Running round, he came upon the object of distress and the cause.

The front-end of Mr. Giveen was protruding from the tiny window of the bedroom; this window had possessed a bar across it, which bar the prisoner, by a miracle of patience and dexterity, had removed. He had got his head and one arm and shoulder through, and there he was stuck.

„Help!“ cried Mr. Giveen. „I'm stuck.“

„Try back,“ cried Bobby. „Don't push forward or you'll be stuck worse. What made you try to get out of that window, you sainted fool? It's not big enough for a child. Push back.“

„Back, is it!“ cried the perspiring Giveen. „Back or front is all the same. I tell you, I'm stuck—for good. Help! Murder! Thieves!“

„Come forward then,“ cried Bobby, seizing the free arm, „and shut that row. Now then, all together. Push whilst I pull.“

„Let up, or you'll have the arm off me,“ cried the afflicted one. „Holy Mary! but you're murdering me! Go round to the room and pull at me legs if you want to pull. Maybe you'll get me in, for be the powers, you may pull till you're black but you'll never get me out.“

„Right,“ said Bobby.

He ran round, entered the bedroom, which was in darkness owing to the occlusion of the window, groped for the afflicted one's legs, found them, and pulled. Loud bellows from the night outside was the only result. First he pulled face fronting the window and with one foot against the wall for purchase, then with his back to Giveen and with one leg under each arm, pulling like a horse in the shafts, he pulled.

„Good Lord!“ said Mr. Dashwood at last, taking his seat on the bed and wiping the perspiration from his brow. „I don't know what we're to do with the boulder unless we pull the cottage down.“

Chapter XXVII

The Story.

ON the morning of the tenth of April Mr. French awoke from a night of pleasant dreams to find the sun shining broad and strong through the window of his bedroom.

He had dreamt of the great race; he had seen in a glorified vision the field sweeping round Tattenharn Corner, Garryowen a length ahead of the favourite; he had heard the roar of the crowd and had been congratulated by all sorts of dream people. The exhilaration of the vision clung to him as he dressed and accompanied him as he breakfasted.

Not a word had come from Mr. Dashwood since the letter announcing the „bottling“ of Giveen, but no news in this case was good news.

Only three days now lay between him and the eventful thirteenth, and if Dashwood could only keep his prisoner safe for three days more all would be well. The chance that Garryowen mightn't win the race never even occurred to French. He was certain; and one of the reasons of his certainty was the opposition that Fate had put in his way. He felt dimly that Fate would never have taken all this trouble to thwart him, would never have put so many obstacles in his path, if she were not sure that when the flag fell the victory of Garryowen would be a certainty.

After breakfast he went out on the downs to watch the colt taking his exercise.

The length of the City and Suburban course had been marked out on the great flat table-land, and here Garryowen and The Cat (the swiftest thing save Garryowen that French had ever possessed) were now exercising, Andy up on Garryowen and Buck Slane on The Cat. Moriarty, a straw in his mouth, was watching them.

„We'll do it, Moriarty,“ said French, as he took his stand beside his henceman and fixed his eyes on the distant horses that were being walked back towards him.

„I'm beginnin' to b'lave we will, sorr,“ replied Moriarty. „We'll just hit the cruck in the middle be the fifteenth; there's not a bit of overthrainin' about the colt; I've been keepin' him back for the last few days, for a horse all fiddle-strings is no more use on the course than a barber's cat at a concert; and did yiz ever hear of thim college chaps, sorr, that goes up for their 'xaminations wid the stuff stickin' out of their heads, and nothin' in their heads but addlement? Faith, Mr. Casey of Thrinity College told me of thim when he was down for the shootin'. He said he'd seem thim college boys, some of thim, larnin' up their stuff right till they were forenint the 'xaminers, wid their book in their hands till the last minit, and thim sort of chaps, says he, always gets stuck, for their 'rithmetic gets jammed in their Latin, and when they open their gobs to spake their g'ography comes out when it's Greek they ought to be answerin'. But you take the boys that aise off before the 'xamination day, says he, and they git through becuse they're the wise ones. Well, it's just the same wid a horse, sorr; addle his legs wid overthrainin' and you do for him.“

„He's a good starter, he's a good goer, and he's got a jockey that knows him,“ said French, as he watched the horses approaching. „And the jockey's a lot.“

„A lot, sorr! It's everything, be the powers! Same as a wife to a man; and what is a wife, sorr, to a man, if she's a decent wife, but a jockey that brings him first past the winnin'-post if he's got the go in him?“

Mr. French assented to this sage pronouncement of Moriarty's and returned to the house in high good spirits. He had just reached the verandah when the sight of something coming up the path made him catch his breath.

This something was a telegraph boy.

„French?“ said the boy, presenting an envelope. Mr. French tore it open.

„Giveen loose, clean got away, motoring down.—Dashwood.“

„Any answer, sir?“

„No,“ said Mr. French; „there's no answer.“

He stood for a moment with the paper crushed in his hand. He could hear the boy whistling as he went down hill. Then he passed into the bungalow.

„Norah!“ cried Mr. French.

„Yes, sir.“

„Fetch me the whisky decanter, and ask Miss Grimshaw to come here.“

He went into the sitting-room. „Giveen loose—clean got away.“ The words danced, before him and sang in his ears, turned somersaults and stood on their heads like a troop of tormenting gamins.

In the crises of a complex and fantastic tragedy such as that of French's, the most galling thing is the inability to seize the whole situation and meet it philosophically. A bank smash which sweeps away one's fortune is a four-square disaster, sizeable if stunning; but this business of Garryowen's was ungraspable and unmeasurable, and unfightable as a nightmare. The horse was in apparent safety one moment, and the next in imminent danger. Fortune was quite close now and holding out her hand; now she was at a distance, and her hand, fingers extended, was at her nose. Yesterday the dreaded Giveen was safe in Ireland; to-day he was attending the village bazaar. Now Mr. Dashwood had him a safe prisoner down in the wilds of Essex, and now he had escaped. The fight for fortune had been a long one, vast obstacles had been overcome—was it all to end at the last moment in disaster?

When Miss Grimshaw entered the room she found Mr. French seated at the table with the open telegram before him, and at his side a glass of whisky-and-water and a decanter.

„Read that,“ said he.

She took the message and read it with a constriction at the heart.

„Well,“ said he, „what do you think of that?“

Miss Grimshaw, before answering, took the whisky decanter from the table and put it on the side table.

„Oh, you needn't be afraid of me,“ said French. „I'm too much at the end of my tether to care very much what happens. Faith, I wouldn't take the bother to get drunk.“

„All the same,“ said the girl, „we must meet this with as cool a head as possible. *Motoring down*,“ (she was reading the message). „Who does he mean, I wonder? Of course he must mean himself, because he evidently does not know where Mr. Giveen is or what he's doing. It was handed in at Regent Street this morning at 9.15; received here at 10.20. It is now nearly eleven—“

„Listen!“ said French.

Sounds came very clearly up here from the lower land, and the sound which had attracted French's attention was the throb of a motor car approaching along the station road.

Moved by an identical impulse they approached the window leading on to the verandah. Mr. French opened it and they passed out.

They could see the car, a large touring car, approaching slowly; there was only one individual in it, and—„That's him!“ said Miss Grimshaw, forgetful of grammar, leaving the verandah and taking the down-hill path to the road.

French followed her and they reached the road just as the car was coming to a halt. It was Mr. Dashwood in very truth, but a more different edition of the joyous and irresponsible Bobby it would be hard to imagine. His hat on the back of his head exposed fully his face, grimy, unwashed and weary. He had, altogether, the disreputable appearance of a person who had been out all night,

and as he crawled out of the car, his movements suggested old age or rheumatism.

„Something to eat!“ said Bobby, as he took French’s arm with his left hand and held out his right to Miss Grimshaw. „I’m nearly done. Giveen is loose, but I’ll tell you it all when I get up to the house. Thanks; may I lean on you? The car will be all right here.“

„Come along up,“ said French.

No word was said till Mr. Dashwood was seated in the sitting-room with a glass of whisky-and-soda in his hand.

„Oh, this is good!“ said he. „I haven’t had a drink since I don’t know how long.“

„Don’t drink till you have had some food,“ said the girl. „I’ll get something for you at once. There’s a tin of tongue—“

„Don’t!“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Don’t mention tinned meat or biscuits to me! I’ve lived on them. Oh, Lord! don’t let me think of it!“

„An egg?“

„Yes, an egg—anything but tinned meat. It’s almost as bad as Giveen.“

In five minutes the egg was boiled, and half an hour after Mr. Dashwood, young again, smoking a pipe of French’s, began his recital.

He told all we know: how he had „shanghaied“ Mr. Giveen, how that gentleman had tried to escape and had stuck in the window. „I pulled and hauled,“ said Bobby, „but it was all no use, and, upon my Sam, I thought it would be a business of pulling the cottage down.“

„How did you get him loose at last?“ asked French. „And why the deuce didn’t you leave him stuck there till the race was over? You could have fed him from the outside.“

„Upon my soul, I never thought of that!“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I felt I had to get him free somehow, and then I thought of a patent dodge, I’d heard of a chap lighting a fire of straw under a horse that wouldn’t go, and I knew the only way to free the beggar was to make him use all his exertions and even more; so I got some straw out of the out-house place and made a big wisp of it and lit it. Made a torch, you know. ‚What are you doing?‘ he said. ‚You wait and see,‘ I replied, and jabbed it in his face. You wouldn’t believe it, but he went in *pop* like when you push a cork down into a bottle. Then I ran round and secured him.

„Well, I pointed out to him next morning the error of his ways, and he promised to make no more attempts to escape. ‚Look here,‘ said I, ‚I’ve been pretending to you I was cracked. I’m not. I just got you down here because I’m a friend of French’s and I don’t want you to set Lewis on him, and here you’ll stay till I choose to let you loose. It’s as bad for me as you—worse, for you’re a beastly slow companion. Anyhow, here you are and here you’ll stick till I give you leave to go.‘ At that he began saying that he had no enmity to you at all and that if I’d only let him loose he’d go back to Ireland and make no more trouble; but I told him straight out I wouldn’t trust him, and there the matter ended. I had written a letter to you, and I had it in my pocket. A half-witted sort of boy came round the place and I gave him the letter and sixpence to post it. Did you get it?“

„We did.“

„I felt when I gave him it like old Noah letting the dove out of the ark, and then we settled down to our tinned meat and biscuits—Oh, Lord! I don’t want to talk or think of it. We played beggar-my-neighbour with an old pack of cards.

