

Wingfield Lewis

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



Lewis Wingfield

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My Lords of Strogue, Vol. 3 (of 3) / A Chronicle of Ireland, from the Convention to the Union

CHAPTER I.

SAWDUST IN THE CHANCELLOR'S DOLL

If the cits of Dublin during this time were in the throes of apprehension and suspense, the Lords and Commons were enduring the agonies of evil conscience. They regretted that parliament had not been prorogued in order that they might have pretended ignorance as to what was passing; for they felt that the world was pointing the finger of derision at them. Not that the English world—the *beau monde* that is-cared one way or the other. In London it was always difficult to arouse interest in the affairs of a remote colony, whose ways were like those of Madagascar. The Viceroy's bleatings appeared weekly in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, and coffee-house critics barely glanced at them, for they were always the same. His excellency was always lamenting the misbehaviour of the populace; was always delighted to report that four or five hundred rebels had on such a day been sent to another sphere. The scraps of poetry that stood cheek by jowl beside this gabble were infinitely more amusing to the critics. Rhapsodies on Chloe's shoe-string—a ravishing account of the last balloon ascent. But these delectable topics failed to amuse young Robert Emmett, whose heart, during weary weeks, was feeding on itself in the English metropolis. On his arrival there, he had been kindly taken by the hand by my Lord Moira, who had held a seat in the Houses of both countries, and who, shocked at what he heard, rose up in his place and protested that it was time for the British public to interfere. A member suggested lightly that there was an Irish parliament whose province it was to look after such matters. Lord Moira hung his head. He knew too well how low that parliament had fallen—how mean-spirited were those who were haggling over the price of their birthright.

The sneers of the Londoners were hard to bear. The dangers which seemed to menace the Irish senators terrified their timid souls. From the 24th to the 31st of May no mail-coach had arrived in Dublin. There was no news save what the Viceroy chose to dribble out; bonfires were seen upon the Wicklow hills. Awful reports were circulating hourly—reports that warrior priests were in possession of Arklow; had arrived at Bray; were at their very gates. If such should prove to be the case, then was the career ended of the faithful Lords and Commons. The sulky scowls of the Liberty-boys boded no good. There would be a massacre of the Innocents. What could Heaven be about to allow its chosen and elect to suffer such gnawing torments? The scum had been evilly ill-treated; but not enough, it seemed, to make them meek and mild. If they were beaten now, they should receive an extra trouncing for presuming in this egregious manner to alarm their betters. Then General Lake started with his army; all the regulars went with him. The capital was handed over to the custody of four thousand yeomen, who—drunken, dissolute, uncurbed—proceeded to make hay while the blood-red sun was shining. Major Sirr and his Staghouse bloodhounds were a power in the state. From being town-major, a title scarcely legible in the list of public encumbrances, Sirr became invested, through the usefulness of his bully band, with all the real powers of the most absolute authority. He was growing rich, for among other trades he was a licensed victualler, owned Nelly's Coffee-house, and obtained the lucrative monopoly of supplying wines to prisoners. He was also a virtuoso; remitted triangle-torture, and sold tickets to his victims for extra light and air, in

exchange for orders upon hapless wives for pictures, bric-a-brac, and household stuff. How, when so many came to a violent end, did such a monster escape assassination? Because one of his first rules of conduct was to push forward somebody else to perform a dangerous job. When his hounds had pulled down the quarry, then would he come forward and strike an attitude upon the body of the hunted beast. It is in the hot-bed of public calamity that such fungi grow quick to ripeness. So soon as the counties rose to arms and caused a panic, the life and liberty of every man was at his disposal. If one offended him, he charged him with high treason and swept him off to prison, and a court-martial. Just now, to be accused was much the same as to be convicted. One day, a professor of language was seized and carted to the Riding-school to receive five hundred lashes because a letter was found in his pocket written in the French tongue. Another day (all this before the month of May was out), a gentleman was pistoled in the street by an intoxicated yeoman because his hair was cut short. Of course he was a 'Croppy'! It transpired afterwards that he was an invalid recovering from fever. Another time, a party broke into a baker's shop at dawn, demanding bread. The oven had not long been lighted-the baking was not complete. No matter; his Majesty's servants would eat the dough half-baked-aye, and wash it down as it stuck in the throat with a jorum of raw whisky. Strange to relate, the whole party was taken ill. Of course the villanous Croppies had poisoned the servants of his Majesty. An example should be made of the malignants! (How fond were these pioneers of a new era of making examples!) The baker and his wife and his two sons were dragged into the street and shot down, without time for shriving, in front of their own door.

Lieutenant Hepenstall, as a type of his class, rose to unenviable celebrity. He stood six feet two, was strong and broad-could lift a ton. The expression of his face was mild as milk-the blackness of his heart was dark as hell. Full of zeal for his Majesty's service, he took to hanging on his own brawny back those persons whose physiognomies he judged to be characteristic of rebellion. First, he knocked down his man to quiet him. His garters did duty as handcuffs. His cravat was a convenient rope. With a powerful chuck he drew his victim's head as high as his own and trotted about with his burden, considerately advising him to pray for King George, since prayers would be wasted on his own damned Popish soul, till the gulping wretch's neck was broken. Is it any marvel that the bullet, the sabre, the lash, the halter, should have been met by the pike, the scythe, the hatchet, and the firebrand?

Major SIRR became all-powerful, and shortly after Terence's mishap had words with Cassidy. He came to look on his old ally with a feeling akin to contempt, for he considered a man mean-spirited who had not the courage of his own iniquity. The time was over now when masks were comfortable wearing. He, Major SIRR, had never stooped to wear one; if Cassidy intended to feather his nest, now was the time, or never. He roundly told him so when the giant called in at the major's lodgings to claim his portion of the £1,000 reward. The latter's brow-tufts came down over his nose; he laughed a sardonic laugh and shook his pear-shaped head. He was specially spiteful over this reward, by reason of the slashes he had received from Phil. True, they were mere flesh-wounds; but he resented having his legs carved about in this reckless way by an amateur surgeon.

'If ye'd have your part of the money,' he said, with incisive scorn, 'come and claim it in the public street. Don't come to me in the dead o' night as though the bumbailiffs were creeping at your heels.'

He held by his decision, and the two cronies quarrelled. Indeed they were very near a duel; but Cassidy, with commendable prudence, observed, 'There is enough discord already among the patriots, so don't let us fall into a similar mistake.' They snarled and showed their teeth, like dogs; then made it up, as wisdom dictated.

Cassidy could not well explain the reasons for his secrecy. He could not say that if he were known to have accepted her cousin's blood-money there would be an impassable gulf 'twixt him and Doreen for ever. SIRR would have only gibed in that a man who was such a rascal should be sighing after an honest wench; so he gave up the blood-money. Cassidy was very undecided at this

moment. Prudence whispered that the major's counsel was good. He knew, too, that as things were going, he could not wear his mask much longer. What was he to do? Unless he were careful he would fall between two stools. Doreen had never given her clumsy admirer any encouragement; would probably refuse him even though he hoarded mines of gold. Was she not rich herself? If he could not have Doreen, it would be quite as well to have money; and he could not earn his proper wage without openly joining the Battalion of Testimony. It was a very delicate question. Would it not be best to sound Miss Wolfe once more? Maidens are coy. Some who are prepared to take us if we persevere, require much wooing. Maybe the fair Doreen was one of these. On second thoughts he did not quite think she was, with her calm bearing and solemn eyes; but at all events it was worth the trial. No harm could come of that.

He determined, therefore, to make a journey to Glas-aitch-é, and trim his sails according to the wind that blew there. Meanwhile it was a dirty trick that his old ally had played him. Yet, after all, it mattered little. The sweetness of revenge is better than guineas. His long-concealed loathing for his unconscious rival had found vent at last, and he felt the better for it, independent of any considerations of self. The odious, good-tempered, bright-visaged, careless young councillor! He dared to aspire to Doreen, did he? The same words as the giant had muttered as he stood before the sleeper, he spoke again through his grinding teeth. If he could not have the maid himself, the councillor should not have her. That unlucky person was sick unto death in duress, with the gallows looming close at hand. There was comfort-great comfort in that. The thousand pounds might go to the devil-or to Major Sirr. Decidedly it would be well to make a trip northward, for though he played his game cunningly and let out useless Castle secrets with much vapouring, yet were the chiefs of the popular party beginning to suspect him. Even unsuspecting Tom Emmett, whom he had been to see in Kilmainham gaol a few days back, twitted him with his liberty. The double game was no longer possible. He would have to make up his mind presently either to assume the palm of martyrdom for Doreen's sake, with a pardon in his portfolio for past delinquencies, or, flinging off boldly all disguise, to pocket the guineas and the obloquy which were the portion of the Staghouse crew.

The sufferings of the Lords and Commons were endured also in full measure by the Privy Council, who found themselves in a quandary. Lord Moira's little agitation in London was not without its effect, although folks did sneer at the wild Irish. On leaving St. Stephen's, the head of opposition linked his arm in my Lord Moira's, and begged to inquire whether he had not been drawing on his imagination.

'Your countrymen are so dreadfully imaginative, you know!' he said plaintively. 'I never forget the story of "potatoes and point" that somebody told me. So Irish! What is it? Oh! some notion of a Hibernian feast on a frugal scale in the far west, where the guests sat in a circle, each with his potato, which was dipped from time to time to give it flavour into a pot of salt in the middle. When the salt began to fail, each potato was *pointed* at the relish instead of being dipped in it, which many declared to be an economical improvement, for imagination did the rest! The Irish, you know, pull the long-bow terribly, and disconcert you by themselves believing their own lies.'

Being at last persuaded that Lord Moira's details were facts which had taken place lately, and would take place each day for months, unless summarily stopped, Mr. Pitt's rival expressed much delight. This was a hole in the harness of Mr. Pitt, of which he would proceed straightway to make the most brilliant use. But Mr. Pitt saw the pair walking together, and, divining at once the subject of their discourse, resolved to forestall any rude suggestions which might be made. He wrote accordingly to Lord Clare, expressing surprise at the reports, bidding him act with discretion-tempering a just firmness with lenity; deploring and disapproving a waste of life; suggesting fewer executions and more close imprisonment. The chancellor was annoyed at being thus interfered with. He was doing his work steadily and well. It was all very fine for an English minister to prate in platitudes, at a distance, about firmness and lenity. He would reap the full benefit of the transaction

when it was completed, whilst his tools in Ireland were laying in a harvest of opprobrium. Then, as his mind worked, the look of anxiety cleared from Lord Clare's face. What happened to the rest of the Privy Council mattered little to him. *He* was the guiding pilot. To *him* must come honours, an English peerage, a seat at St. Stephen's. There might he give a loose rein to his ambition. This letter, though, might prove useful in the matter of Terence Crosbie. The Viceroy's prerogative of mercy should be exercised first of all in the case of the misguided youth, son of the old friend who persisted in remaining so singularly cold as to his fate. Why were my lady's letters so cold? he wondered. Never mind. Her son should be saved, if possible, without more parley.

His plan, however, met with unexpected resistance from Lord Camden, who was usually so ductile. To his amazement that effete person declined altogether to interfere. Vainly the chancellor browbeat him, employing those artifices of language and manner which were wont to make him quiver. The more he argued the more the Viceroy mumbled. Like all weak natures, he could be wofully obstinate at times in the wrong place. He had worked himself up to consider the unhappy Terence as his own private victim, because, in his case, he had acted on his own authority for once, and had even been visited with the sublime inspiration of the reward. He clung to his victim with the tenacity of a bulldog; nothing should wrest from his lips the savoury morsel. For his part, he declared, he thought Mr. Pitt barely civil. He desired these hopeless Irish people to be well kept under, and yet he gave vent to windy phrases which his coadjutors in Dublin could not possibly act upon, without changing their course and becoming laughing-stocks. He, for one, declined to stultify himself. As for this sprig of nobility who had disgraced the ermine and dirtied his nest, it was essential above all things to make an example of him, lest any other misguided youth of the same rank should be deluded enough to follow his pernicious lead.

Lord Clare, like a good diplomat, dropped the subject for that time, and went on to speak of the other imprisoned leaders. What was to be done with them? Could they be executed? No! It would be impolitic to martyrise them too openly, for they were well known in Dublin as patriotic and single-minded young men who led blameless lives. Moreover it was evident from this epistolary hint that Mr. Pitt would object to such a proceeding.

'I'd try 'em by court-martial!' mumbled the Viceroy from the head of the council board, taking snuff.

'State prisoners!' retorted Arthur Wolfe with unusual warmth, from the bottom. 'Better not go through the farce of trial at all.'

The Viceroy glared, and the chancellor bit his lip. Why could not Arthur Wolfe hold his stupid tongue? Lord Clare felt more than ever that this weak-minded friend must be got out of the way somehow. On him, as attorney-general, would of course fall the duties of crown prosecutor. Dear, dear! people seemed to throw obstacles in his way on purpose, as though his task were not entangled enough already! All this considered, these members of the Directory, over whose capture there had been such crowing, seemed disposed to revenge themselves by becoming white elephants. They could not be hanged *en masse* without creating scandal; it was not even certain that they would be convicted if brought to trial, for against several of their number very little tangible evidence could be brought. Their names on a list-their presence at a meeting. This was not enough. Of course the Battalion could be brought forward with fictitious evidence-but Lord Clare shrank from this, except as a last resource. Besides, they were not to be hanged-that was settled. What then could be done with them? A light punishment, as for a misdemeanour, would drive the Orangemen to madness, who were shouting for blood, after the manner of religious bigots. Petty larceny and high treason could not be placed on the same level. Could not somebody suggest something?

'I have an idea,' mild Arthur Wolfe murmured, as he nervously gnawed a pen. 'Banishment might be proposed to them, on conditions which might be made to look like mutual accommodation. For instance, make them confess their offences and explain the ins and outs of their scheme, in order that it may be guarded against in future. By confession they would show the world that we've

not been tilting against windmills. Surely the establishment of the traitorous conspiracy by the testimony of the principal actors in it might be fairly taken as an equivalent for the lives of a few men, without loss of dignity on our part?"

The chancellor mused. The notion was ingenious. The Viceroy drew a picture of a gallows on his paper, and gabbled of court-martials in an injured tone.

'Very pretty, but they would not consent,' affirmed Lord Clare, at last.

'I think they would,' returned the attorney-general, blushing. 'In fact, the idea is not mine. Tom Emmett suggested it to me.'

'You've been to see them?'

'Yes. I've been to Kilmainham and to Newgate. It's a shocking sight,' answered Arthur Wolfe, kindling, 'to see decent men loaded with irons, mixed up with thieves, insulted hourly by the low janissaries of Major Sirr! The poor fellows are so shocked at the accounts which reach them, and see so plainly the futility of struggling now, that they would do anything, I think, to stop the effusion of blood.'

'If they would consent to banishment for life, and let us into the secrets of the society, we should be well out of the job,' the chancellor decided. 'Curran shall be sent to put it to the rascals. The blackguard has influence with them. Meanwhile we will turn on the screw by bringing the worst to trial. Sure Mr. Pitt must not mind just a few being strung up.'

So it was provisionally arranged; but the affair did not run on wheels. The patriots were captious, held out for special terms, dictated alterations in the proposed agreement, behaved in a flippant manner-not meekly and decorously as people should who feel the hemp about their necks.

'It must be understood,' they declared, 'that they were to mention no names, criminate no person; that after an examination before the secret committee of Lords, upon the intentions and aims of the United Irish Society, they were to be sent to America, as Tone had been before them.' Here was insolence! This in order, of course, that they might join Tone in France, and stir up the French again. Contumacious traitors!

The chancellor became exceeding wroth. The screw must be twisted with a vengeance, he said. 'What a pity that they could not be hanged *en masse*! One or two at any rate must suffer-just to teach the others to behave themselves.' Lord Camden suggested Terence, the malignant aristocrat, as a good victim; but the chancellor fenced the matter off, and overruled his excellency. Arthur Wolfe implored and begged-vowed that the words would choke his utterance as he made his opening speech-swore that he could not, would not, come forward to prosecute-even so far forgot himself as to fling the pens and paper about, and beard the Privy Council with upbraiding words. Then my Lord Camden absolutely cackled. Mr. Speaker and Mr. Prime Sergeant laid their hands upon their swords. How indecent! Luckily they sat with closed doors. Here was a split in the cabinet when unity was so essential. Lord Clare's harsh voice rose above the hubbub. He coerced them all to order with verbal whips, like the keeper of some menagerie. The animals, cowed, lay down and growled. The peace was kept for this once, but the astute chancellor perceived that something must be done with promptitude, or the whole of his beautiful fabric, which only needed a roof now to finish it, would come tumbling about his ears. Truly he deserved well of his master, for he laboured hard. He discovered that the excellent, the humane, Arthur Wolfe was too good and clever for his position-almost too good for this world; and so he was graciously put on the shelf-I mean the Bench-and raised to the peerage of Kilwarden, *en attendant* a front seat in heaven. As my Lord Kilwarden we shall know him for the future-the same weak well-meaning man as ever-compelled to listen to false witness from his high chair, but unable to interfere because his mouth was stopped by the fur which trimmed his coronet. The solicitor-general, Toler, was promoted to the vacant place, and proved to be a prosecutor 'of the right sort,' a fitting *pendant* to the jury, in the state-trials which commenced immediately in the sessions-house in Green Street, hard by Newgate prison.

These proceedings followed each other with the celerity which marked the chief events of '98. The rebels had thrown down their gauntlet on the 23rd of May. By the 1st of June, Kildare was quieted. It was on the 11th of June that the court was first opened for the trial of the patriots, whose chief advocate was Curran; whilst horrible reports were arriving hourly from Wexford, which were made the most of, to keep the jury up to the mark. The moment which the little lawyer had prophetically seen was come, when he of the silver tongue was to stand forth and boldly wrestle for noble human life with the demons of Treachery and Malice. The brave little man shrank not from the task, fraught as it was with personal danger to himself. He bore a charmed life. The prisoners in their beds at Newgate could hear his earnest tones in the hot night through opened windows, haranguing the jury till daylight; could detect the trotting of his pony as he returned in the morning to the Priory-no longer hospitably open as of yore, but bolted and barred, with shutters closed and loopholed, in a besieged condition, for timid Sara's sake. That which occupied the sessions-house in Green Street was the only civil tribunal which existed during this troublous time. Except in the instances of the six state-trials, there was no law in town or country but martial law, which is terrible enough even when fairly administered; how much more awful then when conducted, as it was, by excited Irishmen-rabid with religious fury, heated by rancour and revenge.

Events had marched quickly. The chancellor had nothing to complain of, for, with a few trifling checks, everything went well enough. The people had been maddened into committing themselves. All classes were at sixes and sevens. The menagerie was in a chaotic condition. The wolf snarled at the hyena, the bear showed his tusks at the tiger-cat. The senate was as degraded as its bitterest foe could desire. But what an exasperating world it is! How true the trite old maxim about the slip 'twixt cup and lip! Lord Clare saw (not far off, neither) the abolition of the Irish parliament. He heard his own voice ringing along the rafters of the English House of Lords. He pictured himself high in office-why not premier some day? But all of a sudden an event occurred which had never entered into his calculations-a rap came on his knuckles, swift and agonising, which woke him from his vision to see that it was air.

That agitation of Lord Moira's went farther in its effect than its author dreamed. Mr. Pitt perceived at once that it must cause him to change his tactics, and with presence of mind he resolved to do so instantly. 'How lucky,' he mused, as he sat under the comb of his friseur after a night's debauch, 'that this dust was not stirred up sooner! Now it matters not. The effect I wish produced is made, and can't be unmade. But I must disavow the acts that made it. The thing has gone so far now that it must run along to the end by the force of its own impetus.' Then he reflected that it would not be amiss to write a warning to Lord Clare, which might be brought up against him later. He would let things go on quietly till other arrangements were completed, then announce his new purpose as a surprise, and act upon it on the instant.