Then my tobacco gave out. Giveen didn't mind. He was quite happy on the tinned meat, and he doesn't smoke or drink; and I had to go through it all without complaining, and that was the worst of it—“

„I think it was splendid of you!“ said the girl. „Go on.“

„Faith, and splendid is no word,“ said French. „You're a friend in a million. Go on.“

Fortified by these praises, the weary one continued his narrative.

„Well, day after day passed till I began, like those chaps that get shipwrecked, to lose count of time. I heard church bells ringing the day before yesterday, for instance, and then I knew it was Sunday somewhere, for it didn't seem Sunday or any other day in that beastly cottage. Time seemed to have stopped. You see, there were no books there, no newspapers, nothing, and my tobacco had given out; and against all that misery the tinned meat and biscuits began to stand out in such high relief that meal-time became a horror. Oh, Lord! don't let me talk about it! I want to try and forget it.

„Well, things went on like that till it came to yesterday, and I said to myself, ‘This can't go on any longer, for I'm beginning to hear voices, and the next thing will be I'll see things. Southend is only ten or eleven miles away; it's a flat road and there's the car outside. I'll lock Giveen up in his room, make a dash for Southend in the car, get some tobacco and a bottle of whisky and some books and dart back again. I'll do the whole thing in an hour or so, and it's better to take the risk than lose my reason.’ So I just told Giveen I was very sorry but he'd have to accommodate himself to circumstances, and I got a fishing-line of the uncle's and fastened his wrists behind his back; then I fastened him with a rope and a rolling bend knot to the iron bedstead in the bedroom, told him I wouldn't be more than an hour away, shut the door on him, jumped into the car and drove off. I got to Southend in record time. I only ran over one hen, but I very nearly had an old woman and a dog. I piled up with sixpenny novels and comic papers at the first book shop, got three bottles of Johnnie Walker, half a pound of navy-cut and some matches, and started back. It was half-past three when I left Southend, and I hadn't gone more than two miles when the car came to a dead stop. I don't know the *innards* of a car. I only knew that the thing had stopped, that I was nine miles from the cottage, and that the car was right in the fair way blocking the road. A butcher's cart came along and the butcher got down and helped me to push her out of the middle on to the side of the road. He said he didn't know of any repairing shop or blacksmith's nearer than Southend. I asked him to lend me his horse to drag the car back to Southend, but he couldn't. He had his meat to deliver, but he said I'd be sure to find help before long as there was a lot of traffic on the road. So off he went and left me. I thought of leaving the old car to look after herself and going back to the cottage on foot; but I couldn't do that as I'd never have been able to come back for her, and she's worth eight or nine hundred. So I just sat in her and smoked a pipe and waited. I tell you I was in a stew, for I didn't know if I'd made the fishing-line too tight for Giveen's wrists, and if they swelled mortification or goodness knows what might have come on; and I began to think of having to support him for life if his hands had to be cut off; and then I began to think that maybe he might die of it and I'd be hanged for murder or gaoled for life.

„Presently a big touring car came along with a young fellow and a chauffeur in it, and I signalled them to stop, and it pulled up, and who should it be but

Billy Bones! He's Lord St. Ivel's second son, you know; they call him Billy Bones because they say he never eats anything else but grilled bones at three o'clock in the morning. Last time I'd seen him was at the Rag-Tag Club, in Cork Street, at two-o'clock of a Sunday morning, playing bridge with one eye shut to see the pips on the cards. Billy is one of those men who know everything, and he knows all about the inside of a motor car—or thinks he does.

„Hello,“ said Billy, „what's up?“

„I told him, and he hopped out of his car and said he'd have everything right in a minute. He got out his repairing tools, whipped off his coat and got right under the car with his tools, lying on his back in the dust of the road—he's one of those fellows who don't care what they do. I could hear him under the car, and he seemed taking the whole thing to pieces; you could hear the nuts coming out and the pipes being unscrewed and the petrol escaping. He was stuck under there for half an hour or so, and then he came out, looking like a sweep, and he said it was all right and I only had to start her. But she wouldn't start.

„He got under her again and spent another half-hour tinkering at her, and then he came out and said it was all right this time and told me to start her. I started her, but she wouldn't budge. Then Billy told his chauffeur to see what he could do, and the chauff didn't get under the car, he just examined the petrol supply business and in about sixteen seconds she was all right. „I thought I'd done it,“ said Billy, putting on his coat.

„There was an hour clean gone and, I tell you, if I came fast to Southend I flew going back. I got her under the shed and went to the cottage. As soon as I went in I saw something was wrong, for the bedroom door was open. I looked into the bedroom and Giveen was gone.“

„Bad cess to him!“ said French, who had been following the raconteur with deep interest.

„I went to the door and looked around,“ said Mr. Dashwood, "and then I saw, far away on the road, the idiot chap that had taken my letter. He must have come to the cottage looking after more sixpences and let Giveen loose. It was now getting on for five, and the dusk was closing in. I rushed to the car, got her out of the shed, and started off on the London road. You see, I knew he hadn't taken the Southend road, or I'd have met him, and there was nowhere else for him to go unless he'd taken to the marshes or gone into the sea.

„I turned the car so sharp from the by rond into the London road that I nearly upset her, and then I let her loose. I had a chapter of accidents, for my hat blew off and I had to stop and get it. Three children were making mud pies in the middle of the way right before a cottage, and I as nearly as possible made hash of them; a fellow left the cottage and chivied me half-a-mile, and took a short cut where the road bent like a hairpin, and as nearly as possible nailed me. He wanted to get my number, I suppose—but he didn't. Then I remembered that I ought to have my lamps lit; it was getting on for an hour after sundown, and those police on the country roads don't mind swearing to ten minutes. I wouldn't have minded if it had been an ordinary affair, but it wasn't by any means, and I didn't want to be summonsed, or else I couldn't swear an alibi if Giveen took an action against me for kidnapping him. So I stopped the car and got down and lit the lamps.“

Mr. Dashwood paused.

„Yes?“ said his listeners.

„Only for that piece of confounded foolish carefulness I'd have collared Giveen.“

Mr. French swallowed hastily, as if he were swallowing down something unpleasant, then—„Go on,“ he said.

„Think of it!“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I've always taken chances and come out all right, and the first time I'm careful, there I go and spoil everything. Isn't it enough to make a fellow cuss?“

„It is,“ said French, „and it's just the same way with me. But go on.“

„I got the blessed old lamps alight,“ said Bobby, „and the blessed old car going, and I'd gone scarcely half-a-mile when I saw before me, after I'd rounded a bend of the road, a cart going full speed. It was one of those gipsy sort of carts that fellows hawk chickens and things about in, harness half string and an old horse like a scarecrow to look at, but like a steam engine to go. There were two men in the car and one was Giveen. Though it was pretty dusk I could tell him, for he'd taken his hat off and his bald head shone like a stone. He'd evidently met the cart and paid the man for a lift.

„Now,“ said I to myself, slowing down a bit so that I could think, ‚what am I to do? If I try to seize him by force the fellow he's with will help him to resist, maybe, and if he doesn't he's sure to tell about the affair at the next village and I'll have the police on to me. I know—a smash-up is the only thing. I'll ram them full speed and damn the damage. I stand as good a chance to be killed as either of them. If Giveen is killed, or the sweep he's with, well, it's the fortune of war; if none of us are killed I'll sit on Giveen's head and send the other Johnnie for help; then, whilst he's gone, I'll nobble Giveen and drag him back to the cottage, across country this time, and leave the old motor to look after herself.‘“

„Did you really intend to do that?“ asked Violet Grimshaw, looking at Bobby with a mixture of wonder and admiration.

„Intend to do it? Why, I did it, only the old car didn't. I shoved the lever full speed ahead, and what does she do but stop dead and shoot me on to her bonnet!“

„Did Giveen see you?“ asked French. „No; he never looked back once, and he and the old cart he was in vanished in the dusk. It was when I got down to light the lamps that something happened to the machinery. I must have pulled up too sharp, for I heard something go in the fore part of the engine. Anyhow, I was done for. Well, there was nothing for me to do but look for help, and at last I got a farmer chap to hire me two horses to drag the old rattle-trap back to Southend. That was cheerful, wasn't it? At Southend I found a motor repairing shop, the only one in the town, and the mechanic who did the repairing out with a car that wouldn't be back till midnight. So I paid for the horses and sent them off, and got a bed for the night. Well, to cut it short, I was up at six this morning, got the car mended in less than a quarter of an hour, and back I went to London full speed. But the repairs and the horse hire and the bed had taken all my money, and I had only sixpence in my pocket; and I hadn't eaten for I don't know how long. I stopped at a village on the way and had a drink of water at a pump. ‚Never mind,‘ I said to myself. ‚When I get to the Albany I can borrow something from Robert— he's my servant, you know. But when I got to the Albany Robert wasn't there and my rooms were locked up. You see, he thought I wasn't coming back for some time, and I always send him a wire the day before I come. It was just nine o'clock and I was as hungry as anything, but I was in such a tearing rage that I never thought of borrowing money from any

one, as I might have done. Sixpence is no use for food in the West End, so I sent you a wire with it, got some more petrol at Simpson's and came down here full speed."

French got up and took Mr. Dashwood's hand and shook it.

"If I live to be five hundred," said the emotional French, "I'll never forget this to you."

"Rubbish!" said Bobby. "It was nothing. I—I enjoyed it—at least, part of it. Anyhow, I'd do it over again to-morrow for the excitement of the thing."

"I think," said Miss Grimshaw, speaking as though she were criticising some work of art, "that the finest part of the whole thing was your determination to run into the cart at full speed and smash it up. I suppose it was wicked, but it was fine."

"See here," said Mr. Dashwood, anxious to turn away praise from himself, "what we have to think of now is Giveen. What's to-day? The tenth, isn't it? Well, he'll see that man Lewis to-day, as sure as nuts."

"If he does," said French, "Lewis will have a bailiff here to-morrow and I'll be done for."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Mr. Dashwood.

"How do you mean?"

"I've been thinking the thing out on the way down. If he puts a bailiff in, let's corrupt the bailiff."