So it came about that the English premier disarmed the opposition by recalling at a few hours' notice the then Viceroy, Lord Camden, and despatching to Ireland at once-with an energy that did him credit-a new one, who was instructed to carry on the work on a new principle. Lord Clare was thunderstruck. When the news came, his face lengthened by an ell. He thought not of broken puppets, which, having served their purpose, are tossed upon the dust-heap. A new Viceroy! Just at this crisis, too, when more than ever unity was strength. What if the new Viceroy should have a will of his own to clash with the lord chancellor's? That was unlikely, for Lord Clare was essentially a leader of men. He had coerced many viceroys, and thoroughly understood the business. There was no reason for supposing that this one would be more stubborn than the others. But he would of necessity come raw to his work, would have to be taught, which would create delay. It was very provoking. Yet, after all, there was a good side even to this dilemma. Strong-willed or not, he would have to leave things alone during his pupilage. For the present he could not interfere much. Yet, turn the situation over as he would, my Lord Clare could not but see that Mr. Pitt had made a fool

of him; and it was with some misgiving that the chancellor went down in state to Kingstown to make his bow to his new master.

Mr. Pitt's choice was a most judicious one. He had to look for a man who was brave and honest, high-spirited, clear-headed-the antithesis to Camden. Some one who knew something of affairs, who was a soldier-in order that at this difficult juncture the reins of government and the command of the forces should be in one firm grasp. Some one who was experienced in the world's ways, who would be too wise to run a-muck or do anything Quixotic. Who would pull things straight gradually and with circumspection, so as not to stop the ball before it reached its goal, and yet who was too conspicuous for virtue for the opposition to jut forth the tongue at him. Just such a man was the Marquis Cornwallis, who had recently earned glorious laurels in India; whom all the world respected because he was upright as well as worldly-wise.

The preparations of the new Viceroy had been made in secret. Therefore, the word of command being given, he started off, like the good soldier that he was, at a moment's notice, and arrived at Kingstown towards the end of June. As a salve to his predecessor's feelings, a nephew of Lord Camden's was attached as chief secretary-the young Viscount Castlereagh, who, report said, was promising. Lord Clare met the party with a toothsome smile, in all the bravery of tightly-fitting silk upon his dapper limbs, his rustling robes stiffened with gold lace, his lappeted wig powdered with perfumed flour. The viceregal state-coach was not in waiting, he regretted to say. The rapidity of his excellency's coming was extraordinary! My Lord Camden, who was living within a cordon of guards away in the Phoenix Park, had not yet resigned it. But his own poor coach was there (the one which cost four thousand guineas); if his excellency would so far honour him as to take a seat in it, it would be the proudest moment in the life of his humble servant.

Lord Cornwallis, thinking it a good opportunity of studying the notorious chancellor, accepted graciously; and the two jogged together along the high-road to Dublin, preceded by a body of the Liberty-rangers, who appeared to the military optic a sad set of clodpoles. Lord Clare descanted on the beauty of the scenery, the loveliness of Dublin Bay, the delights of summer weather. Sure, his excellency must have had a splendid passage. Was he never sick? Lucky man! Never, never? This good beginning was a fine omen for the future. Might his career in Ireland win his Majesty's approval! and so on, and so forth. Vapid compliments! Lord Clare made himself as pleasant as he possibly could, and congratulated himself rather on his success. It is a fortunate circumstance that we do not abide in the Palace of Truth. The first impression which the coercer of viceroys left upon the mind of Lord Cornwallis, was one of a cruel eye, painfully glittering teeth, a smile to be distrusted, a voice which went through him like a knife.

'What of the people?' he asked somewhat abruptly; for he knew more than he liked about Lake's plans, and feared lest the obloquy which must attend them should be pinned to the new *régime*.

'The people!' echoed his companion, in a tone which spoke volumes-'the people! Ah, well! They've offended the King, and are having a hard time of it. To-morrow they will have a very hard time indeed, but no worse than they deserve; for by nightfall, if all goes well-why should it go ill? – a few hours hence, Wexford and Enniscorthy will be taken, the camp at Vinegar Hill will be a Golgotha-this deplorable folly will be at an end.'

Lord Cornwallis gave a sigh of relief. He had come expecting to see unpleasant sights, to be for the nonce a bandager instead of a carver of wounds. If the chancellor spoke truly, then was he indeed in luck, for the horrors attending this 'Golgotha,' as his companion picturesquely put it, would naturally be considered to belong to Lord Camden's vice-royalty, not his.

The cavalcade which had been rattling along came to a standstill. The Liberty-rangers, with oaths and curses, were striving to force a passage through a kneeling crowd which occupied the way; but the peasants who formed the crowd seemed to have no feeling as they knelt there in the middle of the road, with hats off and heads bowed down.

Vainly were the horses urged, vainly did the postilions, with artful flips of their long knotted lashes, strive to tickle into sensitiveness the soft bare arms of girls-their white necks, from which the hair was braided. They knelt there and moved not.

Lord Cornwallis looked out at the spectacle in surprise, and lowered the window-glass with a bang to bid the postilions respect the sex, in terms of indignant remonstrance. What singular people! So silent; they might be stone. His ear caught a distant wailing, very faint-a long way off-and a peculiar sound which recalled long-forgotten memories of youth. The falling of a flail-yes, that was it. A lightning-flash, of the past revealed to his mind's eye a warm-coloured, familiar threshing-floor, in which he used to play ere he grew hardened by war's vicissitudes. He remembered, as though it were yesterday, the chequered sunlight on the grain, the merry hum of life, the stalwart fellows raising their brawny arms in clock-like rhythm. He heard again the buzz of insects, the booming of gauze-winged beetles along the hedgerows; the exhilarating murmur which sings of teeming nature-of glorious summer. Why were these peasants turned to stone?

Lord Clare, forgetting himself, craned out of his window, and presumed at the very start to counter-order his chief's commands.

'Go on!' he screamed. 'Get through this riff-raff!'

Lord Cornwallis roughly bade him hold his peace.

'It's only a flogging,' the chancellor apologised.

'And this is the silent protest of the people! Have they sunk to this?' cried the Viceroy hoarsely, pulling at his cravat to ease the lump that was in his throat. 'Poor creatures! Ground down so low that they can protest only by their silence-a reverent silence, like that of onlookers at a martyrdom! Who is acting here? Call him forward.'

Presently an aide-de-camp returned through an archway with the sheriff. The aide's eyes were full of tears. He was a youth new to Ireland. This pathetic method of protesting was strangely, weirdly tragic! He had noted how, as the far-off moaning continued, and the thuds poured down in an unrelenting shower, these fair young necks had winced in concert, though no murmur passed their lips. Yet when the postilions flicked them, calling up red marks upon the skin, they made no movement, nor uttered cry. All their feeling was for the suffering victim on the triangle, in the barrack-yard yonder, whose life the cat was slowly beating out of him. None was left for a paltry personal smart, which lasts a second and is gone.

'What are you doing there?' asked the frowning Viceroy.

'Deed it's a Croppy being flogged till he tells the truth, as is the rule,' returned the sheriff confidentially, with grins. He knew not the bluff speaker, but respected the golden coach.

'Learn then, in time, lest your own bones suffer for it,' retorted Lord Cornwallis, 'that I am his Majesty's new representative. That my first order on arriving in your capital shall be to put down corporal punishment in any form whatever, unless sanctioned and signed for by me.'

The sheriff knew not what to make of it. This the new Viceroy, and these his orders? He merely bowed and smirked, taking his cue from my Lord Clare.

A very old man in a long frieze coat, seeming to read some sort of unusual sympathy in the flushed weather-beaten face of the last speaker, advanced to the carriage-window with a grotesque salute.

'What can we do for you, my man?' quoth the bluff soldier, in the hope of some answering quip which should warm away the chill which rested on his heart.

'Plaze, yer honour!' quavered the aged man, with a vacant smile of senility, 'sure I'd loike, if it moight be, for my two lads foreinst the barriks there, as are sufferin', to be hanged at onst! And, av ye plaze, might I go up too? Wid the blessing of God, I'd loike to shake a fut wid my boys!'

Lord Cornwallis pulled up the window with a jerk; and Lord Clare thought the omen not quite so good which marked the arrival of the new Viceroy.

CHAPTER II. MR. CASSIDY IS IN DOUBT

Lord Clare's previsions were justified in the first instance. The new Viceroy was obliged to refrain from positive interference for a time, in order that he might study the chaos and consider his future course. News of the affair of Vinegar Hill reached him on the second day after his arrival, and he thanked Heaven in that he was spared any participation in the maltreatment of the south. But the first week in August brought unexpected news, which compelled his excellency to look about him with promptitude. The French-bugaboo that had given his predecessor sleepless nights, only to prove afterwards the most vulgar of post-cœnal nightmares-were actually present in the flesh at last. An army had landed on the north-western coast; so the news ran which had flitted round the seaboard in a circle of flame. A veritable army had landed at Killala under false colours, flying a mendacious Union Jack: veterans to the number of twelve hundred, who had fought in Italy under Napoleon.

These at least were worthy foes whose presence set his martial blood tingling. The hero of Vinegar Hill was despatched with all speed to the northwest, while the Viceroy assembled his forces to follow him. Three frigates only, bearing twelve hundred veterans! A handful. Was this the *avant-garde* of the invading army? Where was the rest of the fleet? Scattered as usual by wind, or delayed by some accidental circumstance? General Lake sent intelligence to his chief that this handful really composed the entire force, which was commanded by one Humbert, who had come on a fool's errand, without money or provisions, trusting to Tone's assurance that the countryfolk would rally round him so soon as he unfurled the tricolour. 'He would make short work of the adventurers,' he wrote, 'with the help of the "Ancient Britons" and the "Foxhunters." It would hardly be necessary for his excellency to appear in person, for the brush would be over before he could arrive.'

The French met the royalists at Castlebar, where the latter were disgracefully defeated. Humbert, delighted by his easy victory, occupied the town during eight days, astonishing the people by a courtesy to which they were little accustomed. So long as he commanded there no house-burnings were heard of; no ravishing of maidens, or pillaging of household goods. The peasantry poured into his camp, but they were worse than of no service to him-a half-savage horde of idle lookers-on, who howled and danced and quarrelled. The respectable portion of the community held aloof, for Protestants could have no sympathy with a French invader, while the higher class of Catholics looked askance at Free-thinkers who had once been in the bosom of their Church. Moreover, the horrors of Wexford were yet ringing in their ears-horrors concerning which there could be no doubt, for the Foxhunters, smeared with fraternal gore, were in their midst, who were by no means inclined to put their firebrand under a bushel. Nor was it long ere they gave a taste of their quality. They bade the fisherfolk upon the coasts to declare for one side or the other at once, and terrified the harmless people so that many tried to seek refuge in the caverns which, as at Ennishowen, burrow under the western cliffs. Many scores were drowned in the attempt, their bodies washed up upon the rocks. It was not possible (no reinforcements arriving from France) that Humbert could maintain his position at Castlebar. Perceiving his peril, he made an effort to move northward, under the impression that if he could succeed in avoiding a decisive action, Tone would soon come with succour.

The forces of General Lake dogged his steps, amusing themselves with the native hordes who hung upon their skirts; and if ever blood atoned for treason, then were those western counties washed white as wool. Sword and halter were used with unsparing hand. An order went forth that any man in a frieze coat might be sabred, without questions asked. A certain noble colonel's

humour was so broad that for a second time he was publicly rebuked; on this occasion by Colonel Campbell-whose nephew became afterwards Lord Clyde.

Humbert and his men surrendered very shortly, and, cursing the people they had come to save, were marched to Dublin as prisoners of war. So ended the third French folly.

Now hie we to Donegal with Cassidy, who, after the arrival of the new Viceroy, saw more distinctly than ever how advisable would be a short absence. Whilst artfully pretending that he could not keep a secret, or conceal an emotion, or resist temptation, Mr. Cassidy was, as you possibly have by this time discovered, a far-sighted, cold-hearted schemer. A hypocrite is not necessarily one who conceals vice behind a semblance of virtue. He belonged to a branch of the same stem who makes a vice which he has no objection to show a stalking-horse to cover a darker and more profitable vice which it is essential he should hide. It was clear to him, after a very few hours' experience of the new-comer, that my Lords Clare and Cornwallis did not agree. There would be a tussle for power, during which the smaller fry would be wise to remain quiescent. Lord Cornwallis, whose hands were full in other ways, showed no signs of desiring to interfere in the matter of the patriots; could not, indeed, do so without a dangerous stretch of prerogative, for they were in the grip of the law, or rather of the antic creature who for the nonce assumed the name; but he made no secret of his contempt of the Lords and Commons, and his unspeakable abhorrence of the behaviour of the yeomanry. More than this he dared not do as yet, for it was evidently not his policy to quarrel with the ascendancy party; so he shut his eyes to the gymnastics in the Riding-school, and popped his august head under the bedclothes with a groan, when the screams of the victims in the Exchange hard by penetrated to his chamber in the Castle. His path was thick with flints. He complained bitterly of his position in letters to an old brother-in-arms. 'The characteristics of society here,' he wrote, 'are cruelty, intemperance, and profligacy. There is no trick too mean or too impudent for an Irish politician; no deed too wicked for an Irish soldier. These last are ferocious in the extreme, when poor creatures armed or unarmed come into their power. Murder is their favourite pastime. The conversation of all the principal persons in the country tends to encourage this system of blood, and the talk even at my own table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, turns on hanging, shooting, burning, etc.; and if a priest has been put to death, the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company. So much for Ireland and my wretched situation.'¹

In their exuberant loyalty the Lords and Commons made a solemn procession to do homage before a statue of that noble character, George I., which was set up in Dawson Street. Their chancellor strutted in front, followed by Mr. Speaker and Prime Sergeant. But His Excellency declined to take part in the edifying pageant-even muttered something uncomplimentary about a pack of donkeys. Lord Clare, in his anger at the soldier's want of polish, was unwise enough to threaten that he would lodge complaints on the subject. Decidedly it was prudent for those whose nests required feathering to retire into the background until the difficulty was adjusted.

Cassidy rode northward, scanning as he went the numerous signs of recent outrage. In the towns he was stopped and eagerly questioned, for coaches and mail-bags were erratic. Rumour was garrulous, and frequently contradicted herself. He, too, was interested in obtaining information, for the citizens of Dublin know nothing of the northern rising, except that it had been quickly put down with very little trouble. He learnt that in the north, as in the south, the collapse had come chiefly from lack of leaders; for preachers could not be suddenly transmuted into generals, or traders into commanders-in-chief. There had been a half-heartedness about the whole business, arising from mutual distrust. The atrocities of Wexford shocked the Northern Presbyterians, who were only told of the excesses of the Catholics. Derry, too, was jealous of Down, Antrim of both. On the other hand, the Hessian mercenaries irritated all classes-it was the armed occupation of a conquered territory by a swinish conqueror. The flame was skilfully fanned. Amnesty for political

¹ Marquis Cornwallis to Major-Gen. Ross, Correspondence, vol. ii. 369 *et seq.*

offences was vaguely spoken of, which soon merged into sanguinary denunciation, and concluded in the devotion of whole towns to fire and sword. The people knew not how to act. If Wexford was subdued, the lash would surely fall on their backs to punish them for their known detestation of the Sassanagh. It would be better, then, to rise, some argued, so as at least to gain something in exchange for inevitable punishment. And so, undisciplined and ill-led, Antrim rose and was crushed; then Down took the field, to suffer a like fate. It was the old, sad story over again of Wexford, without Father Roche or the priest of Boulavogue. The insurrection was evanescent; accompanied by much intermittent bravery on the part of the peasants, much imbecility on the part of the leaders, awful retribution on the part of the Hessians and squireens. Cassidy found everywhere the feeling which Lord Clare had worked for, and was overwhelmed with admiration at the cleverness of the chancellor. Every one was mourning for a brother or a son. A gloom of failure hung like a pall over the peasantry. The tradesmen of the towns had lost all self-confidence, and were bowed in humiliation. Their lives were so miserable that they cared no more what happened; the iron heel had crushed them both in body and soul. The few whose spirit yet flickered formed themselves into banditti, who for years continued to infest the mountains and wild tracts. How difficult are such memories to eradicate; how tenacious and how spreading are their roots! What a long array of sedatives may be required to blot out the remembrance of a crime of such portentous magnitude as this which we are contemplating!

Meanwhile the dreamland of Ennishowen knew nothing of these things. The fairy islet of Glas-aitch-é seemed defended from outer evil by a spell, which gave the sleeping knights in the sea-caves no cause for waking. The seals rolled over on the blue-green waves as though the world were not full of sorrow; the eagles soared high up in ether, dazzled by the glory of the sun. As month followed month my lady saw that her pet project was brought no nearer to realisation than in the old days of Strogue; that it was further off, indeed; for Shane had grown as coldly indifferent to his cousin as she was to him. He made no love to her, did not seem to see her; the intercourse of those whom my lady longed to see acting as lovers was as calm as that between a brother and a sister. It was exasperating.

My lady hugged her religion, which taught her that those who follow the national faith were capable of any crime. She gloated over the narrative of the horrors on Wexford Bridge; thanked God that she was not so bad as other people; affected a certain journal recently printed by a missionary who had preached Christ's doctrine-or what he took to be such-to the benighted heathen, in which was written: 'Had much sweet enjoyment to-day in reading a sermon on the justice of God in the damnation of sinners.' Her letters brought her news which by degrees changed, so it seemed, the whole tenor of her way of thinking. At least Doreen thought so as she surveyed her aunt, who appeared now to act in spasms of contradictory impulse. At one moment the world was apparently to her so black that there was nothing for it but to sit down without hope to await the welcome end. At another moment she became feverishly-restless and energetic, chafing evidently under some hidden goad which was too bitter to be endured with outward calm. Doreen watched her with increasing interest; for Time, which was changing my lady, had changed her too, by removing the apathetic dreaminess that had, upon arriving in the north, lulled the torn fibres of her disillusioned nature with the anodyne which follows disappointment. As events unfolded themselves, the two ladies changed places. My lady, so imperious and impatient of contradiction, became apathetic, but with an uncanny resignation which increased her age all at once by at least ten years. The proud foot, instead of disdainful of the earth as it used to do, lost its elasticity and dragged upon the ground. The incipient look of terror for which her eyes had always been remarkable, developed into the amaze of one who has seen a ghost face to face, while the skin round them was dry and burning, and darkened to a purplish brown. For hours and hours would she sit, like one inanimate, staring at that ghost which she only could behold, turning with a nervous start if a door or window were opened suddenly. Sometimes-but that was seldom-her surcharged heart found relief in tears; not

soothing dew, but water which burned new furrows down her wasted cheek. It was evident that there was some awful weight upon her mind, which was growing heavier-was squeezing her life-blood out by drops.

Doreen set herself to wonder what this could mean. It looked like the effort of an anguished soul to fly from memory and hoodwink remorse. Yet why should the punctiliously upright dowager be possessed by so dire a visitation? The old lady (really old now, though her years were but fifty-three) kept muttering to herself when she thought she was alone; then looked fiercely up, with glaring eyes like coals, from a suspicion that she might have betrayed something. Once her niece caught her in an excess of what seemed like madness-babbling some frantic words out loud through a thick silken kerchief which she held against her mouth. It was clear that there was some secret which was bursting to come out-that was devouring her piecemeal-and that she adopted this strange way of giving vent to it. Her sufferings must indeed be terrible, Miss Wolfe thought, if that marble pride was powerless to conceal them. No human frame may bear for long such wrenching. Either the stern countess must go raving mad, or else she would certainly soon die.