"Sure, I've got nothing to corrupt him with," said French. "Money's the only thing to corrupt a man with, and I haven't any."

"We might offer him a percentage of the profits if he'll just shut his eyes and let us take the horse to Epsom," said Mr. Dashwood. "We don't want to run away with the horse; we only want a loan of him for the race."

"That's not a bad idea," said Miss Grimshaw.

"If the man has any sporting instincts," said Mr. Dashwood, "it ought to be easy enough. Give him a few glasses of whisky and get him jolly, and the thing's done."

"Faith, and it's not a bad idea after all," said French. "I was thinking myself of getting hold of the chap and making a prisoner of him in one of the loose-boxes, same as Moriarty suggested for me to do with Giveen; but I've thought it over, and there's no use in it. It would only mean that they'd stick me in prison and Lord knows what. It would turn me entirely. But if we can get the chap to consent, that's a different matter."

"Oh, yes, it would never do to make him a prisoner," said the girl. "That would be a common, brutal sort of thing to do. But if you can persuade him just to let the horse run the race it won't hurt the horse and it may make your fortune—even that, I'm afraid, is scarcely right; it's tampering with his conscience."

"But none of these chaps have consciences," said Bobby. "At least, none to speak of."

"Then of course," said Miss Grimshaw, "you can't tamper with them."

Chapter XXVIII

A Convert to Socialism.

WHEN Bobby had sufficiently rested himself he took the car to the inn at Crowsnest and put it up and then came back to *The Martens*, where a bed was made up for him, and where he slept the sleep of the just for ten hours, reappearing at half-past nine that night for some supper and a pipe. Then he retired to rest and put another ten hours of slumber behind him, awakening in the morning a new man.

Nothing important came by the post, only a few circulars and a postcard effusively thanking Miss Grimshaw for some flowers which she had sent to a female friend. As the day wore on, and as nothing appeared in the form of a bailiff, the hopes of the party rose steadily. Mr. Dashwood had suggested that the horse should be taken right away to Epsom, but French was too old a practitioner to make such a false move as that. For if a bailiff arrived and found the horse gone it would be the easiest thing in the world to track him. You cannot entrain a racehorse without the fact being known. Even if he were ridden up to London a telegram would have to be sent on to get a horse-box for the journey to Epsom. There was nothing to be done but wait and trust in luck.

The morning of the twelfth broke fair and unclouded, with no threat—at all events in the weather—of bailiffs. French had made all his arrangements for moving the horse on the morrow. A horse-box was to be attached to the 10.15 train from Crowsnest, also to the London train for Epsom, that started at 1.55. In less than twenty-four hours now the horse would be out of Crowsnest and the day-after-the-day-after-to-morrow was the race.

Garryowen was not even mentioned in the betting lists. White Moth was favourite, Vodki was second favourite; after Vodki you might have read such names—as your fancy wills, but not the name of Garryowen. Only in the lists of the big English and Continental betting agents did this name obscurely appear. French had been getting his money steadily on the horse. He reckoned that when the flag fell he would stand to win sixty thousand pounds, and the thought of this, when it came on him now and then, put him into such a fever that he could not sit still.

They were all sitting at luncheon to-day, and merry enough for the moment, when a knock came to the door and Norah entered.

„Plaze, sir,“ said Norah, „there’s a man wants to see you.“

French half rose from the table.

„A man?“

„Yes, sir. He came round be the kitchen way, and ‘What are yiz doin’ in me yard?’ says Mrs. Driscoll. ‘Is your masther in?’ says he. ‘If he is, tell him a person wants to see him.’“

French, without a word, rose and left the room.

„He’s come!“ said Bobby, putting down his knife and fork.

„It sounds like it,“ said the girl. „But it may be only a tradesman.“

„Shall I go out and listen at the kitchen door?“ asked Efne, half slipping from her chair.

„No,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „sit still. You are too fond of listening at doors; and only for you, you naughty child—“ She checked herself. Only for Effie and her mischievous letter they might have been in security now and not threatened like this.

„Only for me, what?“ asked Effie.

Miss Grimshaw had no time to reply, for at that moment Mr. French re-entered the room. His face was flushed; he shut the door, and then, „May the devil fly away with Dick Giveen!“ he said. „He’s got me at last, confound and d—him! It’s the bailiff.“

„Oh, Lord!“ said Bobby.

„What’s he like?“ asked Miss Grimshaw the practical.

„Like!“ cried French. „He’s like a chap you see in a nightmare—white as tallow and no legs to him, and he’s going out now to inspect the horses. Mark you, that chap’s no use to us; he’s one of the whey-faced type, and he’s not got the heart in him to help us.“

„What is his name?“ asked the girl.

„Piper,“ replied French, pouring himself out some whisky.

„Well,“ she said, „wait here, both of you; one never knows what one can do till one tries.“

She left the room hurriedly and sought the stable-yard, where she found Moriarty.

„Moriarty,“ she said, „the bailiff has come, and he’s just going to look at the horses. Be sure and whatever you do be civil to him.“

„Yes, miss,“ replied Moriarty.

„Tell Andy the same.“

„Yes, miss.“

„I’m going round to the kitchen now to bring him.“

„Yes, miss.“

She left the stable-yard and sought the kitchen. Seated in the kitchen, hat in hand, was an individual of uncertain age. French’s description hit him off to a T. Pale-faced, scanty-haired, with a trace of side whiskers, he had about him a suggestion of aggressiveness and a suggestion of weakness very disheartening to his new beholder, who, however, smiled upon him as she entered.

„Mr. Piper, I believe?“ said Violet, speaking in a hurried and off-hand and friendly manner. „I have come round to take you to see the horses. But have you had any luncheon?“

„Yes, thank you,“ said Mr. Piper, rising to his feet.

„May I not get you a glass of wine or something after your journey?“

„No, thank you. I never touch liquor,“ said Mr. Piper.

„Oh!—well, then, will you follow me?“

She led the way to the stables round by the kitchen entrance. All this was French’s duty if any one’s, but the girl would not trust him; she determined to show Mr. Piper that the horses were safe, treat him as civilly as possible, and try to gauge his corruptibility in the process.

„You know, I suppose, that this is a hired house,“ said she, as she led the way, „and that there is nothing here belonging to Mr. French but the horses?“

„Yes,“ said Mr. Piper. „I asked at the station about that, although my instructions mainly concerned the horses. House and furniture belong to Mr. Emmanuel Ibbetson. Still,“ concluded he, „I must attend to it that nothing is moved from here—neither stick nor stone—till further orders.“

„If Mr. Ibbetson wanted to take his furniture away,“ said Miss Grimshaw, almost losing command of her temper, „I don’t think you could stop him.“

„That’s not the question at isha,“ replied Mr. Piper. „I’m thinking of French.“

„You mean, I presume, Mr. French.“

„Precisely.“

„Moriarty,“ said Miss Grimshaw, „show this—man the horses.“

Moriarty opened the upper door of a loose-box and The Cat thrust her evil head out. The Cat, by Isonomy II, out of Express, would have won her owner much money only for her temper; she had a fleeting eye. The Cat's under-lip and the cock of her ears were the two points you noticed at close quarters, till she nobbled you and took a piece out of your arm, or let fly and, to use the language of Moriarty, „kicked you to flinders.“

„Look out!“ yelled Moriarty. He wasn't a moment too soon, for in another second The Cat would have had the bailiff.

Piper stepped back and wiped his forehead with his sleeve. To be snapped at by a horse is not a pleasant experience.

„It's only her play,“ said Moriarty, „but don't you ever open the door of the box be yourself, for, begad, if she once got a houlth of you it's into the box she'd have you, over the dure top, and after that, begorra, it id be all over but the funeral. Here's the other horse.“

He opened Garryowen's box.

Garryowen projected his lovely head and expanded his nostrils at the stranger. Miss Grimshaw looked from the horse to the bailiff, and from the bailiff to the horse, contrasting the two animals in her mind.

„Are these carriage horses?“ asked Mr. Piper as Miss Grimshaw retired to the house leaving him in charge of Moriarty.

„Carriage what?“

„Horses.“

„Sure, where were you born that you never saw a race-horse?“

„If you arsk me where I was born, I was born in Peckham,“ said Mr. Piper, „and if you arsk me have I ever seen a race-horse, I am proud to say I have not, nor a race meeting; and if you arsk me what I'd do with jockeys and publicans and all those who corrupt the people and take honest men's wages out of their pocket—I say, if you arsk me what I'd do with them, I'd answer you that I'd put them in a sack, and the sack in the Thames.“

„Faith,“ said Moriarty, contemplating his vis-a-vis, „if I hadn't fallen into conversation wid you I'd never guessed there was so much *arsk* about you; but, faith, you're right. It's the whisky and the horses that plays the devil and all wid men. Now, I'd lay from your face, you'd never been dhrunk in your life.“

„I've never even tasted alcohol,“ said Piper. „Neither alcohol nor tobacco has ever sullied my mouth, nor shall it ever sully a child of mine.“

„Have you any children?“

„No, I have not.“

„That's a pity,“ said Moriarty, „for with such a father they couldn't help turnin' out fine men. May I ax are you a Liberal or a Conservative?“

„I'm a Socialist.“

„The masther has tould me about thim,“ said Moriarty, closing the door of Garryowen's box and taking his seat on a bucket. „You're wan of thim that b'laves every man is born equal and we should all share alike. D'you mane to tell me that now?“

Mr. Piper, led on to his favourite topic, expanded, taking his seat on the edge of an old bin by the stable door.

„So,“ said Moriarty, „thim's your opinions? A big puddin', and every man wid a plate and spoon. And who, may I ax, is to make the puddin', and who's to wash the plates?“

Mr. Piper explained that every man would help to make the pudding, and every man would wash his own plate.

„And s'pose,“ said Moriarty, „one chap takes a double helpin' before his turn, or cracks his plate over another chap's head?“

Mr. Piper explained that every man would be equally ungreedy and equally well disposed to his neighbour.