One night when (sleepless herself) Doreen rose to listen at her aunt's door, she caught, amid inarticulate babble, the oft-repeated words, 'Terence-Shane!' muttered in such tones of anguish, that, shivering, she crept back to bed, warned as by chilling vapour from the threshold of a secret which 'twere better not to know. Terence-Shane! Her two sons, then, were at the bottom of the mystery-the two sons who in their mother's mind stood on such different platforms. Doreen watched on, but still found no clue to the labyrinth. The countess seemed sometimes, she observed, to be much occupied with her project-that wild notion, impractical in the beginning, which events had made even more incongruous-of uniting these cousins who had so little in common at the first, and who had now between them the gulf of the late rebellion. Then she would seem by a mental reaction to recoil from the idea, and do her best to prevent the two from meeting who, as it was, so seldom met. Perhaps the lady really had a brain affection, Miss Wolfe's mind suggested to her at times. Perhaps she, Doreen, was trying to solve a riddle to which there was no solution. All whom it concerned knew only too well that my lady disliked her second son. It was preposterous to suppose that his joining the popular party should affect his mother in this manner. It was natural that her pride should be hurt, because he flouted her known opinions and embraced the tenets of those whom she chose to consider as unworthy of consideration. But that she should be absolutely sinking under the agony of the disgrace was altogether out of the question. When the news came that, after eluding pursuit for a long while, he had been taken, seriously wounded, and incarcerated in the provost, she showed no emotion; while her niece, who professed to hate him, was dreadfully distressed in spite of herself. The struggle which had been tearing the old lady appeared to have worn itself out. She appeared to have resigned herself at last to accept the inevitable, to be too fatigued with the fight for her intellect to be capable of a new impression. The ghost had been looked in the face-the ghost which, ever since the late lord died, had been hovering more or less near to her. She had felt his scathing breath upon her cheek; she was under the gaze of a basilisk, whose scorching fascination reduced her will to coma. Should the news come that her son was publicly hanged like a felon, with all outward tokens of ignominy, it could stir her now to no visible emotion. The coldness which in her letters surprised Lord Clare was not one of indifference, but of a despair which had ended in collapse. She disliked her son, yet it was his fate that was corroding her life away. Why was that? If Shane, the well-beloved, had been in similar plight, the wreck, so far as she was concerned, could not have been greater-nay, nor so great. Then her agony would have found vent in indignation; she would have done something wherein might be detected, through a veil, the old imperious ways of the chatelaine of Strogue. But this utter breakdown-this abject wreck-and all about one for whom she could not pretend to care! Here was an enigma which puzzled Miss Wolfe more and more, serving to abstract her somewhat from her own private woes.

The same motive, singularly enough, had wrought the change in both the ladies-Terence, the hapless councillor, who lay now under shadow of the gallows. At the time of the discovery of the pikes, when his mother's careless words had suggested to the high-spirited damsel that her cousin had sold the cause for gold, she had had a glimmering suspicion that her heart was no longer fancy free-that it had gone forth without the asking to one whom it was now her duty to condemn. At least there was a vague whisper (thrust aside at once) within her of the fact, which had caused her to comport herself in a way which at a calmer moment her judgment would have rejected. Then, many causes coalescing into one, she had devoted herself to birds and boating, under a delusion which she strove hard to accept as truth, that because they were beyond her helping she cared no more for her ill-used people, or for the champions who in their weak way would have defended them. It has been shown that she sank into a condition of apathy-of mental numbness-which had about it a sort of negative enjoyment. Then came news of events in the south-garbled offensive news sent up from Letterkenny barracks-news which filled Shane's animal soul with glee, and caused him, abandoning the ladies, to rush off on his own account to emulate the antics of his class. This intelligence struck on the maiden's heart like so many reiterated blows, and, breaking the charm, produced a queer kind of hope. Was it possible after all that Terence could have behaved so shamefully? If not, then how was the matter of the pikes to be explained? Possibly this was another mesh in the net which Judas had been weaving-the many-headed Judas-to catch the tripping feet of all the patriots. The maiden had been too hot to ask for an explanation. Had she wronged her cousin, or not? A strange bubbling of joy welled up within her at the thought that a doubt was possible; but this she repressed with guilty vehemence. It was no time for joy or hope. Then the news dribbled in of Wexford and Scullabogue-the awful crimes committed by the Catholics, without so much as a whisper of the Protestant outrages at Carlow and the Gibbet-Rath; and she longed with a wild longing to go south once more. Was it possible that these reports were true? At the worst, they must be much exaggerated. But men are only human. Drive them too hard, and they inevitably turn to beasts. It is only the purest metal which comes improved out of the crucible; and how rare that metal! If the reports were true, how the men of Wexford must have suffered! It was with a whimsical feeling of distress that she marked her aunt's growing indifference with reference to these reports. Time was when my lady would have chewed the cud of Scullabogue, extracting therefrom a savoury text on which to found a discourse upon the sins of the scarlet woman, pointing innuendoes at her niece such as might quiver in her Papist soul. Doreen would rather have endured this pillory than see the old lady so undone. Nor Scullabogue, nor Carlow, nor the iniquitous Fathers Roche or Murphy, Kearnes or Clinch, could rouse her from her lethargy any more, or distract her attention from the contemplation of her ghost.

Doreen determined to write to her father about the countess, whose state really grew quite alarming: there was no use in talking to Shane about it; he was quite too besotted. Granted that she cared little for her second son, it was astonishing (for she was not hard-hearted) that my lady should evince no desire to nurse her boy, who was lying wounded in a prison cell. Lord Clare was no doubt doing all that was kind; yet a mother's hand on a sick pillow is likely to be even more soothing to an invalid than a lord chancellor's. But as her soul became more shrivelled she pointedly avoided even the mention of Terence's name, and showed general signs of a peevish querulousness, which was alien to her strong character. It did not seem to strike my lady that it was time to pack up and return to Strogue; maybe she knew that her ghost would pursue her thither, and felt callous as to where she abode or what she did, provided that there was no escape from the petrifying phantom.

Doreen had another reason for imploring her father to use his influence as to the return of the family to Dublin. The intelligence of the state-trials moved the damsel much. Her people, it was evident, were to bow under their burden in obedience to Heaven's decree. In their travail she might be of use to the patriots-still more to their distressed wives and families. She wrote, therefore,

pointing out that no one could dream of conspiring now, and that, so far as she was concerned, it was idle to detain her a prisoner.

One day my lord returned from his accustomed cruise down Lough Swilly in huge delight. The circle of flame, which had swept past this portion of the coast as well as others, had informed the dwellers in Ennishowen that peril threatened somewhere. Then had come suspense and vague rumours of the French nightmare, which people put from them at once as idle chatterings of a danger that was over. My lord had sailed from tower to tower-those stalwart towers whose creation he had himself superintended-but no keeper could tell him more than that he had lit his bonfire upon seeing one blazing to westward, and that his own warning had been answered by a similar blaze to eastward. The soldier-sprigs of Letterkenny even could say nothing positive. It was reported that the French had come at last, they said; but at this eleventh hour the notion was absurd. Doreen's heart had leaped within her. The French! Was Theobald with them? She condescended to coax and wheedle Shane, and put forth all her blandishments to obtain more positive information. Suspense was racking her. She even offered to go with him on his yacht, and be civil to those horrible bumpkins in uniform, if he would sail forthwith to Letterkenny and discover something tangible. He went alone; but wrung from her a promise that if he organised an aquatic *fête* shortly, to which he proposed to invite the aforesaid bumpkins, she would cast aside her reserve, and make herself agreeable to them.

'You know, Doreen,' he said, 'that my lady's breaking up. She looks like a ghoul. By the Hokey, she'd frighten 'em all away! and it's devilish dull here for a young man like me. For political reasons I've borne the penance all this weary time. But may I be well triangled if I put up with it much longer.'

Though the speech was rude, as conveying a hint to his cousin that her constant presence by no means made up to him for the vanished orgies of Cherokees and Blasters, yet did she smile her sweetest smile on him. It proved that she need never dread being tormented with his attentions; and so she promised, and he went. He was several days absent; then returned, as I have said, in huge delight. The festival was organised. The squireens were much *obleeged*, and would make a point of responding to his lordship's *feevour*. It was to take place in ten days. Doreen must see to details. They would dine in the low-arched hall, and take their claret in the garden. What pleasanter than to enjoy the delicious autumn air, laden as it was with health-inspiring brine?

Doreen commanded herself sufficiently to listen to his prattle. What was my lord's *fête* to her-the odious boozing boors! She was pining for political news-was about, losing all patience, to interrupt her cousin-when, to her surprise and delight, he stopped of his own accord with a string of oaths, vowing that in this accursed hole he was forgetting his manners. He had picked up a guest at Letterkenny-one whom she used to like. He jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards the yacht. She looked, and beheld-Cassidy-the old friend and true, who was as hearty and as jolly as ever, with his roguish twinkle and double-chin, smiling and waving salutations to her! Cassidy, who had promised once to be a friend-on that day after his silly declaration by the kennels! Cassidy, escaped by some kindly turn of fate from the ills which had fallen on the rest! He would know everything, could tell her private details of persons whose names she dared scarce mention to herself.

This was a delightful surprise. Dropping her ordinary coldness, she advanced quickly to him with flushed cheek and both hands extended. He read in her face that she was genuinely glad to see him, and thanked his stars that he had bethought himself of trying once again. She had been coy-needed persistent wooing-was, like all women, a born coquette. He held both her trembling little brown hands in his, and would have kissed her if grinning Shane had not been looking on. She liked him. There could be no doubt of it. The sweet lovely minx-brown as a berry-all the lovelier and the browner for long exposure to the sun and blustering blast and wholesome air. She had betrayed herself, the demure siren! The Castle and its people might go to the devil now. He need not trouble to feather his nest. She evidently loved him enough to take him as he was, and had gold

enough for both. He mentally resolved to choose the first opportunity to put the tender question in due form. Pretty, stately creature! What a charm there was in the toss of her shapely head, the tawny depths of her solemn eyes!

Her first question somewhat disconcerted the amorous giant.

'How is Terence?' she asked, recovering her usual calm.

He glanced suspiciously down, but there was no tremulousness about the serene face such as his own coming had provoked. It was natural to ask after a cousin who was once a playfellow, and was now on the threshold of an ignominious death.

"Deed, and he's bad, acushla!" he returned bluntly; then, with an affectionate hand-squeeze, followed beckoning Shane to pay his respects to my lady.

With heartfelt thankfulness the girl, who went with them, listened to Shane's budget of gossip, as he tumbled it out, a confused medley, for his mother's benefit. This French expedition was but the wild freak of an adventurer unwisely brave. He and all his men-Frenchmen all-were gone in chains to Dublin, a mirth-provoking spectacle for the good townspeople, who were getting weary of badgered Croppies. The boys at Letterkenny were coming to his little *fête*-he was to send the yacht and a whole fleet of boats for them. It would be rare fun!

By-the-bye, Sir Borlase Warren and some English ships of war were cruising somewhere close by-their mission to prevent another French band from landing, if another leader should be found as foolhardy as this Humbert. That was not likely. Sir Borlase would have his cruise for nothing. The laws of hospitality demanded that he should be entertained. Shane had left a message at the tower on Fanad Head to the effect that Lord Glandore would be glad to be civil to Sir Borlase. Maybe he and his officers would grace the prospective *fête*. With this Shane descended to the cellar, to look out some bottles of prime claret for the delectation of Cassidy. Being but a half-mounted, my lord had consistently treated that personage at Strogue with indulgent patronage mingled with hauteur; but now he was so tired of getting drunk alone, or with the rough skipper of his yacht, that he condescended to kill a fatted calf for the behoof of the new arrival.

So the third French expedition had gone off like a damp squib! Doreen was in nowise sorry for the prisoners. Faithless as the French had been, great in promises which were never fulfilled, it served them right to be punished for their folly. But she was deeply thankful that Tone was not among them. It rather surprised her, till she reflected that her young hero was wise beyond his years, and far-sighted too. He saw, no doubt, as she did, that the moment was come and gone; that there was nothing for it but endurance now. He was galloping in his general's uniform on the banks of the Rhine, or perchance was one of Buonaparte's staff in Egypt or elsewhere. He had slaved with the power of a young Samson for motherland; but treachery had done her work-Samson was shorn. He could do no more. Like her, he could only wait. It was a mercy that his life was spared.

Cassidy's presence was certainly a relief to all, by introducing a new element of interest into a household devoured by ennui. He was so gay and willing. It was a pleasure to hear his rich voice carolling one of the dreamy songs of Ireland, as he caught fish for breakfast over the garden parapet. Even my lady had a wintry smile for him. Shane dragged him out with glee to look at the Martello towers, to shoot a seal, to have a blaze at the puffins about Malin Head. The cheery, pleasant creature! Sir Borlase and his fleet sailed by. The admiral's boat, manned by its natty crew in dazzling white garments, shot to the staircase hewn from the living rock, to scrape acquaintance with the hermits of Glas-aitch-é. He thought he had never seen so singular a household. The scared aristocratic-looking lady, with snowy locks and deep furrows of sorrow ploughed on her faded cheeks-each line in the fretwork of whose brow told of carking care, each rustle of whose silken robe spoke of overweening pride; the beautiful tall gipsy, with pride as great as hers, which was tempered by a serene sadness that became her beauty well. And dwelling with this pair of cold, haughty women, two men of such a different stamp! The young lord, a reckless devil evidently, and fierce, despite his somewhat effeminate figure and tiny hands; given, too, to the modish vice, as

was evidenced by the coarsening of his fine features. And then, culminating surprise, the great jolly giant-type of a rollicking Pat-vulgar and humorous; who somehow was of much commoner clay than his three companions, who yet treated him with indulgent friendliness. What a strange life this quartet must be leading? the admiral mused, as he went upon his way. They would repay careful study. He had no particular orders as to his cruise, except that he was to watch the northern coast. He would inspect the inlets of Lough Foyle, and then come back again. Why were they leading this odd hermit life? Decidedly it would be worth while to examine them more closely. The maiden and the giant went about together a good deal, he remarked, in two frail coracles, side by side-paddling among banks of heavy seaweed, landing on the strand to visit cottagers, skirting the beetling cliff in search of rare ferns and lichens. Could they be about to make a match of it? Some of the most happy couples are composed of the most conflicting elements. Yet it did seem a pity for a refined girl like this to unite herself to a common farmer-fellow!

My lady, too, remarked the apparent flirtation, and frowned. 'What's bred in the bone will come out,' she muttered, as, sitting on the marble seat among the straggling flowers, she basked in the sun. 'It's the blood of her mother. She has a predilection for common people. That is why she went on so shamefully at Strogue, consorting with the sons of old Doctor Emmett, who, in his way, was a good man, in preference to cousin Shane!' Then, remembering the behaviour of her second son, she contemplated her ghost again. 'That he should come to a shameful end,' she groaned, wringing her hands together. 'Is this a direct judgment on me? Did my husband foresee this when he spoke upon his death-bed? Had I acted as I ought, would Terence have been saved?'

Doreen was so accustomed to be led by her wayward will that it did not strike her that she was doing anything peculiar in going thus about with Cassidy. She occupied her boat, he his; sure, nothing could be more proper. She had always looked upon him as on a Newfoundland dog, whose rough gambols are amusing, and courted his society now to hear details of her Dublin friends without interruption from her aunt. She learned much that was true and much that was false. With grief she listened to the weary tale of treachery, marvelling with Cassidy as to who the traitor was. She burned with indignation at the conduct of the executive, observing that there is an unwritten law in accordance with which the ignorant are to be protected from themselves; not coaxed to crime and then murdered for it. For some reason of his own, the giant avoided the mention of Terence; and Doreen respected his delicacy, for she thought that perchance he had ill things to tell of him, and she shrank from hearing them; clinging rather to her present state of doubt.

One day as they drifted on the glassy sea-the one pensive, with her chin upon her hands, the other distracted by his increasing passion-Cassidy remarked that her coracle was leaking, that a tiny rift had been cut in the side by a jagged stone, and that the water was lapping in unawares. He swore there was peril-lost his head in an absurd manner-while she smiled. Why did she not choose to come out with him in a bigger boat? These frail cockle-shells were ridiculous! What greater delight could there be for him than to row so precious a burthen?

'I prefer my liberty,' was her demure reply, as she measured her distance to the islet, and then the incoming water. 'If I put my strength into it I shall get safely home, so don't excite yourself.'

With rare skill she plied the light oars, baring her shapely arms and stretching them to their full length, and arrived at the staircase-foot out of breath, but safe, ere the coracle had time to fill.

'There!' she said in smiling triumph, as she stood on the slippery step, her ripe lips half opened, her bosom heaving. 'Am I not quite fit for the *rôle* of an old maid? Can I not look after myself without a protector?'

Cassidy, with emotion, was as breathless as she. 'Like the poor Irish boys,' he blurted out, 'you should be protected against yourself. When you are my wife you shan't play such pranks!'

Doreen, who was moving up the steps, turned swiftly and looked down at him. There was pained wonder in her tawny eyes-scornful anger in the knitted arches of her brow.

'Mr. Cassidy!' she said, panting. 'Oh, I'm so sorry! Is this my fault? I thought it was quite understood that your former nonsense was mere passing fancy. Never, never speak like that again, or I must tell my aunt, who will turn you out of doors. Indeed, after this, I'm very, very sorry, but the sooner you go away the better!'

Her face was crimson. Gathering up her skirts, and thereby displaying a silver buckled brogue and ribbed woollen stocking, she tripped lightly up the flight and was gone, leaving her forlorn admirer to see to the boats alone.

Was it for good or ill that she went away so hurriedly? Would it have been better for her to have beheld the true man without his mask? She could scarcely be more pained and astonished than she was already. She was not intentionally a coquette. The manner of her bringing up and the atmosphere of melancholy by which she was enwrapped, caused her to think it possible to be on platonic terms with men upon a purely brotherly basis. Neither Tone nor the Emmetts had dreamed of making love to her. She did not consider her own beauty and the inflammable nature of the Hibernian heart-that is, when it is not fully engrossed already by national grievances. Perhaps she would look on Cassidy as he really was ere long-most probably indeed-for as he bent down to tie the boats, the water reflected a villainous expression of countenance, whilst he swore under his breath to be revenged for having been tricked and fooled by a born jilt.

CHAPTER III. SHANE'S LITTLE PARTY

When she observed a marked coolness 'twixt Doreen and the guest, my lady frowned more and more. *Amantium, iræ!* This was worse and worse. Was this boor to take the damsel from under Shane's nose? It occurred to her that it was time to shake off her lethargy. Ghost or no ghost, it would not do for this 'half-mounted gentleman' to carry off the prize after which she had stooped for years to scheme herself, for reasons of her own. As it seemed slipping from her fingers, it appeared to grow in value; and the importance of the danger exorcised the ghost for the time being. Shane's interests should not be made to suffer through his mother's indifference. The list of charges against the hapless dowager was full enough without that. So soon as the *fête* to the squireens was over, she would return to Strogue. Why did she ever leave it to come to this accursed spot? She became once more the imperial countess-roused herself-went hither and thither to see that the family name was not dishonoured by the preparations for hospitality-suggested changes for the better-had the garden roofed in with curtains, and tables spread there in cool shadow. It would be nice, she affirmed, for the gentlemen to enjoy the unrivalled panorama of the Donegal mountains whilst sipping the equally unrivalled claret of their host.

Doreen, who on reflection was grievously annoyed anent the folly of her large admirer, was taken by surprise when she beheld this new phase in her aunt's demeanour. She was a kaleidoscope, but certainly not mad. No judge on the bench was more sane than she. The corroding gloom was still there, but lightened; no longer engrossing its victim as it had done. Power had been given by some mysterious agency to shake off the weight. Who might solve the riddle? Was the cause of her agony actually gone? It could not be remorse, then. The gloom which remained was exhaustion after pain. Doreen gave it up, and resigned herself to the consideration of tarts and puddings for the benefit of chawbacons.

The grand day came, and with it the squireens, who were turned to stone by the aspect of my lady, as by a gorgon's head. Despite the chill which hangs over the sea at sunrise, their warm hands became more and more clammy in Medusa's awful presence. She wore a stiff brocade cut in an obsolete fashion, with a broad sash and full white fichu loosely knotted behind. As a gorgon she was a success. Never in the palmy days of Dublin Castle had she struck terror into the bosoms of *débutantes* as she did now into the innermost souls of these raw youths. They mopped their brows, rubbed their moist hand-palms on their small clothes of kerseymere, tugged at their tight vests, felt nervously whether their pigtails were hanging straight over the tall coat-collars which sawed their ears, stumbled over their swords, demeaned themselves after the manner of awkward youth when in a paroxysm of timidity. She curtseyed like Queen Elizabeth, with high nose exalted, and they shrank back in a wave affrighted; only to ebb again in renewed fear, having well-nigh knocked down the lovely Miss Wolfe who was making a dignified entrance by another door. Those two haughty women together in one room were quite too much for them. With relief they sat down to a sort of improvised breakfast, for the shadow of tables would conceal their shoes, the country make of which had already been remarked by the younger lady's eagle eye. Conscience makes fools of us. Doreen cared not about their shoes, nor saw them. She merely thought the young men a set of oafs, and was displeased, in that they should have arrived too early. By prearranged programme they were to be taken to inspect the towers; then to view the English fleet, by kind permission of Sir Borlase; then they were to return to dinner, to get as intoxicated as if they were 'gentlemen to the backbone,' sleep off their orgy, and return in the morning to Letterkenny barracks. An excellent programme, no doubt, wherewith to while away an autumn holiday-but a still better one had been prepared for them by destiny.