„And where are you going to get thim men?“ asked the tireless Moriarty. „And, see here, they're not going to be all men, unless you smother the women. And, droppin' the puddin', for the sake of argument, and comin' to the question of bunnets, d'you think one woman is going to be content wid as good a bunnet as her next-door neighbour, and the same price? D'you think Mrs. Moriarty won't be saying to her husband, 'Mick, you blackguard, why don't you stir your stumps and make more money to buy me a hat and feather that'll squash Mrs. Mooney's?' And Mick he'll say, 'Sure, Norah, how'm I to make more money when these Social chaps won't let me earn more'n five pound a week?' And what'll she say but 'Be d—d to Socialism, I want a blazin' big hat wid a feather twice as big as Mrs. Mooney's, and I'm goin' to get it—“

„That's not the point at isha—“

„Isha or not, you see here. You may plot and plan and collar your masther's money and pay it out all round to the likes of yourself, but it's the wimmen'll quare your pitch, for, begob, a man may get rid of a master but he'll never get rid of a mistress as long as the world rowls and wather runs. Tell me,“ said Moriarty, with his eyes examining Mr. Piper's legs critically and not complimentarily, „tell me now—are you wan of them chaps the masther spakes of who're always boo-hoo'in' about the soldiers and ba-haain' about the sailors, and wishin' to live in pace and contintment, sittin' on your starns under fig trees wid the figs droppin' into your open gobs?“

Mr. Piper explained that he was a peace party man.

„I thought you was,“ said Moriarty, still with his eyes fixed on his examinee's legs, „and, faith, I'm almost converted meself to the cause whin I look at you. We had a man wanst, and he might ha' been your twin brother, and he came down to Cloyne, lecturin' on all thim things, and settin' up to contist the seat in Parlimint wid ould Mr. Barrin'ton of Inchkillin had. Ould Mr. Barrin'ton stud six fut four; he'd never missed a meet of the houn's, for sixty years, 'cept whin he was laid up wid broken limbs or sittin' in Parlimint. This chap called ould Mr. Barrin'ton his 'ponent, said he was wastin' the money of the people keepin' houn's and horses, and went on till wan day the boys got hold of him—and d'ye know what they did to him?“

„No.“

„Faith, they headed him up in a barr'l and rowled him into the river.“

Moriarty, without another word, got up, left Mr. Piper to his meditations, and strode towards the kitchen.

„Where's the masther?“ asked Moriarty of Norah.

„In the sittin'-room,“ replied Norah.

He passed through the kitchen, crossed the little hall and knocked at the sitting-room door.

„Come in,“ said French's voice, and he entered.

French, Miss Grimshaw and Bobby Dashwood were seated about the room; the men were smoking and in arm-chairs; Miss Grimshaw was at the table,

sitting erect, with her elbows upon it. Her lips were pursed, for they had been discussing Mr. Piper.

„If you plaze, sorr,“ said Moriarty, when French bade him speak, „I’ve been takin’ the size of that chap in the yard.“

„And what do you think of him, Moriarty?“

„Faith, sorr, I’m thinking he was one of the leftovers whin they was makin’ parr’ts, and the divil thried to make a monkey of him, and spiled it in the bakin’. He’s no use at all, sorr, to be talked over or talked under.“

„We couldn’t bribe him, do you think?“

„No, sorr; he’s not the man to take a bribe to do a decent turn. He’s wan of those chaps that hates his betters—soci—what d’you call ‘em, sorr?“

„Socialists?“

„That’s thim.“

„Oh, Lord!“ said Bobby.

„I thought he looked like it,“ said Miss Grimshaw.

„Damn him!“ said French. „I thought there was something wrong with the beast besides white liver and Board School—“

„If you plaze, sorr,“ said Moriarty, with a grin, „I’ve had a long talk wid him and he’s convarted me.“

„Hullo!“ said French, staring at his henchman, „what’s this you’re saying?“

„I’ve come to b’lave, sorr, in sharin’ and sharin’ alike. If you plaze, sorr, have you every thin’ ready for gettin’ the horse away in the mornin’?“

„Getting the horse away!“ burst out French, forgetting Moriarty’s conversion and everything else in an outburst of rage. „How the dickens do you think I’m to get him away with that beast stuck here—“

„All the same, sorr,“ replied Moriarty, „if you’ll lave things to me you won’t find any throuble in the mornin’, and not for some days afther, I’m thinkin’.“

„What do you propose to do?“ „If you plaze, sorr, I’d rather just keep me tongue shut in me head. It’s not that I aren’t wishful to tell you, sorr, but it’s the divil to spake whin you’re fishin’. Do you rimember, sorr, young Mr. James and his wife, whin they came to Drumgool and went out fishin’ the black water? Him and she wid a luncheon basket and tame minnows presarved in bottles of glycerin’ and the hoight of fine rods and patent hucks and landin’-nets, and groun’ bate and the Lord knows all; and you could hear thim chatterin’ to wan another half-a-mile away, and the wather thick wid fish. And the divil a thing they caught in three days but a crawbeen.“

„Moriarty is right,“ said Miss Grimshaw, who had a profound belief in the capacity of Moriarty for doing the right thing just in the right way, when the thing was a matter of diplomacy.

„Look here, Moriarty,“ said French, „are you thinking of making a prisoner of this chap? For that won’t do.“

„No, sorr,“ said Moriarty, „I’m not.“ „He doesn’t drink.“ „No, sorr.“

„You’re not going to bribe him?“ „No, sorr.“

„Well, all I can say is, if you can find some other means of putting him out of action you’re a cleverer man than I am.“

„If you’ll just lave it to me, sorr, you may rest contint.“

French poured out a glass of whisky which Moriarty swallowed neat. Then wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, and saluting the company assembled, he left the room.

„He'll do it,“ burst out Mr. Dashwood, who seemed suddenly, and for the first time, to fully comprehend the possibilities and impossibilities of Moriarty.

„Faith,“ said French, „I believe he will. I've never known Moriarty fail yet. Upon my word, I haven't. Looking back now, I never remember him not getting the better of any man he crossed the foils with. Do you remember that blackguard who came to hamstring Garryowen? And the best of the matter is, he always does things in such a way that the laugh is on his side, and the law, begad! Do you remember that bailiff he drove to the old castle? Well, the law couldn't have touched him for that. The man wanted to be driven to my house, and that was my house, though I didn't live there.“

„It's a man like Moriarty that comes over to the States with a bundle under his arm,“ said Miss Grimshaw. „One moment a poor exile from Erin, standing on a shore that is lonely and chill, and the next day, to quote one of our poets, he's ›Alderman Mike introduc'in' a bill‹. I wonder why the Moriartys are so much nicer in their own country.“

Chapter XXIX

Bon Gré—Mal Gré.

MORIARTY, when he left his master, betook him to the stables and his duties. Mr. Piper had vacated the stable-yard and was making a tour of the premises, admiring the view from all points, and quite on the alert for strategical moves.

He was by no manner of means a fool in his profession; watchful as a stoat, unobtrusive, when his mouth was closed, fitting into corners, and unremarkable, he made an excellent bailiff.

He had always been a careful and saving man, and his character had never been developed by vice. What lay in the subliminal depths of Mr. Piper, Mr. Piper himself could not say; that unrest lay there was evidenced by his socialistic tendencies.

He inhabited rooms at Balham or Brixton, I forget which; he never swore, he never drank, he never smoked or looked at the female population of the British Islands with a view to matrimony or the reverse. His only visible vice was carefulness, saving. The man was without a visible vice and he had several visible virtues. It was this fact that made the problem of him so interesting and made the attentive student of him pause to ask: „What makes him so beastly?“

You know the man.

Moriarty, having watered the horses and seen to them with the scrupulous attention of a nurse called Andy to him.

„Andy,“ said Moriarty, „did you see the chap that's come to collar the horses?“

„Seen him?“ said Andy, for once loquacious. „Faith, I was near pitchforkin' him to h—l as he was standin' there afther you'd left him. Sure, wasn't I listenin' to him—“

„Shut your head,“ said Moriarty, „and listen to your betthers. Go fetch me a big truss of straw.“

Andy, obedient as a dog, went off for the straw and returned with it on his bade.

Moriarty opened the door of the loose-box next to The Cat's.

„Stick it here in the corner,“ said Moriarty, indicating the corner in question.

Andy flung the truss of straw in the corner.

„That's right,“ said Moriarty.

He took a five-shilling piece from his pocket and, leading Andy to the side of the bungalow, gave him the coin, gave him some instructions and pointed in the direction of the village. Andy, with a grin on his face, started.

At half-past eight that evening, Mr. Piper, seated in the kitchen, finishing his supper, heard Andy's voice. He was colloquing in the scullery with Mrs. Driscoll, and what he said was distinctly audible in the kitchen.

Said Andy: „Is the bailiff chap still at his supper?“

„Faith and he is,“ replied Mrs. Driscoll.

„Then kape him there for another ha'ff-hour, for Moriarty's goin' to play him a trick and get the horses away unbeknownst to him.“

Mr. Piper fell into the trap.

He rose from the table, used the back of his hand as a serviette, strolled to the kitchen door and contemplated the evening. The sky was cloudless and a full moon was rising over the hills. From the stables came occasionally the stamping of horse-hoofs. He strolled round to the yard, where he met Moriarty, who was lighting a stable lantern.

„Fine evening,“ said Mr. Piper.

„Fine which?“

„Evening.“

„Oh, faith, it's fine enough. Andy, where were your blitherin' skylights when you stuck this wick in the stable lantern?“

He got it alight and closed it; then he swung off with it, followed by Andy, and the pair disappeared.

„Done 'em that time,“ said the bailiff to himself. „I doubt but it will be a question of me sitting up all night and sleeping in the day.“

He made a tour of the premises; he left them and took a walk on the road down below, enjoying the beauty of the evening. An hour and a half later found him again in the stable-yard.

It had just gone ten and Mr. Piper had scarcely entered the yard than Moriarty, with the lantern in his hand, appeared.

„Why, I thought you were a-bed,“ said Moriarty. „Are you frightened the horses will fly away wid thimselves, or what is it that ails you?“

„My duty is my duty and yours is yours,“ replied the bailiff. „We'll keep 'em apart, if you please, and so be better friends.“

„Friends!“ said Moriarty, with a horrible leer on his face. „Sure, that's what I'm wishing to be, only you're so cowld. Come here wid me now,“ said Moriarty, taking the other's arm and leading him towards the loose-box next The Cat's, „and I'll show you me intintions. Maybe it's the likin' I've taken for you, or maybe it's just the stringth of your arguments, but you've converted me to the sociality bizness and I'm goin' to share and share alike wid you.“

He opened the loose-box door, and there in the darkness stood Andy, like a horrible gnome.