While the party was at breakfast, the stillness became broken by an odd concussion in the air. A dull series of unequal thuds a long way off, which reverberated on the waves, that seemed to bear them onward in muffled throbs. What could cause the strange sensation which acted on the nerves with such irritating effect? It was not thunder. Nobody present had ever been in battle, or they would have recognised the singular sound, which is indescribable, and which, having once been heard, may never be forgotten. It was part of the programme that they should be shown a fleet. Fortune was lavish, and decided to show them two. The English fleet was in the offing; *so was the French*. At dawn, Sir Borlase (whose squadron amounted to nine vessels) had been no little taken aback by the appearance of four ships hurrying through the mist. On descrying the glint of his white sails these ships tacked and made off, confessing by the movement, though they showed no colours, that they represented an enemy. He instantly gave orders to stow away the holiday gear and clear for action-despatching a message to my Lord Glandore, to announce that he was gone away on business, but that he might return in time for dinner, and bring some extra guests with him.

The French! How silly was the Grande Nation! When energy and promptitude might have lost Ireland to England, they hung about and dawdled and did nothing. When the critical time was passed, they seemed suddenly to have awakened and to be resolved to rush wilfully by driblets into the open jaws of death. When Humbert landed a few days before, he had at least the advantage of surprise. Warned by his bit of lunacy, English squadrons were despatched all round the seaboard to guard the coast; and yet a handful of adventurers could still be found to attempt to seize a country that wanted them no more!

When the admiral's message came, Cassidy glanced sideways at Doreen. She turned pale, and, to the relief of the squireens, retired indoors.

The opening of Lough Swilly is one of the most perilous points for seamen who are ignorant of its peculiarities, even on an iron-bound coast which everywhere is dangerous. At ebb there are long stretches of low water, broken here and there into surf by banks of underlying rock. When the French ships strove to flee before Sir Borlase (there were only four-the rest of the expedition being, as usual, nowhere), the French commander recognised the fact that, being caught in a trap, he must stand at bay with one to ensure the escape of the other three. He had one big and heavy man-of-war which floundered-badly piloted-like an unwieldy whale, nearer and nearer to the cliff. The English admiral was bearing down on him. There was no time to tranship men-to leave the monster to its fate-empty-an idle prey. With intrepid courage he signalled his other ships to retreat through shallow water, resolved alone to honour his country's flag, which was now unfurled, by a desperate but hopeless defence.

Sir Borlase despatched a razee and a frigate after the fugitives. They flitted into distance, and were seen no more. Then, the black monster having been surrounded by five smaller foes, one of the most obstinate engagements began that was ever fought upon the ocean. The occupants of the island could mark all that passed, for the returning tide drifted the helpless hulk closer and more close inland, and they, as it were, occupied a front place at the entrance of the lough wherefrom to view the spectacle. It was most exciting. Even my lady's dulled eyes sparkled as they had not done for years. Shane-almost delirious-the cicatrice on his forehead standing forth like a stain-whooped and hallooed and clapped his hands and danced fandangoes on the parapet, and would have tumbled headlong over the garden wall into the sea, if the giant had not held his skirts. Who should be a better judge of such matters than the King of Cherokees? The squireens forgot their nervousness, became oblivious of country shoes, of ill-made pigtails, and red ears and knuckles, whooping and hallooing like a pack of hounds, in echo to the whooping of their host. Some (but these were very forward) even clutched Medusa's dress-pinned Queen Bess's arm-in their eagerness that the white-haired lady should not lose a point in the struggle.

For six hours the doomed monster laboured, heaving on the shallow waves, drifting within a stone's throw of Malin Head. Figures could be detected through the smoke, scurrying hither and

thither in blue uniforms, with gestures of command or encouragement. Two, more busy than the rest, were on the poop, rushing forward-aft-conspicuous in the front of peril for gold-laced sleeves, huge hats and feathers, loose hair after the French mode. Masts and rigging crashed and crumbled-the ponderous hull winced and swayed with repeated shocks, while the surge lapped creamy round its prow. The roar of artillery now was deafening.

'If they don't take care,' Shane screamed, as though his warning could be heard, 'that blundering hull will jam the little vessels against the rocks!'

With a desperate energy which compelled the sympathy even of the squireens, the doomed ship returned fire for fire, though her sails and cordage clung about her in ribbons; though her shattered ribs yawned at each new stroke; though her scuppers flowed with blood; though her decks were piled with corpses. As the smoke swirled away in eddies, the two in hats and plumes could still be seen exposing themselves recklessly, ordering up hammocks and spare sails to stuff into widening gaps. The cannonade of Sir Borlase rang among the sea-caves, bringing thence whirring troops of bats, which dashed in their terror in the faces of the combatants, then dropped dazed into the sucking swell. The frightened fisher-folk looked on furtively at first from holes and clefts, then fled inland, leaving their precious nets and boats as a spoil for the spoiler. The death-struggle of the monster was painful to look upon, as it swung heavily and shivered whilst blow succeeded blow. It was a gallant monster, for the tattered tricolour still dangled over the gap where once the rudder was-a valiant monster! Enemy though he might be who was receiving a final battering, few could look without pity on his death-throes-for he was dying game.

Gurgling foam-whipped water began to pour into the hold of the big ship, which now lay so close at hand that her name was visible in florid carving on her poop-*Hoche*. The name of Tone's friend and Buonaparte's rival, who had died but a few months ago, of consumption, on the Rhine. She was a dismantled wreck-nothing but a dark battered hull. Her batteries were dumb; dismantled. The tattered tricolour went down, as a signal that she struck. The banging of Sir Borlase ceased. The sudden stillness, after so long-drawn a hubbub, was painful to the ear. The squireens clasped each other's hands and embraced in their excitement, whilst Shane drew forth his jewelled timepiece.

'By the Hokey! but it's a glorious sight!' he gasped, flapping his face with a dainty handkerchief; for a spectacle such as this touched the finest chord in his nature. 'Six hours, as I live; and it seems scarce six minutes. The sun is high in the heavens, though you can't see him for the smoke, save as a saffron disk. They are fine fellows, mounseers though they be; we'll give them a hearty cheer when Sir Borlase brings them to dinner. On my honour, I half wish they had conquered!'

Doreen, at the commencement of the action, had withdrawn alone to the watch-tower where the fire-bucket stood, and remained there clutching it with a heavy dread. What a relief it had been to her mind to think that the French had given up all thoughts of invasion! Something told her that that big rolling hulk, caught in shallow water as an unwieldy fish may be, was the flagship. Who might there be on board? When the roaring ended and silence supervened, she was still at her post of vantage, concealed from the sight of the excited mob below by the rolling masses of vapour, which hung like winding-sheets upon the sea. She stood there as in a trance-motionless in the body, though her mind worked with exceeding swiftness-till, after a lapse of time, the sound of measured oars made itself audible, approaching gradually, with regular plodding rhythm; and then a row of boats, headed by the admiral's, loomed at the stone staircase-foot. She woke with a shudder to a Babel of shouts and laughter, and slowly descended from her eyrie, trembling with mortal apprehension.

'Mounseers, every man Jack!' Sir Borlase was saying, cheerily.

'Thank God!' was the fervent echo in Doreen's bosom.

'The French-Irish boys are conspicuous for their absence when it comes to blows for Ireland,' went on the admiral. 'Quite right, too; for we couldn't treat 'em as prisoners of war, you know. There's not a man among my prisoners, thank the Lord, who's not a Parleyvoo.'

Doreen appeared in the small battlemented garden, but stood aside, out of respect to the vanquished braves. They passed her by in their blue full-skirted coats and voluminous neckcloths and queer cocked hats and plumes; some bleeding, some reeling like drunken men, some with heads bowed and livid faces, some with a poor assumption of jauntiness-all smirched and powder-blackened.

They passed between two scarlet hedges, along the avenue which the squireens opened for them, into the low entrance-hall, and there waited in knots. There could not be the smallest chance of escape; therefore no guard was set. Generous Sir Borlase was sorry for the men who had fought so well. This little courtesy was due to such brave soldiers. They might wander where they listed on the islet, while the British admiral was arranging what was to be done with them.

Lord Glandore busied him exceedingly; held important conferences with Sir Borlase and the commandant of the squireens. If the poor fellows were to be captured at all, it was a stroke of luck for him that they should have been taken within his jurisdiction. They should be packed off, by-and-by, in his own yacht to Rathmullen; he would go himself with the escort. The commandant at Letterkenny would send them on to Dublin; he, too, would ride thither. It would be wonderful if he did not receive an English marquise as reward for his brilliant services. Meanwhile it behoved him to play *Grand Seigneur*. If there was one thing which could create a passing spirit of real generosity in his shallow nature, it was the sight of personal prowess. He always loved a good duel, a good cock-fight, a successful bear-baiting. Had he not been in the habit of fighting endless duels himself for a mere bubble reputation? His own rapier was rusty now from want of use; but, please the pigs, he would start afresh next week in the metropolis, and resume his crown and sceptre as King of Cherokees. This contest on the sea had been a delightful affair; the vanquished should quaff their fill of his very best claret-aye, the very primest. As he descended to the cellar he beheld Doreen doing woman's work. She was a kind creature, though stuck-up. She had summoned the maids with linen and water. They were moving quietly among the groups, whilst she, with high-bred courtesy, was whispering gentle words of consolation.

There, in a remote corner, sat the two who had behaved so gallantly. Their fine scarlet capes and cuffs, and gold-bedizened hats, proclaimed them to be of the highest military rank. One was nursing his knee and whistling softly, as his mind wandered far away; the other was bent forward; his hands were clasped over his face; hot tears were trickling between his fingers.

'Be of good cheer,' the lively first one murmured; 'we shall see *la belle France* again, no fear. We shall be ransomed by-and-by. You will again behold your wife and little ones.'

Doreen swept with stately grace to where they sat.

'Are either of the gentlemen hurt?' she inquired in French.

He who was bowed down looked up. She dropped the pitcher which she held, and staggered against the wall.

'Theobald-*here!*' she whispered.

Alas! Yes. It was Theobald Wolfe Tone-thinner, paler, with all the youth gone out of him.

'It was not thus that I had expected to return,' he said in French, with a sorry smile. 'Yet what matters it? *Le temps et le malheur ont flêtri mon âme!*'

Doreen speedily recovered her self-possession.

'How culpably rash!' she muttered. 'There is no one that knows you in this place who would betray you; you will pass for a Frenchman. I will warn Shane, that he may not show surprise. That you should have come at last! Too late-too late!'

My lady, who was always the first to think of etiquette, suggested that the officers of high rank should occupy the reception-rooms. It was showing scant civility to leave them in the hall,

like lacqueys. By-and-by, when the repast was served, they should be shown by their hostess, in person, to the places of honour.

Miss Wolfe gladly echoed her aunt's suggestion, for she was burning to talk to Theobald, yet dared not in this public place, under the eyes of awestricken oafs.

'Mademoiselle's goodness almost makes us thank defeat,' observed Tone's companion, with a Parisian bow. 'If all the ladies in Ireland are like her, it will be a sad moment for us when we come to be exchanged. As for our melancholy friend here, he need surely not be recognised. His appearance is worthy of the uniform he wears, his accent will pass muster; he has quite acquired the *je ne sais quoi* of the Boulevard. We begged of him not to risk himself, but he would; and here he is—*que voulez-vous?*'

Yes, here he was; there was no doubt of that dreadful fact. In wrath (which the Parisian thought became her style of loveliness) she rated him in whispers for his folly, charging him with flying in the face of Providence, with being selfish and unkind.

Theobald listened, while his eyes wandered over the blue line of mountains, glittering now through rifts of driving smoke in the prismatic haze of a hot afternoon.

'I could not help it,' he said, with slow despondency. 'I knew we could not succeed. The English Government was informed of our starting. It was an attempt to resuscitate a flame quenched beyond power of rekindling. Yet I felt it my duty, if the Directory sent but a corporal's guard, to go and die with them. The hand of the executioner shall never be laid on me. If my time has come, it has come.'

This dejection was terrible to witness. Veering round, after the way of woman, Doreen took his hand in hers, and, stroking it, nestled by his side.

The Parisian felt himself *de trop*, and, humming a gay air, turned his attention to the landscape. It was a relief to his sense of *les convenances* when a fourth person entered the drawing-room.

It was Cassidy, whose face underwent a series of rapid changes as he recognised his brother-in-law. He had ceased to be the jovial, jolly, willing Cassidy. There had been a spiteful peevishness about him for days past, which surprised Miss Wolfe no little. The milk of his good-humour had turned sour. She thought it singular that her refusal to become his wife could alter a man's nature so.

'You!' was all that the giant could find breath to say, as with fists thrust deep into his breeches-pockets and thick legs straddled wide, he stared at the apparition.

Theobald held out his hand, but he whose sister he had married did not take it. His mind was seething with new ideas. What an unexpected way had now presented itself of, at one stroke, making his fortune and revenging himself on this haughty minx!

'You!' he repeated again, after a pause, as though he could scarce trust his eyesight.

'Hush!' Doreen said; 'we must keep the secret.'

Cassidy stared sourly at her, and laughed a short sharp laugh. She looked up at him in growing apprehension, for he appeared to her without his mask, and she could not comprehend the change.

'Ireland lies soaked in blood,' he said, 'through you. You've come to look upon your work?'

Theobald started. 'I always designed open and honest warfare,' he murmured; 'not brigandage and murder! The eighteen thousand victims murdered by Alva did not stifle the birth of Holland's liberty. From every drop of my blood and that of those who lay down their lives for the holy cause there shall arise a patriot to avenge our death.'

'Ye're right. When ye get to Dublin ye'll be hanged. A short shrift and a dog's death!' was the blunt rejoinder.

'No, no!' cried Doreen, her face blanching.

'I am prepared to pay the penalty of unsuccess,' Tone answered. 'Washington succeeded. Kosciusko failed. I staked my all with a view to the liberation of this wretched land. I have courted

Poverty. I leave my beloved wife-your poor sister, Cassidy-unprotected, my children fatherless. That's what unmans me. After so much, it will be little further effort to sacrifice my life.'

'It shall not be!' Doreen cried.

Tone smiled sadly. 'From the days of Llewellyn of Wales, and Wallace of Scotland, England has never shown generosity to a fallen enemy.'

'He has come as a French general,' exclaimed Miss Wolfe with creeping fear; 'who will betray his incognito?'

'It may become my duty,' returned the giant, dryly.

The blood left the girl's face and lips. Scales fell from her eyes. Here was the Judas who had sold to the gallows one by one, with the cold crafty deliberation of a devil, the men who had trusted him-who had clasped his hand in friendship. She saw it all now. With the lucidity which comes over our minds in moments of extreme trouble, she beheld in lurid links of fire the chain complete. The discovery of the pikes in the armoury; in the potato ground of the 'Irish Slave'; the two-fold betrayal of the council of the society; the town-major's knowledge of its members, and its passwords; the taking of Terence-of Terence-*who* was innocent!

She could do nothing but writhe under the blow, twisting her fingers together in speechless helplessness.

There was such an intensity of disgust expressed in the movement, that the giant cleared his throat with a shade of embarrassment.

'Miss Doreen,' he said, 'will ye speak to me in private?'

Her white lips moved and shaped the word-'No.'

'Ye'd better,' he urged, 'indeed ye had.' A dead silence still. Revengeful rage disturbed his brain. Foolish woman! she could scarcely expect him to speak out, and clinch a bargain before the victim's face.

'Ye'll repent it,' he growled. 'Would ye have a poor man fling his chances away? This fellow's life is worth two thousand guineas and a seat in parliament. I'd give that up and welcome, if ye'd unsay the words, colleen, that ye spoke the other day!'

What a strange mixture he was of the lion and hyena. The tenderness which he strove to throw into his voice, and the leer in his eye, explained to the patriot the purport of those words. With indignation he turned on his wife's brother.

'Wretch!' Theobald cried, 'who has a hand for every man-a heart for himself alone! Would you dare ask her to sell herself for me? Sooner than that, I'd walk downstairs and tell my name myself to the English admiral.'

Doreen's mind was overset by the discovery she had made. She felt sick and giddy, for the world was sliding from beneath her feet. She looked at one, then at the other, without clearly understanding what was said.

'You are a common informer!' was all she could bring forth.

Cassidy lost his temper. It is aggravating when your overtures of compromise are scornfully repulsed.

'Have it your own way, then!' he laughed, with a reckless snap of the finger, which the Parisian deemed ill-bred in the presence of a lady. 'Mind, if you are hanged it will be your own fault. A man must live. Would ye have me rob the mail? Mine's as honest a trade as any other. Sure, don't the Lords and Commons think it mighty honourable, and my Lord Clare too; or why do they make so much of us? It's a rebel that ye are, Theobald. Rebels are no judges of what's honest and what's not.'

With this half-apology for having at last decided which course of two opposite ones should guide him in the future, the giant left the room with heavy strides-to return a few minutes later as if nothing unpleasant had occurred, with a cheery warning that dinner would be ready soon.

The Parisian, who had been quite baffled in his attempt to understand the scene, gave a sigh of satisfaction. These persons, who seemed old acquaintances, had been indulging in a family quarrel

and had made it up again. His knowledge of the English tongue was limited; but he did understand 'dinner,' and after the excitement of the morning was afflicted with inconvenient appetite.

Punctiliously polite, the countess and her son came upstairs presently to conduct their unfortunate guests with solemn ceremony to the banquet which was spread below. Neither showed any sign of recognising Theobald. Shane, being dull of comprehension, had looked to his mother, taking his cue from her. By virtue of his uniform the stranger was a general; by virtue of this morning's fight he was unfortunate. Vanquished braves of high military rank cannot be treated with too much courtesy.

With the quieting of the excitement their fear of Medusa lowered again on the squireens. One or two of them indeed were tremblingly conscious of having seized the Gorgon's arm and shaken it. These humbly chose the lowest place at the long table which occupied the garden's length, whilst all stood up and hid their hands and shoes as host and hostess passed.

Sir Borlase was in immense spirits. He declared himself grieved to break up so pleasant a gathering, but in the gloaming his prisoners must go. His Majesty should certainly hear of my lord's exemplary conduct. He pledged the two French generals who (Commodore Bompert being slain in action) had managed the ship so intrepidly. He tried to explain himself in broken French jargon to them. Both shrugged their shoulders and smiled to the nodding of their heavy plumes, giving thereby to understand that he had the advantage in languages, but that they considered his speech to be complimentary. 'Lar Bel Fraunce!' he kept repeating, winking his grey eye and poking their ribs with a finger, and tossing off bumper after bumper, laughing the while consumedly, as though all must perceive that the sentiment was witty, and he a model jester (an English joker, not an Irish one).

Doreen sat next to Theobald. The waning sun, creeping in blotches through the improvised awning, touched her neck with gold, showing that warm blood circulated under the rich skin. But for this homage of the sun the squireens might have taken her for a victim of Medusa, so frozen was her manner. She was like one magnetised, who, her power of volition being gone, is obeying the dictates of a foreign power. Meats were brought to her; she tasted them. Claret was poured into her goblet. As through a film she saw the weatherbeaten visage of Sir Borlase moping at her. With mechanical movement she mowed at him in return.

'Your pretty daughter's going to faint,' whispered the admiral to the dowager. 'Such sights as I provided for you this morning are all very well for males; but females-except Spaniards and low-class Frenchwomen-don't care about such things. She supervised the dressing of the wounds-Heaven bless her! 'Twas a strain on a delicate nature. She looks ill and overwrought.'

The countess remarked curtly that Sir Borlase was very good, without condescending to explain that the girl was not her daughter. She knew well the cause of the poor maiden's anguish, and felt both for him and her. The constant contemplation of late of her own private spectre had softened her. Terence on a gallows, who, but for circumstances over which his mother *had* control, might have ended so differently, was burned on her brain as a scathing reproach for ever. Theobald, whom she was used to contemplate as a crackbrained enthusiast, assumed a new interest in her eyes. There was about him a deep-seated hopelessness which is a gruesome sight in a man of thirty-six, and the contemplation of it struck a chord of sympathy in her. The case of Terence she shrank from considering at all. But this young man whose existence was no reproach: she might feel pity for him without stabbing her own soul with red-hot daggers by the impulse.

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