„Why, what are you doin‘ here, Andy?“ asked Moriarty, with an undercurrent of jocularly in his tone that struck Mr. Piper as being out of place and allied to the sinister.

„I?“ said Andy, „Nothin‘.“

„I‘ve brought a friend wid me,“ said Moriarty, speaking as though Piper were an absolute stranger to Andy. „He‘s comin‘ into the loose-box wid us to help me drink his health.“

„Thank you,“ said Piper, „I never drink.“

He took a step backwards, but Moriarty’s hand fell on his arm.

„Just for wanst, now,“ said Moriarty, in the tone of sweet persuasion that a boon companion uses to a boon companion. „Just for wanst.“

„Thank you, I never drink,“ said Piper, with a rising inflexion that did not improve his voice. „And I‘d thank you to release my arm.“

„Come on, Andy,“ said Moriarty, „and help me to persuade Mither Piper to jine us. Now, then, come quiet. That’s it. Sure, I knew you‘d listen to raison.“

Miss Grimshaw, who had retired early, was just in the act of undressing when voices from the stable-yard outside her window made her raise the slats of her blind and peep out.

By the full moonlight she saw Moriarty and Andy at the loose-box door. Piper was between them. Moriarty was gently persuading him from behind, applying the vis a tergo; the vis a fronte was supplied by Andy, who had fast hold of the bailiff’s left arm. She could not help remembering the sheep which she had seen one night, not so very long ago, haled into the same loose-box, Moriarty pushing it behind, Andy assisting its movements from in front.

The loose-box door closed on Moriarty and his victim, just as it had closed on the sheep. Miss Grimshaw, half-horrified, half-amused, filled half with curiosity, half with alarm, waited for sounds to tell of what was going forward; but no sound came and nothing spoke of tragedy save the gleam from the lantern, a topaz pencil of light that shone through the latch hole of the door and dissolved in the moonlight of the yard.

„Put your fut agin the door, Andy,“ said Moriarty, when Piper, knowing himself in a trap, and knowing the uselessness of calling out or resisting, was safely inside the loose-box.

He hung the lantern on a hook, and then, pointing to three buckets that stood upside down close to the heap of straw in the corner:

„Take a sate,“ said Moriarty.

Piper took a seat on the end bucket near the door.

„Not that wan,“ said Moriarty. „The middle; then Andy and I‘ll be able to sit on either side of you, and the bottle‘ll pass more convanient.“

He produced a bottle, a jug and a glass. It was a bottle of Copper’s „Old Highland Mountain Dew.“ Andy had fetched it from the inn at Crowsnest. This old Highland Mountain Dew was a fine old-fashioned, fusel-oil-tinctured fighting spirit. In any properly-constituted community the man who distilled and sold it would be executed, instead of raised to the peerage as Copper was the other day. It is this stuff that makes murders down at the docks, wrecks little homes in Hackney, casts men on the streets and ships on the rocks, and souls on Perdition.

„Look here,“ said Mr. Piper, when he saw these preparations for conviviality. „I don’t know what game you’re up to, but I give you warning—“

„Sit down wid you,“ said Moriarty, pressing him down on the middle bucket and taking his seat on the bucket to the right, whilst Andy took his seat on the bucket to the left. „Sit down wid you and listen to raison. Here’s a glass of good whisky-and-wather, and here’s a toast I’m goin’ to give you, and that’s *Good luck to Garryowen!*“ He swallowed the contents of the glass, wiped his mouth, re-filled the glass and passed it to Andy.

„Good luck to Garryowen!“ said Andy, drinking it off and handing the empty glass back to Moriarty, who re-filled it and held it towards Piper.

„No, thank you,“ said that gentleman.

„Dhrink it off,“ commanded Moriarty, „and wish good luck to Garryowen. Sure, it’s a glass of good whisky never did man or woman harm yet. Off wid it,“ continued Moriarty, in the tone of a person inciting a child to take a dose of medicine. „And it’s a different man it will make of you.“

„I tell you I don’t drink,“ replied the unconvivial one. „If you choose to make beasts of yourselves, do so. I don’t.“

„Listen to him, Andy,“ cried Moriarty, digging Piper in the ribs till he knocked against the jockey.

„Whose you jogglin’ aginst?“ cried Andy, returning the dig till Piper was nearly in the arms of Moriarty.

Mr. Piper tried to rise, but his legs were twitched from under him by Moriarty and down he sat on the bucket again with a bang.

„You’ll be breaking the buckets next,“ said Moriarty. „Why can’t you sit aisy?“

„I see your gime,“ cried the bailiff.

„Faith, then, you can feel it too,“ cried Moriarty, and next moment Mr. Piper was on his back on the truss of already prepared straw, with Moriarty kneeling on his arms.

„Now, thin, Andy,“ said the master of the ceremonies. „Fetch me the funnel, and the bottle and the glass, and I’ll drinch him.“

Andy fetched a small funnel which he had procured from Mrs. Driscoll, and Piper, who had tried to shout, kept silent by reason of fear of Moriarty’s thumb, which was applied to his thyroid cartilage.

„Mix a glass of grog and not too strong,“ commanded Moriarty. „That’s right. Now, thin, open your teeth, you omadhaun, and if you let a sound out of you I’ll scrag you. It’s not for me own pleasure I’m wastin’ good drink on you, but to save the masher. Stand betune him and his fortune, would you? You owl of a divil, wid your sociality and your jaw about aiquil rights! It’s aiquil rights I’m givin’ you in me bottle of whisky. Down wid it, and if you let a sound out of you, I’ll throttle you.“

Whilst Moriarty held the funnel between the patient’s teeth and induced him to swallow, Andy gently poured.

With the skill of an expert chloroformist Moriarty held his hand. He knew his patient’s constitution and he knew the strength of the medicine. Helpless intoxication was not his object; his game was deeper than that.

In the middle of the third glass the victim began to show signs of merriment. Real merriment. All his anger had vanished. Strange to say, he still resisted, tossing his head from side to side as much as he was able, but all the time he was laughing as though he were being tickled.

„He’s comin’ up to scratch,“ said Moriarty. „Aisy does it. Let him be for a minit, for we have to reckon on the cowld night air, and I want him to keep his pins. Well, Mr. Piper, and how are you feelin’ now?“

„Whatsh your name?“ cried Piper, sudden anger seizing him. „I’ll give you something. Come on!“ He struck out with his foot and sent Andy flying, bottle, glass and all. Next second, his legs now released, he landed Moriarty a kick in the face that would have stunned an ordinary man.

„Come on!“ cried Piper, wildly laughing, still on his back and striking out with his feet. „Come on! One down, t’other on.“

„He’s proper and fit now,” said Moriarty, his face streaming with gore, but seemingly utterly oblivious of the fact. „Come on and we’ll run him down to the p’leece-office before the fight’s out of him.“

He rushed in on the resisting one, got another kick—this time in the stomach—and, seizing the maniac by the collar of his coat, got him on his legs, using him as gently as though he were dealing with a refractory child. Another man, had he received the kicks that Moriarty had received, would have paid them back in ill-treatment; but Moriarty never lost his temper, and it was a rule of honour with him that a drunken man should be treated with all possible tenderness and consideration. He would just as soon have struck a priest, a woman or a child as a man in liquor.

Once on his legs all fight seemed to die out of Mr. Piper. Wild hilarity and attempts at song took the place of bellicosity. Bad language also came to the surface and found expression.

„He’ll do,” said Moriarty. „He’ll do. Andy, clip hold of his other arm. Now then, open the door and down to the village with him. The thing that’s thrubblin’ me is he’s gone under so quick that maybe he’s only shamming.“

„Faith,” said Andy, „I know why he’s gone undher so quick. It’s be raison of me givin’ him the second glass nate. I forgot to put the wather in it.“

Miss Grimshaw, who had been unable to tear herself away from the window, had increased her powers of observation by opening the sash. She heard Moriarty’s voice, and the voices of the others. What they could be doing to the bailiff was quite beyond her power of imagination to discover.

Then, as time passed on, she heard laughter. Piper was laughing. She knew the voices of the two others too well to make a mistake. Such long-continued laughter she had never heard before. Then the laughter ceased and she heard the bailiff’s voice crying to the others to come on. After this came more laughter and snatches of song.

Greatly wondering, she waited and watched till, the door of the loose-box bursting open, Andy and Moriarty emerged, supporting a drunken man between them.

Then she understood, in part.

Fortunately for her curiosity she had not undressed and, catching up a shawl, she wrapped her head in it, left the room and crossed the hall to the sitting-room, where Mr. French and Mr. Dashwood, who had not yet gone to bed, were sitting smoking.

„I’ve found out Moriarty’s plan,” said Miss Grimshaw. „Come out on the verandah and I’ll show you something. But don’t make a noise.“

She opened the window on to the verandah and the others followed her.

The bailiff and his supporters were now on the downhill path to the road, they and their shadows very visible in the moonlight.

„Look!“ said the girl. „He’s the middle one.“

„Why, he’s drunk!“ said Mr. Dashwood.

„Mad drunk,“ said French. „This is Moriarty’s work. Will you look at him, and they pulling him along! And he a teetotaller! How on earth did Moriarty do it?“

„I heard them in the yard,“ said the girl. „They dragged him into the loose-box next to the one The Cat’s in and shut the door. After a while I heard him laughing and singing—and now look at him!“ „After them,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „and let’s see what they’ll do with him.“

He led the way down the hill. When they reached the road the others were a couple of hundred yards ahead. The wind blowing from them brought the songs and shouting of the convivial one, on whom, now, the extra stimulus of the cold night air was acting.

„I’ve seen a good many drunken men,“ said French, „but begad! this fellow takes the cake. Look, he’s trying to fight now! Now they’ve got him between them again. Come on and let’s see what Moriarty is going to do with him.“

They followed up the hill to the village street. Here in the moonlight, before the highly-respectable cottage bearing the tin sign inscribed, „County Police,“ the trio stopped, Moriarty clinging to his charge whilst Andy rang the bell.

Mr. Boiler, the Crowsnest constable, had not yet started on his night rounds. He was drinking a cup of coffee in the bedroom upstairs when the summons came. Opening the window, he put his head out.

„Who’s there?“ asked the constable.

„Dhrunken man,“ said Moriarty from the road. „I’ve got him here. He called at *The Martens* dead dhrunk and saluted me. Look at me face. Come down wid you and gaol him, or he’ll tear the village to pieces, bad luck to him!“

„One minute,“ said Mr. Boiler, „and I’ll attend to his business for him.“

Next moment he was in the street, where Moriarty, with a deft touch on the adductor tendons, had deposited Mr. Piper on his back.

„Now then, now then! what’s all this?“ asked the constable, approaching the disciple of La Savate.

The kick on the knee-cap which he received as a reply made him assume the attitude of a meditative stork for some seconds. Then he closed with his prey.

„If you ax me what’s best to be done, sir,“ said Moriarty, later in the night, as he stood in the sitting-room after being complimented on his work, „I’d have Mr. Dashwood go over to Hollborough in the morning, when this chap will be had before the magistrate, and pay the fine—it’ll be a matter of two pounds sure, Boiler tould me—and fetch Piper back here, and tell him to sit aisy and the horse will be back afther the race. You see, sorr, we’ve got the weather gauge on the chap now. If the men that employ him knew he’d been drunk and gaoled he’d lose his job. We’ll keep it dark for him if he’ll keep it dark about the horse. It’s not a plisint job for Mr. Dashwood to go payin’ the fines for dhrunken men, but, sure, it’s all in the game. And if you plaze, sorr, I’m thinkin’ it wouldn’t be a bad thing if you was to sit down and write a letter to Mr. Lewis, tellin’ him the bailiff was here in possession and that the money would be paid in a day or two. That would keep him aisy, and it would make it more natural like if you was to let a little abuse into it and say you’d been very hardly thrated.“

„No, sorr, I won’t go to bed to-night. I’ll just sit up wid the horse. Everything’s ready now for getting him in the thrain to-morrow mornin’. Thank you, sorr; just half a glass. And here’s good luck to Garryowen!“

Chapter XXX

Mr. Welsh.

MR. GIVEEN, on his enlargement, had returned hotfoot to London. The chicken-higgler's cart that had given him a lift on the road had deposited him at Blackmoor station, where he had managed to get the last train up to town.

Too confused and shaken up with his adventures to do anything that night he had repaired to Swan's Temperance Hotel in the Strand, where his luggage was, told his tale to the landlady, received her commiserations, and gone to bed.

Next morning at ten o'clock he appeared at the office of Mr. Lewis in Craven Street.

„Is Mr. Lewis in?“ asked Giveen.

„What name, please?“ asked the clerk.

„Just tell him a gentleman from Ireland wants to see him,“ replied Giveen. „Tell him it's on important business about Mr. French. He'll know.“

A moment later he found himself in the inner office, before a desk table, at which an elderly gentleman with grey whiskers was opening his morning letters.

„Mr. Lewis?“ said Mr. Giveen.

Lewis bowed.

„I've come to you about a matter of importance,“ said Giveen. „You sent a man over to Ireland to seize the goods of a relation of mine—Michael French of Drumgool House.“

„I did not,“ said Lewis. „My agent in Dublin moved in the matter.“

„Well, sure it's all one and the same thing. French had skedaddled. He's taken his horses away, and you don't know his address. Come, now, isn't that the truth?“

„Yes, it is. By any chance, do you know his address?“

„I do.“

„Then,“ said Mr. Lewis, „I must ask you for it.“

„Oh must you, faith? And how are you to make me tell you? See here, now—a bargain is a bargain, and I'll sell you it for a fiver.“

Half an hour later he left the office of Mr. Lewis with the promise of a five-pound note should his information prove correct, and the satisfaction of having revenged himself on his kinsman.

He turned into O'Shee's in the Strand. Though he only drank ginger-beer and soda-water he frequented O'Shee's, finding there compatriots whom he could bore with his conversation.

He had arranged to return to Ireland on the sixteenth, and on the fourteenth, the night before the City and Suburban, wandering into O'Shee's, he fell into conversation with an affable gentleman adorned with rings, whose name, given in the first few moments of conversation, was Paddy Welsh.

„So you're off to the ould country on Thursday?“ said Mr. Welsh. „And what are you doin' tomorrow?“

„Nothing,“ said Mr. Giveen.

„Well, then,“ said Mr. Welsh, „you're just the boy afther me own heart, and I'll give you a thrate you'll remember to your dyin' day.“

„And what’s that?“ asked the other.

„I’ll take you down to the City and Suburban wid me, and give you a dinner and do you fine. Whisht now, and don’t be tellin’ any one! Do you know what me thrade is? Well, I’m a bookmaker. You’ll see me make maybe two hundred pounds to-morrow. I’m not wan of the big bookies; I just deal wid the ordinary men; ha’ff-crowns and five-shillin’s is what I mostly take. Whisht now! and listen to me, and I’ll tell you what you can do. Faith, it’s an idea that has just struck me. Would you like to earn a ten-pound note?“

„Faith, wouldn’t I?“

„Well you can come down and act as me friend. Now, listen to me. We’ll take our stand, meself on a tub and you beside me. I’ll take the bets, and you’ll see the five-shillin’s and ha’ff-crowns *** ? then, when the race is begun, I’ll lave you to mind the tub whilst I run round to see the clerk of the course.“

„And what will you want to see him for?“

„Whisht now,“ said Mr. Welsh, „and I’ll tell you. But you must swear never to spirt.“

„Oh, you may be easy on that.“

„Well, him and me is hand-in-love. He lets me into all the saycrits, and I give him ha’ff profits, on the winnin’s. I’ll tell him how me bets be, do you see? And afther the race, when the jockeys come to weighed in, he’ll kibosh the weights so that the tub to find you, and you and me will go and have a good dinner, and there’ll be a ten-pound note for—“

„There’s nothing against the law in all that, is there?“ asked the cautious Mr. Giveen.

„Law! Of course there’s not, for you and me. If the clerk of the course chooses to earn an honest penny by doin’ what he chooses it’s his lookout; no one can touch him, either, but the Jockey Club and they daren’t say a word, for they’re all in it. Why, man have what’s the Jockey Club for but to jockey the public out of their money? Afther every big race they hold a meetin’ and divide the profits; as much as a hundred thousand sometimes is split up between them, the blackguyards! Where did you say you was stavin’? Swan’s Temperance Hotel? Well, I tell you what I’ll do. I’ll call for you in the mornin’ and take you with me. I’ll pay the thram, So you needn’t bother a bit about the money when you are along with me.“ „Right,“ said Mr. Giveen.

Chapter XXXI

The City and Suburban.

THE City and Suburban morning broke fine; one of those April mornings fresh and sweet as Spring herself. Mr. French, staying with Major Lawson at Badminton House, just outside Epsom, had awakened from a night of dreams, feeling pretty much as a man may be supposed to feel who expects the hangman as an after-breakfast visitor.

He awoke from sleep with the dead certainty of failure upon him. Months and months of anxiety had passed, obstacle after obstacle had been overcome; the last obstacle was now before him—The Race. That, he felt, was insurmountable, and for no special reason. Garryowen had arrived safe at Lawson’s stables; the

horse was in the pink of condition; Andy was fit and well; the favourite had been scratched two days before; several good horses had been scratched; the betting list had altered considerably since we referred to it last, and Wheel of Fortune was now favourite, White Moth second. These new conditions were not unfavourable to the Irish horse; all the same, the sense of coming disaster weighed on French.

Before breakfast he visited the stables with Lawson, who had nothing running in the race and who was therefore free to admire with an unjaundiced eye the excellences of Garryowen. Andy had been taken over the course the day before and had studied its peculiarities, receiving sage advice from Lawson and his master, all of which he listened to with an appearance of respect, but which was scarcely of much profit to him, as his keen eye and judgment could give him, unaided, the ins and outs of any racing track almost as well as the oldest user and frequenter of it.

After breakfast Mr. French went out to smoke a cigar and think things over; Lawson, seeing the nervousness and agitation of his friend, had promised to look after everything and act as second in this duel with Fortune.

The downs even now showed an animated appearance. A few hours more and the great race trains would pour their thousands upon thousands to swell the throng. Gipsies and tramps, pick-pockets, all sorts of undesirables, had camped on the downs or tramped from London; cocoanut shies were going up, costers' barrows arriving, and ginger-beer stalls materialising themselves. Just outside the house Mr. French met Moriarty.

„The horse is all right, Moriarty?“ asked French.

„Yes, sorr; right as rain and fresh as paint. You needn't be unaisy, sorr; barrin' the visitation of God, he'll win.“

„If he does,“ said French, „I'll win sixty-five thousand pounds, and if he doesn't, begad I'm beggared.“

„He's nothing to fear, sorr, but Wheel of Fortune. I've been lookin' and listenin' and talkin' ever since I came down, and it's my opinion there's nuthin' here to give its heels to Garryowen; and if you'll let me give you a bit of advice, sorr, it's this: go for a walk, and don't bother your head about the matter. Major Lawson is lookin' afther everythin', and me and Andy will pull everythin' through.“

„I know, I know,“ said French. „You'll do everything you can. Well, there's no use worrying. I'll do what you say.“

He took Moriarty's horny hand and shook it. Then, turning, he walked off over the downs.

It was twenty minutes or so before the race. A hundred thousand people lined the course and filled the air with the hum of a British crowd on a race day, which is different from the sound emitted by any other crowd on earth.

Mr. French, whose nervous agitation had utterly vanished, was entering the paddock when some one touched his arm. It was Bobby Dashwood.

„Hullo,“ said French. „Good. When did you arrive?“

„Last train,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „I say, it's all right. I paid that chap's fine and lugged him back to *The Martens*, and he's there now, as peaceable as pie, waiting for the horse to come back.“

„My God, Dashwood,“ said French, „inside this hour I'll be either a rich man or broke to the world, and I feel just as cool as if I hadn't a penny on the race. Funny that, isn't it?“

„Not a bit,“ said Bobby. „I always feel that way myself when it comes to the scratch. By Jove! there’s Garryowen, and isn’t he looking fit!“

„Don’t let us go near him,“ said French. „We’ve got him here, but I feel if I go near him my bad luck may stick to him. Come into the ring.“

He led the way to the ring, followed by Dashwood. Lawson was just leaving the ring. „It’s twenty-five to one against Garryowen now,“ said he. „They’ve sniffed him, and, begad, I wouldn’t wonder if he started ten to one. You can’t grumble, French; you’re having a run for your money. Sixty-five to one you told me you got on at. I’ve just put seven hundred on at twenty-five, so that’s my opinion of Garryowen. Now stick here and don’t bother. I’m going to have a word with your trainer. Leave everything to me and him and stick here— but don’t put any more on; you mustn’t pull down your average.“

„Right,“ said French, and Lawson left him.

„I haven’t any average to pull down,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Haven’t a penny on; but I captured twenty pounds yesterday, and here goes.“ He approached Sam Collins, a book-maker beknownst to him, and, lo and behold! Garryowen’s price was now fifteen to one, and at that he put his twenty pounds on.

„Three hundred will be useful,“ said Mr. Dashwood. „Gad, I wish I’d been here sooner and I might have got on at twenty-five to one. However, there’s no use in grumbling. Look! there’s the numbers going up!“

French watched the numbers going up.

„Sixteen runners,“ said Dashwood.

„Ay, ay,“ replied French. „Sixteen it is.“

„Garryowen is number seven,“ said Dashwood.

„Look!“ said French.

The horses were leaving the paddock. Wheel of Fortune was first out—a bad omen, according to racing men; after Wheel of Fortune came White Moth, Royal George, Satiety and Garryowen. They were a beautiful picture in the bright April sunlight.

„It’s Wheel of Fortune or Garryowen,“ said Dashwood, who was half-mad with excitement. „French, I’d put my last penny on Garryowen, but the Wheel’s a wonder. Ain’t they beauties, the pair of them! Make the rest look like dowagers.“

French contemplated his horse as it galloped up the course following Wheel of Fortune. He could not but admire the favourite, but at the moment Garryowen dominated his every thought, and the extraordinary thing was, he had almost forgotten money in connection with the race; a mad longing to win for the sake of winning possessed his whole soul. It pleased him Garryowen was so well matched. To beat Wheel of Fortune would be a triumph.

And now that adjustment of prices which always takes place just before starting was evidenced in the price of Garryowen. „Listen!“ cried Dashwood. „The price has gone to ten to one. Listen!“ The roar of the ring flared up, the horses were now at the starting-post, caracoling and curveting. French saw Andy’s black-and-yellow jacket and the purple-and-white of Lofts on Wheel of Fortune. Would the flag never fall! A false start—another false start—and they were off. The purple jacket of White Moth was to the fore; three full lengths after White Moth came Satiety and Garryowen. Garryowen was going as a cloud shadow goes, sweepingly and without effort; with him, and drawing slightly ahead, went Wheel of Fortune.

They were racing along the rise now. Satiety had drawn well to the fore, and now, of a sudden, with kaleidoscopic swiftness and effect, the field had

changed, and Satiety was no longer to the fore. White Moth had fallen away, the field was fanning out. Wheel of Fortune and Garryowen were leading. Dragon-Fly, a rank outsider, had drawn up to Garryowen, and the whole moving cloud of horses were making for Tattenham Corner, the Cape Horn of luck, where so many a fortune has been wrecked. Wheel of Fortune was going superbly, and as they drew on the corner a roar like the roar of a sea surged up and down the course; as they swept round the bend Garryowen was close on the rails, Dragon-Fly had drawn wide and was losing ground, Satiety was moving up as though pushed by some unseen finger, and as they swept down the hill only some six horses were left with a chance.

Down the hill the pace was tremendous, heart-catching, sublime, if speed can have sublimity. Wheel of Fortune, half-way down, shot forward, and again the roar like the roar of a tormented sea burst out and rushed up the course, a wave of sound, and died away and rose again.

„Look! Look!“ cried Dashwood, with his eyes glued to his glasses. The horses had reached the bottom of the hill, Satiety had fallen back; the struggle was now between Garryowen and Wheel of Fortune. Wheel of Fortune was a length ahead and the distance was shortening.

Shortening, shortening.

„They're running neck-and-neck,“ yelled Dashwood. „Look! they're nearly on the judges' box. Look! He'll win! Garryowen for ever!“

„You can't tell,“ cried French. „You can't tell from here. It's a deceiving course. But I believe he will. Garryowen for ever!“

On the hill, away down the course from Tattersall's ring—itsself a little hell of sound—now rose an outburst; one long, never-ceasing roar. A snow of waving handkerchiefs made the stands look as if beset by a million white butterflies.

„Wheel of Fortune wins! Wheel of Fortune wins!“

Flash!—they are past the winning-post and the race is ended.

„Look! Look!“ cried Dashwood.

Impossible to tell the winner from the ring. Till the number went up the two men stood, eyes fixed on the man at the board.

„Seven!“ cried French as the number went up, and in the voice of a person who sees what he cannot believe.

Mr. Giveen and his now-found friend, Mr. Welsh, arrived at Epsom by an early train and took up a position near the ring. Giveen was quite unconscious that his kinsman French had entered Garryowen for the City and Suburban. He knew that the horse had been destined to run in some race, but he knew as little about race meetings as bazaars, and he never even glanced at the race-card which Mr. Welsh gave him. He was entirely taken up by the crowd and half addled by the noise around him.

Mr. Welsh had been joined at the station by a very evil and flashy-looking individual who frankly called himself Lazarus, perhaps because it would have been a waste of time and energy to have called himself anything else; and Mr. Welsh, having introduced Mr. Lazarus to Mr. Giveen, the trio proceeded to the course.

Here Mr. Welsh, who was dressed for the occasion in the most amazing check suit that ever left Petticoat Lane, took his stand on a tub provided by Mr. Lazarus and proceeded to address the crowd in a language that was Greek to Mr. Giveen. But the effect of Mr. Welsh's words was quite understandable to him. Individuals came forward, one after another, talked more Greek to Paddy

Welsh, received coloured tickets from Mr. Lazarus, and handed him money which he deposited in a bag by his side.

As time wore on and the moment of starting drew near Mr. Welsh, on the tub, became less a man than a volcano emitting sound instead of lava, and the more Mr. Welsh shouted the more individuals were sucked towards him and the more money poured into the bag of the perspiring Lazarus.

All at once the crowd surged away. A shout filled the air, „They're off!“ and Mr. Welsh jumped from his perch.

„Now,“ said Mr. Welsh. „I'm off wid me friend Lazarus to see the clerk of the course. Here's the bagful of money for you to keep, and mind, we thrust you. We'll be back in two minits. You just stick here and wait for us.“

Next moment he and the Israelite had vanished, leaving the luckless Giveen, bag in hand, standing by the tub.

„They're off!“ These words often include in their meaning bipeds as well as quadrupeds on City and Suburban day.

Giveen, with the bag in his hand, was torn by conflicting emotions. Suppose Paddy Welsh and Mr. Lazarus could not find him again because of the crowd? Then what would he do with the money in the bag? Faith, what else but take it back to London; and as he was off to Ireland next day, what else could he do but take the bag with him?

His mind played with Cupidity and Theft as a puppy plays with its mates. He would not steal the money, but he would stick to it if the others, by any chance, missed him. And he determined to give them every chance of so doing. He would wait a decent time, say two or three minutes, after the race was over, and then wander back to the station. Besides, there was ten pounds due to him. Paddy had promised him ten pounds anyway.

Engaged in these thoughts, he scarcely heard the shouting around him as the horses were sweeping round Tattenham Corner.

The desire to look at the money in the bag now came on him irresistibly, and opening the clasp he peeped in.

Pebbles and pieces of brick met his gaze and confounded him.

What on earth did it mean? Then he guessed. He had been done!

Paddy and Mr. Lazarus had levanted with the money. They must have had two bags and substituted this one. Withered leaves and desolation! He would never get his ten pounds now. That was why they had bolted. Instead of flinging the accursed bag away and bolting himself, the unfortunate man, who knew nothing of welshers and his own abominable position, slung the bag over his shoulder by its long strap, and, to complete the business, mounted on the tub. From this position he scanned the crowd eagerly, looking for the defaulters.

He did not see them. He saw a wide expanse of ape-like and fatuous faces; every face was unadorned by a wide-open mouth, and every mouth was yelling:

„Wheel of Fortune! Wheel of Fortune!“

Ten thousand voices made the sky ring with the shout. Garryowen, leading by a neck, was passing the winning-post, but the crowd, deceived by the course and their own desire, fancied still the favourite was the winner.

At the result the shouts were not so triumphant.

„Garryowen 1. Wheel of Fortune 2. Satiety 3.“

„Here you are. Ten shillings. I backed The Wheel for a place two to one.“

„What are you saying?“ said Mr. Giveen, tearing his eyes from the course and looking down at a youth with a weak mouth, a bowler hat and a screaming check suit, who was holding a pink card in his hand and addressing him.

„I want my money.“

„I haven't got your money. I'm lookin' for a big man with a red face and a—“

„Here you are. Fifteen bob. Satiety for a place.“

„Here you are. Forty-five half-crowns for Garry-owen—“

„Go to blazes with you!“ shouted Mr. Giveen to the ring of individuals surrounding his tub and demanding their money. „Who are you taking me for?“

„He's got the bag,“ shouted one voice.

„He was with the other chaps,“ shouted another.

„Welsher!“ cried a third, and at the last cry Mr. Giveen was off his tub and being hustled. The bag was plucked from him and opened.

Then the real business began, and where the police came from it be impossible to say, but they were only in time to save Mr. Giveen's shirt and trousers. His coat and waistcoat and hat had vanished utterly and like smoke when four stalwart constables surrounded him and began a fight for his life. Several other welshers in the neighbourhood had done their business and got clean away; the crowd was in a nasty temper, for they had lost over the favourite, and the gods, with a certain poetic justice, had offered up Giveen as a dripping roast to the fury of the people.

„Pull him in pieces!“

„Duck him!“ (There was not a pond within miles.)

„Jump on him!“

„Down with the police!“

„Welsher!“

„Look!“ cried Dashwood.

French, half delirious with delight, French, the winner of a big fortune, to say nothing of the stakes and the glory, was being led from the ring by Mr. Dashwood, when they came across a maelstrom of howling humanity, amidst which, like rocks, stood forth the helmets of the constables.

„It's a welsher, poor devil,“ cried French. „The police have him. Hi! I say—by—G—d! it's Giveen!“ He had caught a glimpse for a moment of the face of his cousin. The next, he was in amidst the throng, helping the police.

„Michael!“ yelled the half-naked one. „Lend us a hand or I'll be torn in bits. Musha! listen to the devils—Help!“

Next moment French was knocked aside. Fourteen constables had charged the crowd like a wedge, and Giveen was surrounded and safe, and being marched off to the lock-up.

„Did ever a man see a thing like that!“ cried French. „After winning the race and all, to have a disgrace like this fall on me!“

„Come on,“ said Dashwood. „You can go to the police station after you have seen the horse. The bounder is all right now. And serve him jolly well right! It's some mistake. He'd never have the brains to try to welsh people. Come on.“

Two hours later, Mr. French, Major Lawson and Mr. Dashwood, having celebrated the victory in champagne cup, drove up to the Epsom police station. The Major made himself known, and obtained permission for Mr. French to interview his relative.

Mr. Giveen was seated in a police cell with a police blanket over his shoulders.

„Well, there you are!“ said French. „And a nice disgrace to me and the family! What brought you down here at all? Do you know what you’ll get for this? Six months, if you get an hour.“

„Oh, glory be to God!“ said Giveen. „Sure I don’t know what’s been happening to me at all, at all. What have I done that you should all be going on at me like this?“

„What have you done?“ cried French. „You’ve betrayed me to Lewis, you scoundrel! That’s what you’ve done, sorrow mend you! You came sneaking down to Crowsnest to get my address. You’re a bad, black-hearted beast, that’s what you are, and it’s glad I am to think you’ll spend the next six months, or maybe the next year, picking oakum or dancing on the tread-mill. Come now and tell the whole truth. What have you been doing?“

Urged to the tale, Mr. Giveen told all about Paddy Welsh and Mr. Lazarus, French listening and scarcely able to contain his merriment.

„Paddy Welsh!“ said he. „Oh, faith! that makes it worse and worse! Oh, faith! you’ve done for yourself now, and it’s maybe two years you’ll get. Now, listen to me and I’ll give you a chance. If you’ll promise me to go back to Ireland by the next train I’ll talk to the magistrates to-morrow morning, and I’ll tell them you’re my relation and that you’re a fool. You can tell them what you’ve told me, and maybe, backed by my word, they’ll believe you. Do you understand me?“ „I do.“

„Will you go back to Ireland?“ „I will.“

„And never interfere in my affairs again?“ „I’ll take me oath to that.“

„Well, you’ll have to stay here all night, for they won’t let you out till you’ve been before the magistrates. There’s no use in going on like that; here you’ll have to stay—and when you come before the magistrates in the morning—“

„Sure, I’ll pretend to be soft,“ said Mr. Giveen.

„You needn’t pretend at all,“ said Mr. French.

He left the cell and heard with a deep satisfaction the cell door close upon the prisoner; then he drove back to Badminton House with his companions.

Half an hour later Mr. Dashwood drew him into the smoking-room, which was deserted.

„I sent that wire to Miss Grimshaw,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „telling her that Garryowen has won.“

„That’s right,“ said French.

„Look here,“ said Mr. Dashwood, „I’m just going to write to her. We won’t be able to get back to *The Martens* till the day after to-morrow, with this Giveen business on hand, so I’m going to write to her and tell her straight out that—that, well, as a matter of fact, that I want her to marry me. I’m going to tell her that she knows me now as well as ever she’ll know me, and that if she doesn’t like the business I’m game and can take her answer and still be friends. We’ll all be friends, whatever happens, she and I and you; but I think it’s best to make the position clear as soon as possible, for we can’t go on like this. And a letter is the best way to do it.“

„You’re right,“ said French. „Faith, the horse has nearly driven everything else out of my mind. It’s a queer business the way that girl came to my house and saved my fortune. I tell you straight, she put the come-ither on me so that I’d follow her through the black bog itself, if she beckoned me, with both eyes shut. She’s a jewel, begad! she’s a jewel. Look, now, at what she’s done for me: saved and scraped, put me on an allowance of pocket-money—she did that—“

kept the house together; and it was she put the idea of taking the horse away from Drumgool into my head. Then again, only for her you would never have come about the place, and what have you done? Why, you've saved me twice and three times over. My dear boy," burst out French, seizing Mr. Dashwood's hand, „it's you that's been the making of me, for if you hadn't nobbled that black beast of a Given I'd have been done for entirely, and I hope to God she'll have you and make you happy—“

„It's all a toss-up," said Mr. Dashwood as he wrung French's hand. „You never know what a woman will do; and I tell you this, if she chucks me, and if you—if you—well, as a matter of fact, if you marry her I'll forget I ever cared for her, and we'll all be friends just as we've always been.“

„You say you are going to write to her?“

„Yes. I'm going to write now.“

„Well, then," said French, „I'll do the same, and write to her myself.“

Chapter XXXII

A Last Glance at French.

ON the morning of the thirteenth, when the men had departed, Mr. French for Epsom with the horse, and Mr. Dashwood to Hollborough to bail out the bailiff, Miss Grimshaw found herself alone and for the first time in many months, lonely. The society of women can never make up to a woman for the society of men, and the society of men can never make up to a man for the society of women. French and Dashwood had taken away a genial something with them; the place seemed deserted.

She had grown fond of them both, extremely fond of them, and if she had cross-questioned herself on the subject she could not have discovered, I think, which man she cared for most as a companion. Bobby Dashwood had youth on his side, and youth appeals to youth; but then French had experience— though it had never done him much good—and personality. There was a lot of sunlight about Michael French; one felt better for his presence, and though he would knock a man down for two pins, though he made sport out of debt and debts over sport, and drank whisky enough to shock the modern tea-and-toast and barley-water man, he was a Christian when it came to practice, and a friend whom no disaster could alienate.

I cannot help lingering over him, for he belongs to a race of men who are growing fewer in an age when coldness and correctness of character veil, without in the least diminishing, the essential brutality and savagery of man.

Miss Grimshaw, left to herself, made a tour of the rooms, set Effie some sums to keep her quiet, and then retired into the sitting-room and shut the door.

It was now that the really desperate condition of things that underlay the comedy of Garryowen appeared before her unveiled.

„If the horse does not win?“

The ruin that those six words have so often postulated, rank raw, cold and brutal, rose before her. Horses, cards, dice, wine—one's dislike of the Pipers who cry these down is accentuated by the truth that underlies their piping.

They are the prophets of the awful telegram which heralds the misery, the pinching and the poverty that will grip you and your wife and your children till you are in your coffins. They are the prophets of the white dawn that shines into your rooms at Oxford when the men are gone, shines on the card-strewn floor where, like a fallen house of cards, lies the once fair future of a man. They are the physicians who prognose inefficiency, failure, old age at forty—mental death.

Effie would have two hundred a year. Nothing could touch that. But what of the jovial French? She knew enough of his financial affairs to know that he would be absolutely and utterly ruined.

Tears welled to her eyes for a moment; then she brushed them away and her colour heightened. Enthusiasm suddenly filled her; the desperate nature of the adventure appealed to her adventurous soul. Never did a doubter do any great work or carry any high adventure to a successful close. Garryowen would win? She felt that to doubt it would be the act of a traitor, and to believe it would help the event.

Shortly after three the dog-cart hired at the inn for the purpose of bailing out Mr. Piper arrived with Mr. Dashwood and his charge.

Mr. Piper looked literally as though he had been bailed out. The unfortunate man, besides receiving a severe rebuke from the magistrates, had been fined two pounds, which Mr. Dashwood had paid.

In Mr. Piper's morning reflections, conducted in the police cell at Crowsnest he had recognised his false position and the uselessness of kicking against the pricks.

He knew full well the ridicule that attends the unfortunate who tries to explain away the reason of his drunkenness; to say that he had been made tipsy by force would, even if it obtained his discharge, be so noticeable a statement that the London press would be sure to seize upon it. If the horses had been taken away it would be far better to put the fact down to the evasion having been effected whilst he was asleep, and as he had some money about him he felt sure of being able to pay any fine that might be inflicted on him. He was unconscious of the fact that he had kicked the constable.

Mr. Dashwood, having released him, paid his fine and given him some soda-water at the Hollborough inn, sketched for him the true position of affairs, making him understand that the horse, once the race was over, would be religiously brought back, and that the only course for him in the midst of these circumstances was to return to *The Martens*, accept its hospitality, and wait.

Having left him there, the young man, after a short interview with Miss Grimshaw, returned to London.

Chapter XXXIII

The Roman Road.

THE spring was early that year. The swallows must have known it, for they had returned several days before their time, and to-day, the sixteenth of April, the silence of the Roman Road was broken by their twittering and crossed by their shadows; the trees in the woods were green again, the little river beneath

the bridge was foaming in spate, and from far away in the wood depths came the moist, sweet sound of the cuckoo, singing just as he sang in Chaucer's time, just as he will sing in times a thousand years unborn.

The girl had freed herself from Effie and had wandered down to the bridge, where she stood now, watching the wimpling water and the brown weeds, listening to the cuckoo and the chatter of the blue tits in the branches of the trees.

A telegram had brought her, yesterday, the news of Garryowen's victory, and this morning's post had brought her two letters—one from Mr. French and one from Mr. Dashwood.

From what she could gather in the perusal of these letters each man was in love with her, yet each was proposing that she should not look coldly on the other.

They would return that evening. She would have to make up her mind on the question, and she had come here, apparently, to argue the question out.

Now that she was brought face to face with the matter, the chivalry of these two gentlemen one towards the other was the thing that perplexed her most.

She had come here, apparently, to argue the matter out, but in reality her subliminal mind had already made the decision as to which of these two gentlemen she would choose as her natural protector for life.

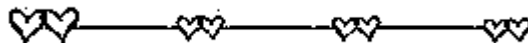
She had no one to confide in, no one to make a confidant of her choice; she had taken her seat on a little ledge of the parapet, and with that charming impulse which prompts a woman to put her name on paper coupled with the name of the man she loves, the girl, with the point of her parasol, dreamily, and like a mesmerist under the dictation of a spirit, wrote upon the dust of the old road's face,

VIOLET

Then, with a half-blush, she was preparing to add the fateful other name, and the blue tits in the branches above were craning their necks to see, when from beyond the hill-top the sound of a motor car rapidly approaching broke the spell.

As it passed she was standing looking at the river, and name on the dust of the road there was none, nor anything to hint of love but the graceful figure of the girl and the beauty of the morning.

NOTE: Passages illegible marked by ***



(22-1) Anglice, drinking it for coolness out of the saucer.